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# THE PULPIT

OF THE

ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH.

CONSISTING OF

SERMONS BY THE MINISTERS

OF THE

FOUR SYNODS OF THAT DENOMINATION.

EDITED BY

REV. JAMES PRESTLEY.

VOLUME III.

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P.

# S E R M O N I .

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## THE SAVIOR'S HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION.

BY REV. MOSES KERR,

*Formerly Pastor of the Third Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh,  
Pennsylvania.*

"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." *Hebrews 10: 12.*

THE ritual of Moses afforded to the Jews a shadow of the blessings of the Christian dispensation,—a faint, but still a full shadow. Its expiatory offerings were all typical of the sacrifice of "the Lamb of God;" its priests, of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whoever understood it, knew the way of life. Though it is no longer obligatory, we regard it with no ordinary feelings of veneration. It was the great source of that moral light which illuminated Judea, when all the world around it was enveloped in the grossest darkness; from its smoking altar, and its sacred "holy of holies," it proclaimed the way of life, when, on that subject, Grecian and Roman philosophers and oracles had been consulted in vain. Yes,—we venerate the dispensation of Moses, because God was its author, and because it greatly blessed those to whom it was given; and we deprecate every effort to cast it away as a thing no longer necessary to be kept in remembrance. As a system of religious rites, it is abrogated; but as a system of religious instruction, it is as authoritative, and as intelligible, and as eloquent as it ever was. To regard it, therefore, as a mere religious relic of former times, curious indeed, but no longer of any real value, is no less an impiety than to close our eyes on one of the brightest orbs of light that God has set in our moral firmament.

Having thus expressed our views of the Mosaic dispensation, we will not be understood as depreciating it, when we observe that

there was much about it inferior to the dispensation of Christ. Of what value were its numerous and costly sacrifices, when considered in themselves, to atone for sin? What power had its priests, in themselves, to obtain for men the favor of the Almighty? All its sacrificial merit, and all its atoning power, were borrowed from the sacrifice and intercession of our New Testament High Priest. When, then, it is compared with the Christian, the Mosaic dispensation is evidently the inferior of the two.

The illustration and application of this truth, constitute the burden of the epistles of which the passage before us is a part. In that part of it with which my text is more immediately connected, the apostle shows the inferiority of the Mosaic to the Christian dispensation, as it regards their priesthood,—that Aaron and his successors were inferior to Christ. These are the points on which he insists;—that the priests under the law were men, but Christ, “the Lord from Heaven;”—that the former were required to offer sacrifice for themselves, but the latter, having no personal sin, had only to make atonement for his people;—that the former offered the blood of bulls, and goats, and lambs, but the latter his own blood;—that the Jewish priests were required to repeat their sacrifices every year, but that “this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.” You see, then, from this exhibition of the connection of our text, that it is a part of the argument of the apostle in proof of the inferiority of the Mosaic to the Christian dispensation, as it regards their respective priests.

Having thus led you to form a correct conception of the sense of the text, when considered as a part of the epistle to which it belongs, our design is, in the remarks we have yet to submit, to illustrate the interesting truths with regard to Christ, which it presents to our view. What are those truths? Look at our text, and you cannot but see them; they lie on its surface, and in the very order most favorable to a continuous illustration of them.

I. Christ’s “one sacrifice for sins.”

II. His present exalted state.

These are the truths exhibited in our text, and to which we invite your attention.

I. Christ’s “one sacrifice for sin.”

Before we proceed further, we wish to fix in your minds a cor-

rect idea of the sacrifice of Christ. By the sacrifice of Christ, then, I understand that part of his atonement which consists in his sufferings and death. Permit me to throw this idea out again, in another form. Christ's atonement is made up of two parts—his obedience to the precepts of the law, and his endurance of its penalty. Now it is the latter—his endurance of the penalty of the law, his suffering the punishment due for sin—that constitutes, correctly speaking, his sacrifice.

We now re-affirm the first truth contained in the passage before us, that Christ did offer sacrifice for the sins of his people; or, that he did, in his sufferings and death, bear the punishment due for their sins; and we proceed to prove it.

To convince you of this truth, we cite, in the first place, the evidence of the prophets. Isaiah declares, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But 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." David, personating Christ, says, "Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." Daniel, pointing to the very moment of the great sacrifice, proclaims, "And after threescore and two weeks, shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." In this plain and unequivocal manner did the prophets foretell that Christ would offer sacrifice for the sins of his people—that he would bear the punishment due for their sins.

The same truth is taught by the expiatory sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation. Go into the temple at the hour of sacrifice; see the priest lay his hands upon the head of the devoted victim, and confess over it the sins of the people; see him shed its blood and burn it on the altar. What is the nature of that ceremony? Is it not a representation of the great sacrifice offered upon Mount Calvary? Considering its typical character, what is the great truth which it teaches? It is that Christ would die in the endurance of the punishment due for the sins of his people. So the pious Jews understood it in every age; so John explained it, when, pointing to the Lord

Jesus Christ, he exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

But we have clearer and fuller evidence still on this subject—the evidence of the apostles. —Open their writings anywhere, and read on for a few chapters together, and this truth will be unequivocally asserted to you, or taught by the strongest possible implication. What is the meaning of such passages as these, if they do not teach that Christ offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people, i. e., that he bore the punishment due for their sins?—"I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."—"Christ also suffered for us."—"He was delivered for our offenses."—"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."—"He died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God." Do not these passages convince you that Christ offered a sacrifice for the sins of his people, that he bore the punishment due for them? Can any evidence be clearer? Can it be fuller? Can it be of higher authority? You have the evidence of prophets, of priests, of apostles, nay, rather you have the evidence of God, speaking through the venerable ministers of our religion. Is not this sufficient? Do you ask for more? You ask that which we have not; that which would put an angel to silence; that which is not within the power of Deity himself. How can you have stronger testimony than the word of God?

The greatness of that sacrifice which Christ offered for sins, or the severity of those sufferings which he endured in expiation of them, while they demand our notice, yet overwhelm our powers of comprehension, and are ineffable by human language. They began with his terrestrial existence, and, pervading his whole life, were terminated in his death. We have no knowledge of his childhood and youth, excepting of his flight into Egypt, his presentation in the temple, and his argumentation with the Jewish Rabbis. During this period he may have suffered much; but God has thrown over it a veil of impenetrable darkness. When he came forth from the seclusion of his early years, and entered upon the active discharge of his ministry, his sufferings became more numerous and more intense. The terrible temptations of Satan to which he was exposed, his rejection by the Jews, the calumnies that were heaped upon him, the point of the sword of justice which pressed upon his heart, —though as yet it was not permitted to pierce into its core, so

wrung him with anguish that his form assumed the appearance of one enduring the greatest suffering and grief. Such is the import of the pathetic language of the prophet: "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."

But what were the sufferings which he endured in the early part of his three years' ministry, to those which were pressed into the last few days of his life? Let us divide these sufferings into classes, —those that were inflicted upon him by the instrumentality of men, and those produced immediately by the hand of God,—that we may be able to present them in a more distinct and impressive manner.

He suffered nothing from the hands of men in the garden, more than that necessarily resulting from an arrest by an infuriated crowd. But after that what did he not suffer by their instrumentality? They dragged him away like a felon, with every demonstration of impatience for his death, "to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled;" and sought false witnesses to testify against him. To their testimony Jesus made no reply. The chief priest then adjured him by the living God, to say whether he were "the Christ, the Son of God." The meek sufferer replied that he was; and the high priest rent his clothes, saying, "He hath spoken blasphemy;" and immediately he was polluted with the spittle of the by-standers, and reeled to and fro from the repeated strokes that fell upon him from every side!

All these events took place in the night; and when the morning had come his enemies took counsel to put him to death, and led him away to the Roman governor to obtain a warrant to execute their design. Pilate shrank from a compliance with their wishes, "for he knew that for envy they had delivered him." At the feast of the passover he had been wont to liberate whatever prisoner the Jews might demand, and he proposed Jesus in connection with a man guilty of every crime, and asked which of the two he should release unto them. No doubt he thought that they would liberate Jesus rather than Barabbas; but, excited by the priests, the multitude demanded liberty for the latter. The governor then asked what he would do with Jesus, and with a hundred angry voices they exclaimed, "Let him be crucified." Pilate, by a vain ceremony, sought to guard himself against the pollution of his blood, and gave him up to the multitude to be crucified; they exclaiming as



they rushed forward to receive him, "His blood be on us and on our children."

Then follows a scene, to describe which we borrow the language of inspiration. "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him."

"To crucify him!"—yes, one terrible scene of suffering crowds upon another! The multitude laid his cross upon his shoulders, and rushed with him through the gates of the city. Unable to bear the weight of the accursed tree, Jesus sunk to the ground, and the crowd rushed past and over him. Arresting themselves in their course, they turned back for their victim; and binding his cross upon another's shoulders they hurried on to the place of skulls. Some prepared a place in the earth to receive the foot of the cross; others threw Jesus down upon the instrument of his death, and stretched out his hands and feet to their places; others, seizing the nails and hammer, fastened him on his cross with repeated strokes; then many hands lifted it up and let it fall into the place that had been prepared for it. Human malice had now done its utmost. The dying sufferer trembled with agony—the blood streamed from his wounded members—his lips fell asunder—his head sunk upon his bosom,—he seemed to be sinking into the calmness of death, when lifting himself up, he cried with a loud voice, "It is finished," and his soul ascended into the presence of God! Thus much and more did Jesus suffer at the hands of men.

What, in addition to these things, did Jesus suffer immediately from God? The hand of God was on him, during the whole time of his humiliation; but, at two periods of his life, it seems to have smitten him almost with the full power of its omnipotence,—in the garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross. Christ had no sooner entered the garden, after he had instituted the Lord's Supper, than his soul became "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Leaving his disciples, he went a little way from them, "and fell on his face

and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt;" "and there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him." Rising from the ground, he went back to his disciples, and, finding them asleep, awakened them, saying, "What! could you not watch with me one hour?" He then departed again from his disciples a little distance, and again fell upon his face, and again uttered a prayer that is enough to move us to tears by the very resignation which it breathes,—“O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done;” “and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground!” Whence is this unparalleled suffering? No visible hand is laid on Jesus; everything around him is adapted to soothe his heart—he is in the midst of a garden, the parched air of noonday is cooled and freshened by the zephyrs of the evening, the queen of night—for it was then nearly full moon—was riding high in the heavens, his disciples are with him; why then is Jesus borne to the ground under an overwhelming weight of mingled terror and agony? Whence that weeping cry that breaks with choked utterance from his very heart? Whence that mysterious sweat of blood? The hand of his Father was laid upon him in punishment of our sins;—how, I know not—but the hand of his Father was laid on him; the hand of his Almighty Father; the hand of an Almighty Father reckoning with him for the sins of all his people: it was it that prostrated him on the ground; it was it that forced from his lips the cry that he uttered: it was it that crushed from his body that bloody sweat!

On the cross Christ did not suffer less from the immediate hand of God. Then he commissioned the sword of his justice to execute upon him his vengeance fully, saying, “Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow; smite the shepherd.” Then God descended out of heaven to lay on Christ the punishment due for the sins of his people; the sun beheld him as he came down in his wrath, and veiled his face in darkness; the earth felt his tread when he lighted on Mount Calvary, and trembled to her center; Jesus, observing him approach him in his anger, and losing for a moment his sense of his favor, and sinking under the repeated strokes of his retributive justice, exclaimed, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,” and a little after, “He bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” Why were not men plunged into the lowest hell?—

why was not every relic of man's apostacy blotted out from the universe by his own annihilation, and the annihilation of the world that was the scene of his guilt, rather than that the Son of God should thus suffer even unto death, by his Father's hand, for its expiation? God would not have it thus; he would save us even by this fearful sacrifice of his Son. O God, what manner of love is this!

We have now shown you, my brethren, that Christ did make a sacrifice for the sins of his people, and we have illustrated the greatness of that sacrifice;—in other words, we have shown you that he did bear the punishment due for their sins, and have described the severity of those sufferings in which it consisted. We now ask your attention further to a few remarks relative to the fact that he who offered this sacrifice for sins, has forever sat down on the right hand of God.

II. We direct your attention to Christ's present exalted state.

Beneficence unrewarded excites the sympathy of all generous minds. Excepting a few persons, whose natures are of the baser sort, mankind call for blessings on the head of him who has suffered in the promotion of their interests. Hence nations delight to honor the man who, by his skill and prowess in arms, saves his country from the insults and injuries of hostile powers; if there be honors to be conferred, they wreath them around his brows, if there be a high place to fill, they confer it upon him; wherever he goes he is received with acclamation, his fellow-men crowd into his presence to look upon him, and when he dies his country weeps over his bier. It seems to gratify the feelings of his countrymen to honor him.

Now, my Christian brethren, we have a benefactor, in comparison with whom I would almost esteem it blasphemy to mention the purest and most devoted of all the patriots who have ever lived; one who has delivered us from one of the most debasing and terrible of all tyrannies, that of sin and Satan; and secured to us the most valuable of all privileges, those of the sons of God; and who, in accomplishing these things, sacrificed himself. Would you not be unspeakably gratified to see him honored with more than human promotion;—to see a diadem placed upon his brow, and all his enemies subjected to his dominion? It is done! Earth in amazement, and heaven in rapture have seen him crowned "King of kings, and Lord of lords,"—"this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God."

You need not be informed that this language is figurative. To aid the poverty of our language in the revelation of divine things; to assist our minds in the comprehension of their meaning, and to impress them deeply upon our treacherous memories, God is represented in Scripture as being possessed of the senses, and the members of humanity. And while we are delighted with the beauty and struck with the power of this manner of speech, it misleads no one; for all are acquainted with this first principle of religion, that God is a spirit. What, then, is the meaning of the figurative language employed in the text with reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, "is set down at the right hand of God?"

1. Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, implies that he had completed his offering of sacrifice, and rested from the labors of that part of his mediatorial work. This is one of the points in which the apostle shows his priesthood to be superior to that of the Levitical order. "Every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." The Levitical priest was not permitted to remain long before the Shekinah, and during that time he must stand. Having sprinkled the blood of sacrifice upon the mercy-seat, and burnt incense before the symbol of Jehovah's presence, he went again without the vail, to slay and offer another victim. From the altar to the Holy of Holies, and back from the Holy of Holies to the altar, he traveled continually until death relieved him of his office. But when Jesus Christ had made one offering for sins, and entered into the Holy of Holies in heaven, with the blood of atonement, he sat down there forever; thus teaching, in the most impressive manner, that he would not again perform the duties of the altar, but had finished his offering for sin, and rested from the labors it had imposed upon him. Christ shall not be led again as a lamb to the altar, be slain by the sword of justice, and be consumed by the fires of Jehovah's wrath; he rests from all his sufferings, and is in the full enjoyment of a blessedness that is infinite, and will be eternal.

2. Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, denotes his investiture with universal dominion. When Christ ascended up on high, all power was given unto him; a diadem was placed upon his head, a scepter was put into his hand, and the armies of heaven hailed

him "King of kings, and Lord of lords." This imposing ceremony was exhibited to Daniel in a vision of the night. He "saw, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." An apostle speaks of this ceremony, after it had taken place, in language scarcely less sublime than that of the prophet. "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. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Can you conceive of a dominion more independent, or more extensive than this which has been conferred upon the Savior. The angels in heaven are all *his* ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation. By the command of God they worship him. The spirits of just men made perfect are represented as casting their crowns of glory at his feet, exclaiming, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power"—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." His will is the law of the material universe. The celestial worlds observe their courses,—the sun rises and sets,—the earth revolves around the center of our planetary system, bringing summer and winter, seed time and harvest in their seasons,—the earth smiles in the summer sun, its valleys are clothed in verdure, and wave with grain. He causes the face of nature to change; he sends forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly. he giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes: he casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold, he dissolves the wintry ice, he sends forth his Spirit and revives and renews the decayed face of the earth. All its varied changes

are ordained by him. Its seas roll,—its rivers flow,—its volcanoes pour forth their burning lava,—hurricanes and tornadoes sweep over its oceans and continents; and the dreadful imoon over its desert wastes,—the earth itself quakes with convulsive throes;—but he upholds and governs all. He rides in the storm, and on the swift wings of the wind,—he speaks out of the whirlwind and from the midst of the fire,—he touches the hills and they smoke, and looketh on the earth and it trembles. “O Lord, our God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty.”

This independent, universal dominion our triumphant Redeemer exercises in the behalf, and for the good of his Church. He is “exalted far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named;” and God “hath put *all things* under his feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.”

3. Christ’s sitting at the right hand of God is expressive of the splendor in which he exists. His human nature is now ineffably glorious. Carried away into the third heaven, by the spirit of inspiration, John saw Jesus, and thus describes the splendor of his person: “And, being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” Such is now the ineffable splendor of the Redeemer’s body; it has attained the ultimate point of beauty and glory, and at that point it will exist in eternal freshness. Of his human spirit, with whatever moral splendor it may be adorned, we say nothing, because nothing has been revealed. In all that we say, we declare only that which God has made known, whipping back our own busy fancy from intermeddling in things so holy.

But what is the splendor of the exalted Redeemer’s humanity, when compared with that of his Godhead?—it is as the shining of the dimmest star, to the burning effulgence of the noonday sun,—and less, infinitely less. Angels cannot look upon it but with down-cast eyes and covered visage. When with nearly all its brightness.

vailed, it descended upon Saul of Tarsus, it eclipsed the sun, and, with its dazzling brightness, struck blind the persecutor of all who bore the name of Christ. If all the suns of the universe were to mingle their rays together, their united splendor would go out amidst the light, which breaking from the divinity of Jesus, enshrines him in its glory.

We remark, lastly, Christ's sitting at the right hand of God is indicative of the honor in which he is now held. When Solomon desired to honor his mother in the highest, he placed her at his right hand in the presence of all his court. In like manner Christ's session at the right hand of God declares the honor in which he is held by his Father. A similar honor is conferred upon Jesus, by the vast multitude of created spirits that dwell in Heaven; they bow before him with all the reverence, and worship him with all the ardor of celestial piety. And earth, with no feeble voice,—and it will grow stronger and stronger until it will drown the roar of its mightiest cataracts—joins heaven in giving honor to Jesus. John, in vision, beheld heaven and earth thus uniting their voices in giving honor to Jesus, and thus describes the spectacle: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, 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 that 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, forever and ever." Amen.

# S E R M O N I I .

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## FINDING CHRIST.

BY REV. JAMES WALKER,

*Late of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod of the West.*

**"We have found the Messias: which is, being interpreted, the Christ."—John 1: 41.**

JOHN the Baptist, Christ's immediate forerunner, having two of his disciples standing with him, and looking on Jesus as he walked, says in their hearing: "Behold the Lamb of God." The Lord so far blessed this verbal testimony of John to his disciples, that they presently followed Jesus. One of the two who heard John speak, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He was concerned to get his brother acquainted with Christ; therefore he, and probably the other disciple, went both together in search of Peter, but Andrew first found him. The grace of God in the heart gives a person a feeling concern for the salvation of others. Andrew got acquainted with Christ, and he cannot rest easy till his brother be acquainted with him also. Paul's desire and prayer to God for his countrymen was, not the restoration of a temporal kingdom to them, or that all their enemies might be subdued under their feet, but that they might be saved—saved in Christ, with a spiritual and eternal salvation. When Agrippa said to him, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," he answers, with great good will and concern for the king's soul, and the souls of all those who were with him, saying, "Would to God that not only thou, but also all those that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." When a worldly minded man's riches or wealth increases, he grows the more covetous: he would engross all to himself, and cannot bear any to be above him or equal to him. The world contracts the hearts of its children, and makes them



narrow-spirited, selfish, and invidious. But the grace of God has just the contrary effect; it opens and enlarges the heart wherever it is implanted; so that truly gracious persons earnestly desire that all others were partakers of the same grace with themselves, and will use all proper means to bring them to the possession of it. Andrew here seeks his brother and brings him to Christ.

The words of my text are Andrew's joyful and triumphant speech to his brother, on finding him. "We have found the Messiah; which is, being interpreted, The Christ." The word Messiah is Hebrew, and being turned into Greek, it is Christ: and both these words, when turned into our language, signify the same thing, namely, The Anointed. The particle The, in the text, is emphatical, and not merely propositive. He is The, or That anointed, by way of eminence. Other kings, prophets and priests were anointed: yea, all the people of God are called his anointed; but Christ was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, and received not the Spirit by measure. "We have found the Messiah; which is, being interpreted, the Christ." We shall,

I. Speak of finding Christ, and show what is supposed and implied in it.

II. Inquire what they may be said to find, who find Christ, and obtain an interest in his obedience, sufferings and death.

III. Conclude with a short improvement of the subject.

I. We are to speak of finding Christ, and show what is supposed and implied in it.

Now, finding Christ supposes and implies the two following things.

1. We observe, that finding Christ supposes that there is a saving discovery of him made to the soul; so that the soul sees him in such a light as it never saw him in before, which makes it cry out with Andrew, I have found him—I have found him: and behold, he is fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into his lips. Yea, he is altogether lovely, the chief among ten thousand. There is an objective discovery of Christ made in the Gospel, to all those who hear its joyful sound, without exception. There he is held forth and exhibited in his glorious person, natures, offices, and grace, as the great propitiation through faith in his blood; as the only mediator between God and man; as the way, the truth, and the life, through whom alone sinners can come to

God, the Father, with acceptance to their persons and services. But though the sun shine in his meridian brightness and splendor, yet those who are blind cannot see it. And thus it is with sinners. The god of this world hath blinded their minds, that they cannot behold Christ, the brightness of the Father's glory, shining in the dispensation of the Gospel. But there is an internal subjective discovery of Christ made in and to the soul, that finds Christ by the Holy Ghost. This the apostle Paul experienced at his conversion, and speaks of it Gal. 1: 15, 16, where he says, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." The particle, *In*, is emphatic; Christ is revealed unto all those that hear the Gospel, but he is revealed *in* them that believe. A ray of heavenly light shines on their minds, and removes the thick darkness that formerly overshadowed them, so that they discern Jesus Christ in his superlative beauty, brightness, glory and excellence. The apostle Paul, at his conversion, had not only his bodily sight restored unto him, but the eyes of his understanding were enlightened; for he was filled with the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to discover Christ unto, and form him in, the soul, as the hope of glory.

Now, the mind being thus enlightened, discovers in Christ the three following things:

The mind being thus enlightened, discerns in Christ a transcendent glory and excellence. Formerly the mind saw no beauty or comeliness in him, on account of which it should desire him; and, therefore, despised and rejected him. But now the man sees a glory in his holy, though humble and mean, birth; in his righteous life and bloody death. Instead of being ashamed of the cross which was and is the great stumbling-block to a carnal world, he glories in it, and desires to know nothing so much as, or in comparison of, Jesus Christ; and him crucified; what formerly he thought a blemish in Christ, he now esteems a shining beauty.

The mind being thus enlightened, discerns in Christ a suitableness, both to the glory of God and its own case in particular. When once the sinner's eyes are opened to behold the abominable nature and dreadful demerit of sin, he begins to think how he can be saved in a way suited to the honor and glory of the Divine perfections. Sin is a breach of God's holy law; it is injurious to his

justice and righteousness: and such is his holiness that he can have no communion with sinners; and the word of truth is already gone out of his mouth—the soul that sinneth it shall die. How, then, can sinners be saved, in consistency with the honor and glory of God's perfections? Why, the soul finding Christ, discovers in him a suitability to all the Divine perfections: so that in and through Christ, mercy and truth shall meet together, and righteousness and peace shall embrace one another. He who was not subject to the law is made under the law, and he has magnified and made it more honorable by his obedience unto it, than it would have been by the continued obedience of saints and angels through all eternity. He who knew no sin is made sin; and he who was and is the fountain of blessing, was made a curse that we may be made the righteousness of God in him; and that we may be redeemed from the curse of the law, and obtain the blessing. But then, the soul finding Christ finds in him a suitability to its own particular case and circumstances. You never saw one thing answer another so exactly as the Savior does the sinner; and all those who find him are, in some measure, made sensible of this. Are they poor and miserable?—He has riches. Unsearchable riches and honor, says he, are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. Are they ignorant, weak, and foolish?—in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Are they guilty and bound over to death?—He is the great high priest who appeared once in the end of our world, and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Are they vile and polluted?—He is without spot and blameless; and is made of God to them for sanctification. Are they in bondage to sin, Satan, death and hell?—He is a king, able to subdue them to himself, and to deliver them out of the hands of their spiritual enemies, and make them conquerors over them all.

The mind being enlightened discerns in Christ an ability, as well as a willingness, to save to the very uttermost all those who come unto God by him. The soul finding Christ, not only finds one who is able to save, but one who is as willing as he is able. The soul discerns good-will and kindness in Christ, toward itself in particular, as Paul did when he said, 1 Tim. 1: 15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Sinners under deep conviction, are ready to hesitate concerning Christ's willingness to

save; saying, Will ever he be merciful to such guilty, polluted sinners as we are? But when there is a full discovery of Christ made to the soul, the objection is removed; and the soul discerns goodwill and kindness toward itself, in the face of Jesus Christ.

2. This saving discovery of Christ being made to the soul, immediately the soul closes with, and is united unto him, by the Spirit and faith. Christ apprehends the soul by his Spirit and grace; whereby the soul is enabled to lay hold on him by faith, and dwell in him by love: and so receive out of his fulness and grace for grace. "They that know thy name," says the Psalmist, in the 10th verse of the 9th Psalm, "will put their trust in thee:" and said our Lord to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that said unto thee, give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him and he would have given thee living water." The soul finding Christ says of him, This is my rest and here will I abide. He is my righteousness, my rock, my refuge, my portion for time and eternity.

II. Inquire what they may be said to find who find Christ and obtain an interest in his obedience, sufferings and death.

And here we shall mention the following things:

1. We observe that all those who find Christ, find life. Sinners by nature are dead in trespasses and sins; they are legally and spiritually dead. But finding Christ, they find life, because they find him who is the resurrection and the life of dead souls. "I am," says he, "the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall he live: he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." And again he says, Prov. 8: 35, "Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord." How readily would a drowning man seize at a rope thrown to draw him out? How readily would a malefactor on the scaffold rejoice at news of a pardon being sent to him? How much more must the sinner who feels himself bound with the cords of death, rejoice to have them loosed? The judge said to him, Thou shalt surely die, and he expected nothing else; but Christ has said to him, Thou shalt live and not die, saying, deliver from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom. Now those who find Christ find a life of justification. The sentence of the law is repealed: they are declared righteous, on account of his righteousness imputed to them; and they are adjudged to life eternal. They find a life of holiness or sanctifi-

cation. The seeds, habits and principles of grace are implanted in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, so that from henceforth they die daily to sin, in the love and practice of it, and grow alive to righteousness through our Lord Jesus Christ. They find a life of inward comfort. Christ, as it were, says to the justified sinner, as David's men said to Nabal, 1 Sam. 25: 6, "Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast." None have such cause to lead a joyful life, as those who have found Christ; for they have peace with God, and thereby an enjoyment of eternal life: all things are theirs, and all things shall work together for their spiritual and eternal welfare. They have obtained a right and title to a life of glory. I give unto them eternal life. This life of eternal glory is begun in their regeneration, and carried on in a progressive work of sanctification. Heaven is brought down to their souls, at death their souls are carried by angels up into heaven, and when Christ who is their life shall appear, then shall they also appear with him in glory.

2. Those who find Christ, find liberty. "In whom," says the apostle, Eph. 1: 7, "we have redemption through his blood." And Christ himself says, John 8: 36, "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Life is very uncomfortable without liberty. How would it embitter life to be always in prison and in chains; but if it would give a person joy to be brought out of prison and set at liberty, how much more would a person rejoice to be brought out of prison to reign as Solomon speaks. What a heavy life had the Jews in Babylou for seventy years, being in bondage to a foreign enemy: and how was their mouth filled with laughter and their tongue with singing, when the Lord turned again their captivity; then they cried, "The Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad." It is said of the Grecians, that when Titus Flaminius had restored their ancient liberties, and proclamation was made thereof by an herald, in his name, they so pressed to hear it that the herald was in great danger of being squeezed to death among the people: but when the proclamation was ended, there were heard such shouts and acclamations, that the birds of the air fell down astonished with the noise, while they continued to cry, "a Savior, a Savior." But that bondage from which Christ delivers believing sinners, is much greater and infinitely more dreadful than that from which Titus delivered the Greeks. Sinners by

nature are bond-slaves to a foreign prince, a prince of another nature than themselves: they are shut up in the prison of a natural state, and bound with many bands and fetters; but finding Christ they find liberty; he knocks off their chains and fetters, opens the prison doors, and says to them, Go forth, ye are free. Oh, then, how much are they bound to show forth the praises of him who calls them out of spiritual darkness, and makes them light in the Lord.

3. Those who find Christ find a treasure. The kingdom of heaven, that is, the Gospel, or Christ in the Gospel, is like unto a treasure hid in a field, which, when a man hath found he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field, as you may read in Matt. 13: 44. Now, there are several things in the notion of a treasure, which agree very well to Jesus Christ. Thus, for example, there is preciousness in the notion of a treasure; things treasured up are precious, either in their own nature or in the estimation of those who make them their treasure. How well does it agree to Jesus Christ! for he is precious in himself, and likewise in the estimation of those who believe. Those who find him find the pearl of great price—the plant of renown—the altogether lovely object—the most valuable blessing heaven can bestow, or sinning man receive.

There are riches in the notion of a treasure. How do worldly-minded men treasure up riches and wealth as their portion; but those who find Christ find the richest treasure that can be conceived of. Hence we read of the unsearchable riches of Christ, and of all fulness dwelling in him. These riches do not consist of silver and gold, which are perishing things and unsuited to the soul, but they are spiritual and eternal riches; riches of grace, riches of mercy and riches of glory. There is hiddenness in the notion of a treasure. Things treasured up are secret and hidden from the world. Christ is the treasure that is hid in the field of the Gospel; he is a veiled beauty which few have eyes to discern; he is a mystery in his person, offices and grace: a blind, carnal world knows him not at all, and those who believe know him only in part; but when that which is in part shall be done away, then that which is perfect shall come.

In a word, there is a variety in a treasure. So those who find Jesus Christ find in him a rich variety for the spiritual entertainment of their souls. In him they find spiritual clothing, namely,

the robe of his imputed righteousness, through which the smallest drop of divine wrath shall never penetrate. In him they find spiritual food. "I am," says he, "the bread of life;" and again he says, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed; whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him." In him are remedies for all spiritual diseases. In him is armor for the day of battle, and comfort for the day of distress. In him are all the exceeding great and precious promises of the everlasting Gospel. They are all in him, Yea, and in him, Amen, to the praise and glory of God the Father. In him is wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and complete redemption.

4. Those who find Christ find rest. Our Lord Jesus is the rest, or the refreshing wherewith the weary are caused to rest; therefore he solemnly invites a weary world of wretched sinners, saying, as in Matt. 11: 28, 29, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls." Now, those who find Christ find a three-fold rest.

They find a present rest to their consciences. Romans 5: 1. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God." When conscience is awakened by the terrors of the law, the sinner naturally seeks rest and peace in the law, by his reformation and obedience; but still the conscience is not peaceful, for it is impure and threatens the sinner with eternal wrath; but the sinner finding Christ gets the thorn of guilt taken out of his conscience: it is purified and pacified, and instead of accusing and condemning him, it absolves, clears, and comforts him. "How much more," says the apostle to the Hebrews, "shall the blood of Christ purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God."

They find a present rest to the heart. The heart of man is a large capacious thing, so that the whole creation cannot satisfy it; but it is still crying, Give, give, and never says, It is enough. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing. That which is crooked cannot be made straight, that which is wanting cannot be numbered. The world is such a lottery, that if a man were to draw through eternity, he would still draw blanks and never draw the prize; but those who find Christ find an immediate rest to the wandering unsatisfied heart. Now they are

at a point, and will go no further. They are ready to say with the Psalmist, "And now, O Lord, what wait I for; my hope is fixed on thee; this is my rest, and here will I abide."

Those who find Christ shall in due time be put in possession of a future and an eternal rest in heaven. Heb. 4: 9. "There remaineth a rest to the people of God." They may have a restless life here on account of the outward troubles, calamities, temptations and dangers of this mortal state: but heaven will make a sufficient compensation for them all, for there shall be fulness of joy and pleasures forever more. And as meat relishes best with the hungry, and rest is most refreshing to the weary, so in heaven there will be a certain sweetness in the rest of the spirits of just men made perfect, after all their labors, sorrows and sufferings, which would not have been in it if they never had endured these things. Then and there it shall be said concerning them, "These are they who came out of great tribulations, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his holy temple."

5. Those who find Christ find a refuge. David, in Psalms, 142: 4, 5, tells us that when he was in great distress, and all refuge failed him, he applied to the Lord, saying, "I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living." Isaiah 32: 1, 2, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest: as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Heb. 6: 17, 18, 19, 20. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec." "Who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." In these words there is



no doubt an allusion to the cities of refuge under the law. They were of divine institution, and an illustrious type of Jesus Christ, the great God our Savior, who delivers from sin and the wrath to come: and flying thither for refuge, is used by the Spirit of God to express the most precious and Gospel method of sinners escaping incensed justice and wrath to come. The six cities of refuge were not more impregnable than any of the other towns of Israel, but by getting into one of them, the involuntary manslayer abode under the shadow of the Almighty. It is observable that great pains were taken to make the way into the cities of refuge plain and patent. The magistrates of Israel were commanded to prepare the way unto them; and it is in allusion to this that John the Baptist calls himself "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord—make his paths straight." The roads leading to the cities of refuge were to be thirty cubits broad; the hills in the way to them were to be leveled, and bridges laid over the waters; and at the parting of the road there were statues erected with this inscription, Refuge, refuge, and with a hand pointing to the city of refuge, that those who were flying to them might have nothing to retard their motion. With respect to sinners who are out of Christ, the justice of God pursues them, and when their eyes are so opened to see their enemy and avenger hard at their heels, they know not what to do: but finding Christ they find a refuge, where they are safe and secure from the law and justice of God, from sin, Satan, death, hell, and all their spiritual enemies. No doubt the first sight of one of those cities of refuge would be very rejoicing to the heart of a poor man, who having slain one unawares was flying; even so the awakened and convinced sinner rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory, to find Christ, the great and glorious refuge of heaven's preparing for people in those circumstances. And oh how refreshing and acceptable is this refuge to the awakened and convinced, guilty and polluted sinner! It is like the water-brooks to the panting hart, or the king's pardon to the condemned malefactor on the scaffold.

6. Those who find Christ find a portion. When David found himself cast off at all hands, he cried unto the Lord, saying, "Thou art my portion in the land of the living." The double portion of goods movable, was one of the rights of primogeniture among the Jews; in like manner, all those who are members of the General

Assembly and Church of the first-born, having Christ for their portion, have the double portion. It is not a portion of silver and gold, houses or lands, all these things fade away and perish with the using; but it is a portion that will outlive all the clay-portions of this world's children; for it is a crown of glory that fades not away: it is an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled. It is a soul-enriching, and satisfying portion for time and eternity.

7. Those who find Christ find all things in him necessary, in order to constitute their spiritual and eternal happiness. Oh! believers, read the apostle Paul's epistles, and there you will find an inventory of your blessings and privileges in and by Jesus Christ. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. The things of the world answer their respective ends and purposes for which they were designed, but Jesus Christ is profitable for all things; in him we are completely furnished with everything necessary for our eternal welfare, for he is all and in all. "We have found the Messias; which is, being interpreted, the Christ."

III. We shall now conclude with some improvement of the subject.

1. From this subject let us learn to acknowledge and admire the happiness of all those who have found Christ. Happy, indeed, are the people, in such a case, yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord! They have found life, they have found liberty, they have found a treasure, they have found rest, they have found a refuge, they have found a portion, and they have found all things necessary to constitute their spiritual and eternal happiness. Now, is it possible for us to figure in our own minds a person or people in better circumstances? Let none consider religion a melancholy exercise: let none count the saints of the Most High to be of all men the most miserable; they are satisfied with their lot and portion, yea, they rejoice and glory in it, and would not exchange their lot for ten thousand worlds.

2. From this subject we may learn matter of trial and self-examination. Well, then, try and examine whether you have found Jesus as a Savior and portion for your souls. In order to assist you in this duty, we shall lay before you the following things:

If you have found Christ you will look on the discovery as a

matchless discovery of free and sovereign grace, and you will be highly transported with it. Archimedes was so highly transported with finding out the secret of Hiero's crown, that he cried out, I have found it, I have found it. Augustine was so transported with the discovery of the truth, in his dispute with the Manichæans that he clapped on the table and cried out, The conclusion is against them. Now, if the discovery of natural or moral truth is so transporting, how much more transporting must the discovery of him who is truth itself be! You will be ready to say within yourselves, I was seeking asses, and behold, I have found a kingdom: I was wandering in the search of happiness, and now I have found it; I was a dog under the table, now I sit among the children at the table; I was feeding on dust with the serpent, and on husks with the swine, but now I have found the hidden manna, the bread of life which came down from heaven. If you have found Christ you will love and esteem him above all things. The merchant seeking goodly pearls, when he had found the pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. People may judge of their state by the habitual current of their affections. What is it that you love and esteem most of all? Is it Christ or the creature, heaven or earth, the present or the future world?

If you have found Christ you have got other views of sin and yourselves than ever you had before. Manifestations of the glory of Christ are ever attended with humbling discoveries of sin. When Job had seen the Lord, he cried out, "Behold, I am vile; I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." And the prophet Isaiah exclaims, "Woe is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

If you have found Christ you will earnestly desire greater and further discoveries of him. You will say, with Moses, "I beseech thee shew me thy glory." Moses had often before this time seen the glory of the Lord; the Lord had talked with him face to face, as man talks with his friend. But communion with God is one of those things which never wearies the soul; and, therefore, he cries out, in as great earnestness as ever, "I beseech thee shew me thy glory."

3. From this subject we may learn matter for exhortation. Let sinners who are living without God, without Christ, and without

hope in the world, be exhorted to seek a God in Christ while he is to be found, and to call upon him while he is near; and do not give over the search till you find him, to the joy and rejoicing of your souls. And in order to excite you to this, consider the following things:

Consider that Christ is seeking you, and such as you are. If you ask what evidence there is of this, we answer: he came to seek and to save that which was lost: and he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Well, then, you are by nature in a lost and perishing condition; you are guilty and polluted, exposed to the wrath and curse of God both in this life and that which is to come. O, then, seek Christ, and flee to him as the only hope and refuge set before you in the Gospel. There is not salvation in any other; he alone can save from sin, and the wrath to come.

Consider what a mercy it is that a God in Christ will be found of you. He will not be found of the fallen angels—he will not be found of the damned in hell; but he will be found of you if you seek him with all your heart.

Consider, that if you will not seek him now, the time may come when you shall seek him and he will not be found of you. So he has threatened: Prov. 1: 24. "Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel; and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh—when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts: behold, now is the accepted time; this is the day of your merciful visitation. He that is wise shall be wise for himself; but he that sinneth, he alone shall bear it.

## SERMON III.

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### THE HOUR AND ITS RESULTS.

BY REV. JAMES WORTH,

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and now Missionary to Oregon.*

“Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.”  
*John 17: 1.*

No event since time began its lengthened race, or days began to be numbered, was ever distinguished as this hour. We have heard of eternal counsels, of the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, of the appointment of our Lord Jesus Christ to his mediatorial work, and are informed that for its complete accomplishment it was necessary that he should give his life a ransom. The hour which was to accomplish the divine purposes, and conclude the sufferings of the Son of God was just at hand; yea, says Christ, “The hour is come.”

They who have lived long in the world, passed through various scenes of life, been actively employed in its affairs, formed a long train of acquaintances, and numerous very endearing relations, cannot look forward to the last fatal hour which shall dissolve these relations and annihilate the schemes of life, without seriousness and emotion; and when it approaches, are ready to exclaim, The last, the dreadful hour is come. If there is a time of solemnity it is the hour of death. At this juncture the covetous man quarrels with the world on account of its vanity and deceit, and censures his own duplicity. The voluptuary loses his taste for his former pleasures, and blames his sensual desires. Every ear is attentive to the last sayings of mortals about to depart, and to the very solemn injunctions of dying friends. The solemnity of the occasion and the importance of the event concur to procure this attentive audience.

These words have a respect not to the last hour of any mortal,

but to the departing hour of an incarnate God. Having, in the most affectionate manner, reasoned with his disciples on the necessity of his departure to procure for them extensive and permanent blessings, and consoled them with the hope that though he was about to leave, it was by no means to be a final separation; as he says, "Ye now, therefore, have sorrow, but I will see you again and your hearts shall rejoice,"—having as an affectionate master comforted his disciples who had sorrow at the prospect of his departure, his thoughts turn to the all-absorbing concern of his last suffering and its consequences, both as it respected himself and his Father; respecting which he breathes the earnestness of his soul to his Father in the words of our text: "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." Consider these things, that you may feel the weight of these momentous words.

We shall endeavor to illustrate these words by,

I. Describing this hour.

II. The results which it produced, viz: the glorifying of the Son and the Father.

I. Describing the hour.

It is obvious our Lord Jesus Christ alluded to the time of his departure out of this world by the cruel hand of death; and previous to his actual death, to those sufferings of mind which the treachery of a pretended friend, and the blasphemous reproaches which his enemies "cast in his teeth." It is evident, that by the hour just at hand, Jesus meant his death: for this prayer of Christ's follows the valedictory to his disciples, at the commencement of which address we have these words: "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end." To the same hour here mentioned Jesus refers when in his prayer he says, "Father, the hour is come." This was indeed an important hour.

1. Because it separated between dearest friends. If this event on this account does not directly interest ourselves, it is nevertheless of sufficient interest to detain our thoughts for a while. Men have sometimes been found who, finding their end approaching, have collected their family, summoned up their remaining strength, expressed a strong desire to take a last and long farewell of the persons who were most dear to them, and to break asunder by one

concluding act of social attachment, all the remains of that human affection which tied them together in the world. What an object, what a heart-affecting object does that man present, who, beholding himself on the point of being removed from all those to whom he had been united by strong, near, and endeared ties, desires to see them all assembled around him for the last time, and when assembled addresses them in these or the like accents.—It was to you, my beloved friends, the joy of my life, that I took pleasure in disclosing the most secret emotions of my soul. Though the bands which unite us are close and endeared, they cannot last forever. It was in the order of human things either that you should be called to close my eyes, or that I should be called to close yours. Providence is now revealing the Divine pleasure that I should “go the way of all the earth” before you. It was my desire before I leave the world, to behold the persons I have always loved so much, to recall to my recollection the sweet counsel we have taken together, the moments of kindest friendship which we have enjoyed. And after this to give vent to those strong feelings of attachment which I feel, and thus to take my leave of the world; then to forget the world and the things of the world, and raise my soul to those sublime things which are above it and beyond it, as it becomes a dying man to do, and then hasten to submit to the will of a sovereign Providence, who holds in his hands the power of life and death.

At the approach of this hour Jesus did somewhat similar to this representation. His disciples were, doubtless, his most powerful earthly attachment. The kind of death which he was about to suffer demanded the individual attention of his mind; but before he plunges into that vast ocean of thought which was to carry him through the conflict before him, he wishes to behold at his own table those tender objects of his affection: “With desire,” says he to them, “I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.” Had I not good reason to say, that though this spectacle did not directly interest ourselves, it, considered in itself, would be highly worthy of detaining our eyes and of fixing our attention.

2. It was an important hour, because the hosts of wicked men and devils were leagued against him. Men who pass out of the world by the hand of death in its mildest form and undisturbed by the fury and violence of malignant foes, pass through a scene of

great solemnity and terror, but it was not permitted our blessed Savior to depart out of the world, even thus far undisturbed. His enemies among men, at the suggestions of subtle demons, enter into deep counsels how they might accomplish the most satanic designs. They bribe a professed friend to betray him into their hands, and, though they mocked him with a trial, their conduct evinced that he was more than any other the object of envy, hatred and malice, and that their steady purpose was to degrade, ill entreat and crucify him. When they could not find a just ground of accusation against him, they proceeded to criminate him on the testimony of false witnesses. They affected to understand his confessed relation to God and the Church as the most unqualified blasphemy. On the one hand the chief priest and officers cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him;" and on the other hand, the common people of the Jews and the ignorant multitude echo back the same mad demand, and add, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die." They spurned him from their presence and denied him his honorable relation, and refused him any tribute of proper honor: for when Pilate said to them, Behold your king! they with indignation "cried out, Away with him, crucify him." They loaded him with reproaches, in derision hailed him as king of the Jews, and to render him a more considerable spectacle, arrayed him in a gorgeous robe. Not contented with wreaking their own fury on him, they used all their arts to unite with them the strong arm of the Roman power, and were but too successful. The influence of wicked spirits was seen in the artifice, cunning, and extravagant excess to which these enemies proceeded. Who, that was not moved by the malice and revenge and fury of a devil, could have thus persecuted spotless innocence, offering, as Jesus did, the most innocent pleas for all he had done?

3. It was an important hour, because during it the Savior had to endure the wrath of his Father, as it burns against sinners. Already had the suffering Son of God had a severe conflict in the garden, which caused him to exclaim, "Now is my soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death. Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Again, he, having as it were enjoyed a short respite, is again called to pass through an ocean of deepest sorrow. The prophet, in foretelling this event, seems to assume the very authoritative language of the incensed Majesty, and says, "Awake, O



sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." To have the countenance and presence of our friends tends in a great degree to alleviate the sorrows of affliction; but in the hour of greatest extremity, as if the Father had delivered his Son to struggle alone with the merciless foe, he hides himself and forsakes his Son; yes, that Son who was his only begotten, and had always done the things which pleased him; so that this Son on the cross in extreme agony cries out, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Though he were a Son yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered of his Father. He learned that his justice will abate in no degree its demands, and that he having once pledged himself for the sins of men, no relation or even infinite mercy could save him.

4. It was an important hour because of the magnitude of the work which that hour was to complete. The economy of redemption contemplated a full and real atonement for sin, as the only possible way of the sinner's escape from those punishments which sin deserves. As to sin it is said, "There is no remission of it without shedding of blood." The shedding of the blood of slain beasts could never take away sin. Human victims cannot avail for this purpose; nay, not even "the first born for the transgression, or the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul." If a man would sacrifice his own life it could not appease Divine wrath, and even any limited duration in the place of punishment itself, cannot appease Divine ire or satisfy the demands of justice. If we should suppose it could, we could never justify the Divine conduct in perpetuating the punishment of impenitent sinners. But when we consider sin as an infinite evil, deserving an infinite degree of punishment, we see the reason why their punishments must be everlasting. They being but mere creatures, could not render, in a limited time, infinite satisfaction. But this the law demands, and hence the sinner's punishment must endure without end. Their punishment must be infinite; if not in intensity it must be in duration. The work which the Savior had to complete was to expiate sin. And it was his blood alone that could procure remission. How shall we attempt to describe this atonement for sin! It must be such an atonement as would meet the claims of justice, and assuage Divine wrath. Justice demanded that the satisfaction should make full restitution

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OF THE

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for the injury done. The amount of injury is incalculable. Think! Sin is contrary to the holy nature of God; a violation of his holy, just and good law. It is rebellion against the heavens it corrupts the man both in soul and body, and to the utmost degree unfits man for the service and glory of his Creator. We have no arithmetic which can calculate the amount of injury which sin has done; to say nothing of the deranged state of the Creator's works by it; of the misery which it has entailed on all animated nature; of the bitterness with which social life has been blended on account of it; of the misery and sorrow of the world, and the universal reign of death. What a suffering must it be which would make restitution for the injury sin has done; which could magnify a broken law, annihilate the wrongs and insults which injured majesty had received, and display in majestic grandeur the divine glory; and bring "peace on earth," and favor to man.

5. The horrors of death rendered this hour important. The terms in which the horrors of death are expressed to us, in the Scriptures, are powerfully energetic. They represent to us a mighty tyrant, causing death to march at his command, and subjecting the whole universe to his dominion. This tyrant is the devil. He is the personage, "who through fear of death subjects men to bondage." You stand aghast, no doubt, on beholding the whole human race reduced to subjection under a master so detestable. The fact, however, cannot admit of a doubt. This great enemy of our salvation unquestionably exercises a kind of empire over this entire world. It was with death, rendered thus formidable, that Jesus had to contend; and hence, when the Scriptures speak of his triumph "over death," it also declares in connection with this, his triumph "over him that has the power of death, that is, the devil." Three things render death formidable to man. 1. The veil which conceals from the eyes of a dying person the state on which he is about to enter. 2. The remorse of conscience which a sense of guilt excites. 3. The loss of titles, honor, and every other earthly possession. But how inconsiderable are these when compared with the weighty considerations connected with the death of Christ. His death was destined to be a triumph over Satan, and the death of death itself. "In few instances do men die without suffering. Death in its mildest form is usually preceded by violent symptoms, which some have denominated the harbingers of death. These har-

bingers of death are mortal swoonings, feverish heats, paroxysms of pain, and tortures insupportable." But crucifixion was the most cruel punishment which human justice, shall I say? or human barbarity ever invented. The imagination recoils from the representation of one nailed to a tree—suspended by the iron which pierces his hands and feet, pressed down with the weight of the body, the blood of which is drained off drop by drop, till he expires merely from the excess of anguish. Such was the death which belonged to this dreadful hour.

II. We have next to attend to the effects of this important hour.

1. Jesus prays for this effect: "Glorify thy Son." The Father did glorify his Son upon earth:—in the sufferings of his life; by the signs and wonders which attended them. When they that came to take him were thunderstruck with a word, "and went backward, and fell to the ground." When Judas confessed him innocent, and sealed that confession with his own guilty blood. When the judge's wife asleep, and the judge himself awake, pronounced him innocent; when the sun was darkened, and the earth quaked, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

2. He glorified him even in his sufferings. Therefore, says Jesus, after Judas had departed to betray him, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." The Father glorified the Son by acknowledging their value, and accepting of them as the price of man's redemption. Suffering to satisfy for sin was necessary; but the sufferings of men, or angels, could not avail to satisfy for one sin. If this had been the case, that they could, angels might escape from their punishment and men escape from torment; but this is not the case. It was Jesus alone who could say, Save them, [that is, his people,] from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom. The conduct of God toward his Son in accepting of the sufferings of his Son as a sufficient atonement for the sins of men, does glorify the Son.

But, finally, the Father glorified the Son after his sufferings were ended.

1. In raising him from the dead. The whole work of the Savior seemed to stand, and all visible ground of hope being swept away by the flood of death which had drawn into its current Jesus, the

foundation of the Church; hope itself was for a time suspended, and fear began to be excited. But in a short time Jesus rises from the dead, dispels the fears of his disciples, and replaces their suspended hopes. Those enemies who had thought their cause triumphant, began to feel their disappointment, and he triumphs over them. He now manifests also that by his death he had got dominion over death, and him that had the power of death.

2. In exalting him to glory. Jesus, having continued on earth after his resurrection, given to his apostles and evangelists those instructions relative to his rising Church, and obtained the promise of the spirit in their behalf, was taken by a bright cloud beyond the sight of the bodily eye: He ascended to heaven; and is at the right hand of the Majesty on high, so much better than the most exalted angels, as his name is better than theirs.

3. He has honored him with the outpouring of his Spirit, to build up and establish his kingdom among men. At the day of Pentecost this Spirit was sent to bless, in a signal manner, his disciples, to whom had been committed the concerns of the Church. By extraordinary manifestations of the Divine favor, their timidity was changed to the most heroic courage, their remissness into the most fervid devotion and unconquerable zeal. Relying on the celestial succors, the early heralds of the cross went forth to their work, and first commenced the exercise of their ministry at Jerusalem, according to the command of the Savior. They having founded different churches there, and reduced them to due order, next pass to Samaria, which received the Gospel. After this they extend their views further, pass unto the Gentiles, and carry the lamp of the Gospel to all the then known regions of the earth, and everywhere saw their efforts crowned with the most abundant success. Thus, by the good providence and favor of God, did Christ's name "become a praise and a glory in the earth."

2. Jesus Christ brought glory to God in this hour. In his prayer the Son pleads his Father's interest and concern connected with that important hour. "Glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee." Jesus had consecrated his whole undertaking to the Father's honor. He sought to be carried through his work triumphantly that he might glorify him in two ways. First, by the death of the cross which he was now to suffer. "Father, glorify thy name," expressed the great intention of his sufferings, which was to retrieve his Father's injured honor among men, and by his satis-



faction to fulfil the glory of God, of which man by his sin had come short. Father, own me in my sufferings, that I may honor thee by them. These sufferings did, indeed, confirm and illustrate the unbending justice, the immaculate holiness and uncompromising threatenings of the Father. Secondly, the doctrine of the cross of Christ which was now shortly to be published to the world, by which God's kingdom would be established among men, would tend greatly to the glory of God. He prays that God would so grace his sufferings and crown them, as not only to take off the offense of the cross, but to make "it to them that are saved, the wisdom of God and the power of God." If God had not glorified Christ by raising him from the dead, his whole undertaking would have been crushed. Therefore says Christ, "Glorify me, that I may glorify thee." Sinners who have been converted by the preaching of the Gospel, admire the wisdom, power, mercy, grace, and goodness of God which that Gospel unfolds, all displayed in the salvation of each redeemed one, and infinitely resplendent in the salvation of the numerous tribes of the redeemed. But if Jesus had not fully accomplished his arduous work, the everlasting love of God had never flowed to us; his astonishing wisdom could not devise a plan to save us; his power, though infinite, could not have brought us help; his mercy, though ready to enlist every sympathy, and use every plea, would have been shut out by the bars of justice. And his manifold goodness and his tender mercies would have been shut up in his wrath.

It was to commemorate this hour that our blessed Master instituted that ordinance which we, brethren, propose this day to observe. But what closeness of attention, what concentration of thought does it not require of us, if we consider it in those great and comprehensive views which animated the Savior of sinners when he instituted the sacrament of the Supper. Behold the divine Savior prepared to finish the work which was given him to do! He comes to substitute himself in the room of those victims whose blood, too worthless, could do nothing for the purification of guilty man. He comes to fulfil that mysterious prediction, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." He came to deliver up himself to that death, the very approaches of which inspire the soul with horror, and constrained him to cry out,

“Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?—my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.”

What shall he do to support himself in the prospect of such tremendous arrangements? What buckler shall he oppose to those envenomed arrows with which he was about to be transfixed? Love, my brethren, formed the generous design of the sacrifice which he offered up, and love carried him through the difficult work. He says of himself, that the memory of this work, of this death which he endured, should be perpetuated in the churches, even unto the end of the world—that even to the end of the world he would be the refuge of poor, perishing sinners. That through the whole world of believers, whom the preaching of the Gospel would subdue to his love and obedience, this death shall be celebrated. He himself instituted the memorial of it, and taking the bread and the wine, the symbols of his body broken and his blood shed, he gives to his disciples; he says to them, and in their name to all who should believe on him through their word, “Take, eat, this is my body; this is my blood of the New Testament, drink ye all of it. This do in remembrance of me: for as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come.”

You see, then, brethren, one great design of this institution. It was to be a memorial of your benevolent Lord: and of all those blessings he has procured, in saving us from wrath and procuring the hope of eternal glory, it is the seal and pledge. We hope you have considered, in all its importance, that command which enjoins you to “examine yourselves, that you may eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”

Dearly beloved brethren, while you reflect on communion seasons past, have you the testimony of a good conscience, that you have drawn nigh to God in some state of preparation? If so, you have good reason to hope for the enjoyment of the same felicity. God draws nigh to you in this ordinance, not with the awful manifestations of his vengeance, but in all the attractions of his grace; and while you honor him with fear, honor him with confidence. Study to feel your own weakness, and say in the language of repentance most lively and sincere, and of humility the most profound, “If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mightest be feared. I wait for the Lord, and in his word do I trust.”

## SERMON IV.

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### THE YOKE, THE BURDEN, AND THE REST.

BY REV. STEPHEN L. HAFT.

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"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."  
*Matthew 11: 29, 30.*

OUR Lord and Savior, from his particular acquaintance with the opinions and customs of men, was always ready, by allusions to them or to something that was well known, to give instruction. In these words there is evidently an allusion, in the first place, to the yoke which bound oxen together while engaged at labor. And because it was a very common thing in Judea to see these animals laboring for men under the yoke, to which they became very obedient, the Savior makes use of this simple figure to teach us our obligation and our duty. The term "yoke" was variously used by the Jews, in a figurative manner, to denote obligation and duty. They had, according to Dr. Clarke, five uses to which it was applied. 1. The "yoke" of the kingdom; or obedience to the revealed will of God. 2. The "yoke" of the law; or the necessity of obeying all the rites and ceremonies of Moses. 3. The "yoke" of the precept: or the necessity of obeying any particular command to which an individual had bound himself: such as the vows of the Nazarite to abstain from wine, and to preserve himself unshaven. 4. The "yoke" of repentance, without which they knew that they could not enter the kingdom of heaven. 5. The DIVINE "yoke;" or the obligation to live a spiritual life, and one of thanksgiving or gratitude. Thus from this account we learn, that the Jews understood by the figure of a yoke, obligation and duty. And hence, the Savior very fitly makes use of the term, inviting men to become obedient to his laws and religion; for a great part of his audience were

Jews, who well understood the meaning of it, and would easily comprehend his idea.

With regard to the other figure used in the text, we cannot be certain what occurrence might have suggested the idea of a "burden." But as it was a common thing to see persons carrying burdens up the hill on which the city of Jerusalem was built, this might be the allusion of the Savior in the passage. However this may be, he refers to the common practice of carrying burdens. He might possibly have a reference to the unlawful and weighty burden of duties, which the Scribes imposed upon the people, and of which he made mention when he denounced his woe upon them. And although he does not promise his followers an exemption from all kinds of burdens, yet he does say that his burden is "light."

In further remarks upon these words, we shall,

I. Inquire what is the nature of the "yoke" which the Savior requires men to take upon them.

II. Notice the character of this yoke—"It is easy:" and of the burden—"My burden is light."

III. The object of taking this yoke—that we may learn of him as our teacher: and of his qualifications—He is meek and lowly.

IV. The motive here presented to take his yoke,—“you shall find rest to your souls.”

I. Let us inquire what is the nature of this "yoke" which the Savior requires men to take upon them.

The "yoke" which is here spoken of is the religion of Christ. It is a yielding of ourselves servants unto the King of Zion, as servants are said to be under the yoke, and must learn obedience to their masters.

It is here supposed that men are naturally under some other yoke; for Christ invites those who hear the Gospel to take *his* yoke. All men are, by nature, under the yoke of *sin and Satan*. When Adam ate the forbidden fruit, he brought himself and all his posterity, with all the powers of their minds and bodies, under the yoke, or under the dominion and power of sin and Satan. The *understanding* is so bound in the fetters of ignorance and spiritual slumber, that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness *to him*; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. The *will* is filled with obstinate rebellion against the God of heaven, and so contrary to his

revealed will, that men will not hear or obey. The *heart* is enmity against God, and is bound with a hardness, as the streams are bound with ice; or it is, in Scripture, compared to the hardness of the flinty rock. Thus the powers of the mind are in subjection to sin, and consequently under the yoke of Satan: for he is "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." And besides this, men yield their members, as the instruments of unrighteousness, unto sin; for the members of the body are under the direction of the mind: and if the carnal mind is enmity, if the imaginations of the thoughts of the heart are only evil, and that continually, is it likely that the body will be employed in the service of God? Such, then, is our condition by nature—we are under the yoke of sin and Satan.

2. Men are naturally under the yoke of *the law as a covenant of works*. The covenant which God made with Adam in paradise promised life on condition of perfect obedience. But when Adam sinned against God by eating the forbidden fruit, he deprived himself and his posterity of the power and the privilege of attaining eternal life by this covenant. For now, it is said, "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God." Yet men who have any concern about eternal things in their natural state, will work away under this "yoke" as though they still expected life by the works of the law. But it is fruitless for them to labor under the yoke of such a master, for after they have toiled and wasted their strength they will receive no reward. Not only are we naturally under the yoke of the law as a covenant, and perfect obedience demanded of us while we are in this state, but we are in a state of condemnation for the transgression of it, and are liable to eternal wrath: "For we are, by nature, the children of wrath," and the lawful heirs of hell. Such, then, is our carnal state by nature, that we are under the awful yoke of condemnation; and it is nothing but the long-suffering of God that has stayed the execution of the penalty of his law, to the uttermost, upon the guilty race of man.

3. Many are under the yoke of the *world*; its riches, pleasures, and customs. There is, in the minds of many of our fellow-men, an inordinate thirst after riches; and they are so yoked to the pursuit of these, that they can give no attention to the riches of God's grace, or the inheritance of the world to come. Others are bound

in the yoke of continual striving after those earthly, fleeting pleasures which are unsatisfying to an immortal soul; while they seek not the pleasures of communion with God in Christ. Some are bound by the customs of this world more than they are bound by the word of the living God. All such are under the yoke of the world, and are by it held in bondage.

4. Many are under the yoke of *self-righteousness*, and *self-conceit*. Many are trusting to themselves that they are righteous, and are despising others. They are ready in their heart to say to their neighbor, "Stand apart, for I am holier than thou." They are often full of conceit on account of the gifts which God has given, and are ready to look upon others, who are less gifted, with some degree of contempt. Some, indeed, are puffed up with too much confidence in their ability, even in religious exercises. All such are laboring under another yoke than that which Christ invites us to take on us, and are required to lay it aside for Christ's yoke, which is easy; and for his burden, which is light.

Such are some things which we suppose to be implied in the language of the text. Now, the yoke of Christ is altogether different from any of those which men usually wear. We would remark, in regard to it, that to take the yoke of Christ is,

1. To yield a *cheerful obedience* to all his commands. It is to obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, from a heart full of love to him, and to God in him. It is giving ourselves away to the Lord in an everlasting covenant; a coming out from the world, and taking a stand on the Lord's side, by a profession of attachment to Jesus Christ. It is to live in obedience to the law of God in Christ, or yielding obedience to it as a law, which has been fulfilled by Christ, and which is a rule, and not a covenant, of life, to them that believe.

This "yoke" includes the law as the rule of duty, while men naturally regard it as a covenant of life. It includes the close tie of faith, which is the foundation of obedience to this law. It includes the sweet tie of love, which binds to Jesus, and is the spring of cheerful obedience, and makes it a pleasant work; while the obedience of men to the law, as a covenant of life, is mere drudgery without a compensation. It is the obligation of a willing servant to render obedience to a kind master; while men naturally serve the devil, who is a severe master—who only torments his servants

for their services. It is the "yoke" of obedience to God as a Father in Christ, such as a dutiful child gives to a kind earthly parent. In a word, it is an obligation to serve Christ as a king, all the days of our life upon earth, with the hope of enjoying happiness in heaven through his obedience, death and intercession.

The *taking of this yoke* is believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and putting ourselves under him as a MASTER and a KING. It is submitting ourselves to him to be saved by his atonement and grace, and becoming his servants and subjects. It is a cheerful taking his commands as the unerring guide of our conduct, and following his example of love and patience, humility, self-denial and suffering, so far as it can be imitated by us. In a word, as says the apostle, that "same mind must be in us which was also in Christ Jesus; 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 became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Such are some things included in the nature of this "yoke."

We are briefly to notice,

II. The character of "the yoke," and of "the burden" of Christ. It is "*easy*," and his burden is "*light*."

We remark,

1. It is an easy yoke, because Christ carried this yoke himself. Being a Son, he learned obedience by the things that he suffered. In his incarnation, he was "made under the law to redeem them that are under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons." In his life of poverty and reproach, persecution and want, he obeyed the law and carried this yoke when it was heaviest and most galling. Nay, he bore it even to death: for he "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Now, having done so, he has made the yoke "easy" to those who carry it after him. For those who submit to the law of God in Christ, will find it fulfilled in its precept and penalty, and they are not required to obey it in order to obtain life: for Jesus has already procured life for them. But they are required to carry his yoke, or to obey the law of God as their rule, out of love to the lawgiver; as a Father, and not as a judge. If they had to carry their yoke, or to obey the law in order to obtain life by it, it would prove to be as fruitless and as laborious a task, as the imaginary punishment of the heathen, in

which an individual, after death, was condemned, for certain crimes, to roll a large round stone to the top of a hill; and no sooner had he come near the top, than the stone again returned to the bottom. So the sinner, in obeying the law, might labor at it, but he would only increase instead of lessening his labor. How should we rejoice that Christ has made the "yoke easy" by his own obedience.

2. It is easy because it *is lined with love*. Those who willingly take this yoke, wear it in the exercise of love, and with a willing mind; and this makes it feel more easy. When an animal does not take a yoke willingly, or labor willingly under it, it frets and worries itself much more than when it takes it patiently, without constraint. So those who take the yoke of Christ upon them with their own consent, and out of love to him as their Master, will find his yoke more easy, and they will esteem it easier than any they have ever borne. For when an individual obeys the laws of God in Christ, out of love to its Author, his obligations, although they are really no less than when out of Christ, yet are much easier; because it is agreeable to the will of the child of God to do so, just as it is easier for a child to render obedience to a Master or parent whom he loves, than to one whom he hates.

3. The "yoke" of Christ is easy *when compared with other yokes*. It is much easier than the heavy yoke of *the ceremonial law*, which the Jews had to carry under the former economy of the covenant of grace. Their obedience to that law was far more laborious—although they esteemed it light,—than the yoke of Christ. For Christ, by his death has abolished this law and all its ceremonies.

It is much easier and more profitable to carry the yoke of Christ, and far more honorable; than to wear the yoke of Satan, which is a galling yoke. Christ is a merciful and kind master to serve, and has a fellow-feeling for those who serve him. But Satan is a cruel taskmaster, who imposes the greatest tasks upon his servants without any sympathy; nay, like the taskmasters of Egypt, if they should complain he would say, "Ye are idle, ye are idle." Those who are under the yoke of Christ will be rewarded by him; but the servants of Satan will be only taunted and tortured by him. Christ is an honorable master; for he is the Son of God, the Lord from heaven. Satan is a fallen and degraded spirit, and the prince of hell, whose kingdom is darkness and rebellion.

It is easier to wear the yoke of Christ than the yoke of the



world. While an individual may serve the world, and follow its pleasures, riches and customs all their life, yet it gives nothing that can satisfy the soul at the hour of death. But they who wear the yoke of Christ and serve him, have a competent portion of the things of this life given to them, and the promise of eternal life, on which their soul can rest in the hour of death.

Under this head we may also notice the nature and character of the burden of Christ, which he imposes upon his followers.

1. What is this burden, and why is it called light? The burden which the followers of Christ have to bear is affliction, in whatever form it may come; whether it be affliction in our body, our mind, or relations, or in our estate, or by the temptations of Satan and the world, or in any way in which affliction comes to the people of God. Christ informs us that it is through much tribulation that we are to enter the kingdom of heaven. This burden all the disciples of Jesus may expect to bear. None of them have been free from tribulation of some kind, and those who take the yoke of Christ may make their calculation to bear this burden in some way. For they that will live godly in Christ Jesus, will suffer persecution from Satan or the world, or frequently from both at the same time.

2. But then, an encouragement to bear these afflictions patiently is held out to us in the text—this burden is said to be “light.” Although the burden itself “is not joyous, but grievous, yet it is calculated to work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” It is sometimes heavy when considered in itself; yet the grace and strength which is given to support us under it, makes it “light.” Hence Moses esteemed the afflictions and reproaches of God’s people, greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; and certainly the burden was considered light, or he would not have put this estimate upon it. Paul considered the burden of Christ to be light, although he endured “a great fight of afflictions”—“in cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment”—“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;”—and by the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, which buffeted him. Yet under all the weight of his burden, he had strength given which

caused him to esteem it "light." As he says, 2 Cor. 4: 8, 9, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

But, finally, on this head: the encouragements which are held forth in the promises of God's word, are calculated to make this yoke easy and this burden light. God has wisely and graciously given promises to suit his people under all their various afflictions. His general promise is, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Another is, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, for I am thy Savior." Another consolatory thought is, in all the afflictions of his people Jesus is afflicted, or sympathizes with them. In a word, the promise of eternal life and the expectation of its enjoyment after death, is every way calculated to encourage the people of God under their burdens. Hence said Paul, "in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began,"—"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, which God, the righteous judge, will give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them also, who love his appearing."

These, and many such considerations, support the followers of Christ under their burdens, and cause them rather to glory in their tribulations; knowing that tribulation worketh patience and patience experience, and experience hope." And for this cause they faint not: for though the outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

We direct your attention to the third thing proposed, viz:

III. The object which is here proposed to those who take the yoke of Christ:—"learn of me."

Should not the language of our hearts be, like that of the apostle, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

1. Those who take the yoke of Christ, or obey the Gospel of

Christ, should calculate to learn from him by precept, as a great teacher, sent from God to instruct mankind. In the wise counsels of eternity, God has been pleased to appoint him as a prophet to reveal his will. After the fall of man he commenced the work of his office: first by voices, dreams, visions, and signs; and secondly, by men appointed and set apart by himself for the purpose, who were called prophets. Thus he performed the duties of this important office, before he assumed our nature. In the days of his flesh he taught men personally, and by the seventy disciples whom he sent forth with power to instruct, to heal, and to cast out devils, and to do wonderful works. After his ascension unto glory, he performed this duty by apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Since the close of revelation, he instructs men by the ministry of reconciliation, and the written word. Now what does this Teacher require us to learn from him? The whole word of God, in general, and the special testimony which God has given concerning him in particular. By his word and Spirit he teaches the way of salvation and the means of obtaining it:—this we must learn from him. He teaches what God is in himself, and what he is to man. He give us just notions of the being of God and his perfections; and of the worship due to him, as well as the mode of its performance. He gives us instruction with regard to the purposes of God, and his holy commands; and teaches us our accountability to God for the discharge of our duty, or for the commission of sin. He teaches us to love and fear God as our God, and to glorify him as the chief end of our creation. We learn from this teacher that he is the Savior of sinners, and that there is no other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved; and that there is redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. He informs us that to believe on him is the only way to be saved: “For he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” We are taught by him that we are to be washed and sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God. In a word, we are informed by him that there is a world of glory to be enjoyed; and that those who wear his yoke with cheerfulness and submission shall be its glorious inhabitants. All this and much more may we learn from this heavenly Teacher, and surely it is worth while to pay attention to his instruction.

2. We have here a very necessary qualification of this Teacher: and it is an example to all others who teach in his name, as well as to all his followers:—"I am meek and lowly in heart." It is a characteristic of a good teacher that he be *gentle* toward his scholars; for if he be too harsh and stern in his manners he cannot gain their affections. Although it be necessary to maintain dignity among pupils, and exercise authority when called for; yet this had better be done with meekness and gentleness. This is better calculated to enforce authority and instruction, than severity or harshness. This, then, is a qualification of this divine Teacher, who showed meekness toward all men. Even when they reviled him to his face, he instructed with all gentleness and love. This trait also, well becomes those who profess to be his servants in the instruction of mankind. Hence we have the exhortation of Paul to Timothy: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive: but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive by him at his will." Besides, those who take the yoke of Christ must learn, by his example, to be meek toward their fellow-men: for to such he has given the precious promise, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth."

3. Another qualification in a teacher is, he should be humble and condescending to his scholars who are dependent upon him for instruction: and this trait of character is here given to Jesus:—*he* is "lowly in heart." Jesus was an extraordinary example of humility, not only in the fact of his assuming our nature, but also during his life. "Being in the form of God he 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 condescension and humility! The equal of the Father assumed our nature and became a servant. Nay, he was in some instances a servant of servants, for he washed his disciples' feet as a token of humility, and they were his servants; and he is called the servant of God: "Behold my servant," says Jehovah, "whom I uphold, my elect in whom my soul delighteth." So great was his humility that

he called his disciples brethren, although he was their Lord, and Master, and Redeemer. Yea, he condescended to meet objections which they presented, as well as those offered by others; and when his disciples did not comprehend his parables, and asked him for their meaning, he gave them a particular explanation; and in all things showed himself a pattern of condescension to the ignorant, and of readiness to impart instruction. In all his conduct he was lowly in heart, and left behind him an example of humility, both to his ministers and all his followers. Not only did he enjoin meekness and humility in his public and private instructions, but he did so by a shining example. In this, as in all other parts of his conduct, he exemplified the force of the exhortation, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Let us briefly consider,

IV. The nature of the motive which is here presented: "And ye shall find rest unto your souls."

There are several things embraced in this rest, to which it is proper we should direct your attention.

1. It is a rest from "*the deeds of the law*:" for "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth. In his obedience and death he fulfilled all the righteousness of the law which was required for the justification of the sinner; and those who take his yoke, embrace him by faith and obey his Gospel, shall be saved the enormous task which they undertake—of working out salvation by the deeds of the law—and which they never can accomplish. But Christ is the end of the law: that is, the law terminates in him, "for righteousness to every one that believeth;" or, in other words, "They are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

2. This rest is a freedom from the *fear of condemnation by the law*. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." In him it is, at the same time, a rest from the bondage of the law. For as no debtor can be kept in bondage after he has paid his debt, so they who are under the yoke of Christ have paid the debt of obedience which the law demanded in order to salvation; and therefore they are discharged from the bondage of the law, and enjoying the liberty wherewith Christ maketh them free. They shall be free: for whom the Son maketh free they shall be free indeed.

3. This rest is, in a measure, freedom from *over-anxious care for the things of this world*. While the believer is on earth he must necessarily have some care for the things of this life: for he must be "diligent in business," as well as "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;" and "he that does not provide for his own, and especially those of his own household, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." But there is an anxiety for the world which excludes all serious thoughts about eternity, and occupies a chief place in the heart. Now, from this anxious state of mind after the world, this is a rest. For those who are true followers of Christ are most anxious to "lay up treasure in heaven, where moth and rust doth not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." They are most desirous of the incorruptible and undefiled inheritance, which fadeth not away, but is reserved in heaven for them, when they have finished their period of trial upon earth.

4. Besides many other things which are included in this motive, it embraces *a rest from the trials of earth, and an eternal sabbath of enjoyment in heaven*. While we are here upon earth, none, either believers or unbelievers, are entirely exempt from trouble. But the follower of Christ has trouble of mind of which the world knows nothing. While others are not concerned about neglect of duty, a failure in this respect is a cause of sorrow to him. While many are not concerned about the corruption of their nature, this is his constant burden. While many are not harassed with temptations, or if they are it is no trouble to them, this is a fruitful source of grief to him. While many know nothing of, and care nothing for the hidings of God's countenance, this is a bitter grief to him; as when a father, for its faults, thrusts away a child, and will not for a while smile upon it, it greatly vexes its heart, until it gets a glimpse of favor in his countenance.

Besides these, there are many trials and troubles to which the Christian is subject; but this is a *final rest* from them all. Satan can no longer tempt; the world no longer frown and reproach; nor can corrupt nature, in its hundred ways, disturb the peace of the soul, when this rest is fully enjoyed in heaven. "There shall be no more sorrow nor sighing, for God shall wipe all tears from the eyes."

In concluding our remarks on this subject, we would say,

1. To you, dear friends, who have taken the yoke of Christ, and who are taught by him, this subject affords matter for joy and  
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thanksgiving. Although the yoke is large, or, in other words, the duties of the Christian are many, yet do you not know, from sweet experience, that it is easy, because of the love you bear to him who requires these things at your hand? If this be not the case, you have not taken Christ's yoke upon you in a proper manner; for it is his own language, and he cannot testify a falsehood, that his yoke is "easy." Is it not so, that his burden, although great in itself, is light—not only when compared with other burdens, but because of the support which you receive to bear it? If you consider that this burden requires trials which you do not like to bear, or if you would wish to shun this burden on account of its weight, it is to be feared that you do not carry *Christ's burden*, but one of your own making; for Christ's burden is "light."

But above all, be thankful and rejoice, not only that you have experienced this rest in part, (if this be so,) but also at the delightful prospect of that rest which remains for the people of God, in another world. "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven,"—great is that life and immortality which is brought to light by the Gospel.

2. Unto you, dear friends, who have not taken the yoke of Christ, is the language of the text directed, "Take upon you my yoke, for it is easy." If you do not carry the yoke of Christ—if you have not embraced him as your Savior, and submitted yourselves to his law—if you are not endeavoring to learn of him by his word, and seeking to be taught by his Spirit, you must be under the yoke of Satan, and are the subjects of his kingdom: and if you so continue you receive his reward.

Oh that you would be wise, that you would consider these things before it is too late. Oh, take the yoke of Christ, "and you shall find rest unto your souls." Jesus says you shall find rest, and his word is good. It has never failed in other cases, and there is no danger that it will in the present. There is no possibility of obtaining rest in any other way. In vain shall we seek it from any other source. Therefore, hear him speak, and obey the invitation: "Take upon you my yoke, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

## S E R M O N V .

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### THE FOUNDATION AND SECURITY OF THE CHURCH.

BY REV. JOHN MACDILL,

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“And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” *Matthew 16: 18.*

IN this chapter, commencing at the 13th verse, is recorded an inquiry which Jesus made of his disciples, respecting the opinion which men entertained concerning him,—“Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?” They told him that opinions were various, some supposing him to be John the Baptist, some Elias, and others that he was Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Having drawn their attention to the subject, he asks for their own opinion—“But who say ye that I am?” Peter answered for them, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”—an opinion different from that entertained by any of the others: shewing how differently the same things affect persons in different circumstances. Jesus said to Peter, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.”

Others had seen the same works that Peter had seen, yet they thought that he was John the Baptist, or one of the prophets. But Peter, better instructed by the Father, and led to consider the things that would take place when Messiah would come, saw that he was the person. Jesus therefore pronounces him blessed, and adds: “And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” In this verse there are *three* things worthy of attention.

I. Who is the builder of the Church—“*I will build my church.*”



II. The foundation on which the Church is built—"This rock."

III. The safety of the Church—"The *gates of hell shall not prevail* against it."

We proceed to inquire,

I. Who is the builder of the Church. We are in the habit of using the word Church in two ways which are somewhat different, and the sense is determined by the qualifying word connected with it—thus, the visible Church and the invisible Church. By the *visible* Church we mean, "all those throughout the world, who profess the true religion, together with their children." By the *invisible* Church we mean, "the whole number of the elect who have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof." Now it may be of some use to determine to which of these we must refer what Christ says in the text.

It appears to apply fully to the *invisible* Church, for this reason: that to it belong all who will be saved—all who shall be brought together and admitted into the New Jerusalem. It is true of the other—the *visible* Church—in all times and places,—in proportion as its members belong to the Church invisible;—and what is said may be considered as said of it, under such restrictions. Then, who is the builder of the Church?

We may find an answer to this question in three ways. First, By considering the history of the Church as given in the Scriptures. Second, From the design of the Church; and third, From express declarations of Scripture. When God appeared to Abraham, and made the promise to him to be a God to him and his seed after him, was the time when he first began to organize his Church as a distinct society. His dealings with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—his care over the seed of Jacob, in sending Joseph before them into Egypt, to provide sustenance for them—his care over them while in Egypt, while in the furnace of affliction—the miracles that he wrought—the plagues which he sent upon the Egyptians, their oppressors, while he claimed a peculiar relation to them, calling them "my people, Israel,"—prove that it is God who commences and carries on the work of erecting his Church. God's further treatment of this people—his care of them after they left Egypt—at the Red Sea, Mount Sinai, in the wilderness forty years—in defending them, feeding them with bread from heaven, and giving them drink from the rock by a miracle, and causing them to

drink of "that spiritual rock that followed them, which rock was Christ"—all go to prove, beyond a doubt, that the Church is the work of God. The whole history of God's dealings with this "peculiar people" in the capacity of a Church, giving them his laws, ordinances, and religious rites—making them for the time present, the depository of his word, "the pillar and ground of the truth"—and all his treatment of them as long as they continued to exist as a Church, show that he was the founder, the builder, and protector of this people as a Church.

Now, if this Church was a type of the Christian Church—or, rather, if it was the same Church, under a different dispensation: if it was the "good olive-tree" into which, after that the "natural branches," the Jews, were broken off, the "wild olive" branches, the Gentiles, were ingrafted, and so constituted the Christian dispensation, or the Christian Church, it partakes of the "root and fatness of the olive," which are, all the blessings of which the others partook, and with the others, of necessity, the same attention and care from the hand of God. Of course, then, the Church is the building of God. He planned it—he laid the foundation—he carries it on, and will carry it on to perfection.

2. We come now to consider the design of the Church, that we may thence perceive who is the builder of the Church. The design of the Church and the ordinances which are instituted in it, is the "edifying of the body of Christ." That is, the gathering into one body or assembly all the elect of God who are scattered abroad throughout the world, by means which unite them together in smaller or greater assemblies or bodies, in the different parts of the world in which their lot is cast. In these assemblies or Churches, the means used are the word and ordinances of God; the end aimed at, as conducive to the great end of bringing them to salvation, is that of bringing them to "live soberly, righteously, and godly." Now we find from the Scriptures, concerning man, that "the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are only evil continually," "from his youth." That "the carnal mind is enmity against God"—"is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be." Man is, by nature, a corrupt, depraved being, and it is contrary to his inclination to be under the restraints which the law of God, which is holy, just and good, imposes. He is carnal, sold under sin, and in sin he finds his delight. He is eager in the pursuit of pleasures

though they may be criminal; and if at any time, through necessity, he is cut off from an opportunity of engaging in them, his happiness is gone. He rushes through all restraints that can be thrown around him. Now, how shall this person be brought to live soberly, righteously, and godly? Let the beauties of virtue and the deformities of vice be painted to him in the most glowing colors;—he may perhaps acknowledge the propriety of the description, or it may be that he cannot be at all brought to acknowledge that it is correct. Be that as it may, let him be ever so firmly persuaded that he is not what he should be, that he does not do what he ought to do, still there is no amendment. The temptation is no sooner presented, than he is again involved in guilt. All the moral lessons of philosophers—all the fabulous representations of the heathen respecting the future bliss of the virtuous, and the future wretchedness of the immoral and profane; failed in making any alteration, of a lasting kind, upon mankind. The highest pitch of excellence to which any of them could arrive, in the words of one of themselves, is, “I see and *approve* the better, but *follow* the worse.” “The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be.” But it is not only true that the speculations of the heathen could never reach the human heart, in such a way as to produce a change for the better; but it is also true that, though God condescended to meet with many of his servants of old, and converse with them face to face, and deliver to them instructions by which men should govern their lives; they disregarded these. Notwithstanding all his care over them, and gracious deliverances which God wrought for the Israelites, both before and after their settlement in the land of Canaan, they soon forgot their obligation and rebelled against him. Though at Sinai he delivered to them a “fiery law,” under circumstances calculated to inspire them with reverence and awe of him, they soon “forgot God” and transgressed his law. Though he sent prophets to warn them of their duty and their danger, still they persisted in their rebellion—the great mass of them were not moved by all his dealings with them, whether in intreating them to return, in warning them of danger, in threatening them with judgments, and actually inflicting them by pestilence, famine, war, captivity, or destruction of the city and nation, and dispersion of the remnant among all nations, to be a by-word and a reproach; all these failed, and they

went on in their own way, in persevering rebellion against God. Nor is this all; since the introduction of the Gospel dispensation—since the canon of revelation has been completed and the ordinance of the ministry of the word appointed—though the word was preached by the inspired apostles, with all plainness, point and power, so that a hardened Felix trembled before it, yet it failed with many to produce any good effect; many were enraged at the preachers, who brought it home to their consciences so forcibly that conviction flashed upon them, and resolved upon taking revenge for the interruption of their quiet and security, by abusing those who declared it; and others, turning it to ridicule, mocked and reproached the apostles as drunkards. When the offer of salvation through him whom they had crucified was made to the Jews, it was to them a “stumbling-block.” When it was made to the Greeks or any other of the Gentiles, it was to them “foolishness.” What! “shall we be saved by him that was crucified!” was the reply. Crucifixion was a mode of punishing the lowest and vilest malefactors. To trust in one who had been crucified, was too humiliating for their pride to endure. To be saved by such a low person would be intolerable in their estimation. So it has been from that day to this. All the threatenings of the law, all the invitations of the Gospel, no matter how faithfully set forth, have failed to wean the heart of man from sin and turn it to God, to be wholly for him, and to be obedient to his law. This has been true of the great body of mankind in all ages of the world. Neither their own natural inclinations or the moral lessons of philosophers; their ideas of future rewards and punishments, whether correct or only fabulous; the warnings given by God himself in various ways during the Old Testament dispensation, and under the New; the preaching of the apostles and ministers of the Gospel, have availed to turn them from sin to holiness, or to cause them to connect themselves in any way with the Church of God. Still God has had a Church on earth, he now has one, and his word is pledged that he will still have one in which his elect shall be edified and nourished up until they become meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light—till they are prepared for enjoying that inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away—which is reserved in heaven for them.”

How then have these things been accomplished hitherto, and

how will they be carried on? It is by the *power of God*—he has, by his spirit, given efficacy to the means of his own appointment—for they are only *means* which he uses, and the effect is wholly of him—it cannot be otherwise.

3. But here we may bring in the positive declarations of Scripture, in confirmation of this fact.

“A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted unto the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a generation that shall be born, that *he* hath done this.”

“When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.”—Ps. 102: 16.

In the third chapter, third verse, of the epistle to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul uses this language concerning Christ: “For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant—but Christ as a Son over his own house.” In this he states that “Moses was faithful in all his house”—now, what house was this in which he was faithful? Certainly the Jewish Church. But Christ was worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house itself. The force of the reasoning plainly is this: Moses was only as a servant in the Church, but Christ built this Church, and therefore is worthy of more glory than he who is only a servant, having the care of the house. It was Christ, then, that built the Jewish Church, and he builds the Church still. “He that built all things is God.” Here he shows that Christ is truly God, which also may be shown by comparing the text with the third verse of the ninth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians: “On this rock *I* will build *my* Church.” “Ye are God’s husbandry; ye are *God’s* building.” These words show both who it is that builds the Church, and proves that Christ is God. Abraham forsook his country and sojourned in a strange land because he looked for a “city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” We are told, that “Paul may plant and Apollos water; but it is God that giveth the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.” “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”

Again, in the account of the additions which were made to the primitive Church, we are told that the Lord made these additions. "The *Lord* added to the Church daily such as should be saved." In short, throughout the Scriptures we find again and again references to this subject, in all of which it is represented as the work of God. Thus we see that the *history* of the Church, as far as it is given in the Scriptures, reveals that the building of the Church is the work of God. The design of the Church shows that it must be the work of God; and the Scriptures themselves declare that it is the work of God—that he, and none else, is the *builder* of the Church.

II. We come now to consider, "The foundation on which the Church is built."

Here we touch upon a disputed point. It is said that Christ declares that Peter is the rock on which the Christian Church is built. Christ said, "Thou art Peter; and on this rock I will build my Church." The authority for this interpretation is drawn from the fact, that the word (*Petros*) Peter, signifies *a stone*. But it may be observed that the word translated *rock* (*Petra*), is different from the word Peter, (*Petros*)—the former signifying, as it is translated, "*a rock*," but the word Peter (*Petros*) only "*a stone*," or a *small part, or fragment* of a rock. By which we are to understand that there is a difference between Peter and the "rock" on which the Church is built; proportionate, at least, to the difference between a small stone or fragment of a rock and the rock itself. By refusing to admit Peter to be the foundation on which the Church stands, it is by no means intended to rob him of any honor which the words of our Lord bestowed upon him. Christ pronounced him "blessed," and so he was; he said to him "thou art Peter." He had named him "Cephas," which signifies a stone—the same which Peter means—and it is probable that it was intended to express his firmness, but no more; and from Peter, or Cephas,—"*a stone*"—he turns the attention of his disciples, Peter included, to that "*rock*" on which the Church rests—that foundation of greater firmness laid of old in Zion—other than which cannot be laid—even Jesus Christ. This seems to be sufficient to set aside the idea that Peter is Christ's "vicar on earth."

Respecting this building this same Peter speaks afterward in his first epistle, second chapter, commencing with the fourth verse,—  
"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed, indeed, of

men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scriptures, Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded." These things are not spoken as if he considered himself the rock of the Church; but "the Lord" is the corner-stone of which he speaks.

The persons addressed are also spoken of as "lively stones," composing part of that building of which he is the "chief corner-stone." This may lead us a little into the meaning of Christ's words to Peter: "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock will I build my Church." That is, "thou art a stone." He was a stone in the same sense with those whom Peter calls "lively stones"—He was ready for use—he had made a good profession. Here is a stone ready; but where is the *foundation* on which the building is to be raised? Christ answers: On *this rock* I will build my Church. This seems to be the most natural and correct construction that can be put upon the passage; for truly the other seems to be a forced construction.

But more than this, we may examine the whole history of Jesus and his disciples, and we cannot find that Peter was at any time singled out and addressed in a manner peculiar from the rest. Do the advocates of the doctrine we oppose, claim that he is *the chief shepherd on earth*, and cite as proof, where Christ addressed him, "Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou me?" and after repeatedly asking and being answered affirmatively, said to him, "Feed my lambs"—"feed my sheep"? It would appear that our Savior intended these words to be understood rather as a reproof for former back-sliding, and denial of himself, than exaltation of Peter. It implied that he who had denied him might be supposed to be destitute of love for him; and that he who had loved Christ so little as to deny him, might, when the master was gone, love the flock of Christ so little as to neglect the sheep or the lambs. But it not only appears to be intended as a reproof, but as an admonition: as though the Savior, knowing Peter's rash, impulsive, self-confident nature, had said, "Mistrust yourself—remember the past: the love that you, repentant, now feel toward me, manifest in care for my sheep and my lambs." But supposing that we are mistaken in the above

interpretation; it cannot be shown that this charge to him contains or implies more than is contained in the charge to all the apostles; and all who have the care of souls. One, similar to this to Peter, is addressed by the apostle Paul to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, and it cannot be shown but that the one is as important and implies as much authority as the other: it is this, "Take heed, therefore, 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."

The epistles of Peter give no evidence that he claimed a higher rank than the rest—neither does the account of the Synod at Jerusalem: but evidence quite the contrary. In this same chapter, in the 23d verse, we do not find Christ addressing him as the *rock* of the Church, or his own "vicar on earth." The address is this: "Get thee behind me, Satan—or adversary—thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

We have yet to inquire, what is meant by the rock on which Christ builds his Church? or, what is the foundation on which the Church is built? "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is, *Jesus Christ*." Christ, then, is the foundation of the Church: or, rather, it appears that he had reference to the answer given by Peter—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" when he said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church." Upon the substance of thy confession the Church is founded. The doctrine contained in it lies at the root of the Christian religion. Paul sums up the whole of his preaching in these words, We preach "*Christ crucified*." This contains the substance of the Gospel—it is a summary of it. The confession of Peter amounts to the same thing. By acknowledging him as the Messiah, he acknowledged him as the person to whom the prophecies going before applied; as having come to perform the works which they foretold should be fulfilled by that person; a history of whom, by way of prediction, we find in the 53d chapter of Isaiah, the burden of which consists in his "magnifying the law and making it honorable,"—by his obedience and sufferings,—by his being wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our in-



iquities,—the chastisement of our peace being laid upon him, and we being healed by his stripes. In short, the doctrine held forth is none other than the doctrine of substitution—Christ substituted for the Church. This is the rock of the Church—this is that upon which it has stood, now stands, and will forever stand—this is the substance of Peter's confession and Paul's preaching. This is the doctrine contained in the first promise—that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. This is the doctrine by the belief in which, Abel was enabled to offer to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain—this is the doctrine which Noah, Abraham, and all others of the ancient patriarchs believed, and owing to the belief of which they engaged in offering up sacrifices to God—on this doctrine rested the whole of the law of the Israelites in sprinkling the blood of the paschal lamb, and in attending to all the ordinances respecting sacrifices whether stated or occasional; it was this that taught them to believe that “without shedding of blood there is no remission,” and this, under the new dispensation, since the substance has come, of which all these were shadows, Christ, as suffering “the just for the unjust,” is the foundation of the Christian's hope. Let this be *false*, then vain are all the faith and hopes of all the fathers and worthies under the old dispensation. Let this be false, then was the preaching of all the apostles and ministers of the Gospel, and their faith and that of all who have believed and have died in full hopes of a blessed immortality, *vain*. If this be false, they are yet in their sins, and all their toils and labor vain, and worse than vain. Let this be false, then must the songs of the redeemed in heaven, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing,”—thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation,” be hushed forever. Nay, more; if this doctrine is not true, then has Christ suffered and done all in vain: for how shall he “see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied,” and justify many by his knowledge, if this doctrine is not true? Strike this foundation from the Church, and the whole structure sinks at once and becomes a confused mass without design or use. This, then, as the substance of the confession of Peter, is the rock on which the Church is built—this is the foundation of the whole Christian system—the foundation of the whole plan of saving sinners, which is the design of God in organizing the Church.

### III. We come, in the next place, to consider the *security of the Church*.

It will not be denied by any, who seriously consider the matter, that the end for which the Church was established is a desirable one; whether they have any concern for the glory of God or not, and whether it is a matter of interest to them that godliness and morality should be promoted or not: if they carefully consider it they will see that the Church has been of vast service to society at large, in making men good and peaceable citizens, relieving the necessities of mankind and ameliorating their condition in various ways. This, and the prospects of happiness hereafter, which it holds out to men, are things which will make it a matter of interest to many to know whether it shall continue to exist, and succeed in accomplishing that which it designs, or not. To the Christian, not only the present state of the Church, but the future, so far as it can be known, is a matter of the deepest concern. This is what now claims our attention.

One source of encouragement to the Church is the threatenings of God against its enemies. In the second Psalm we find these words: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed, (his Christ,) saying, Let us break their hands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."—"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise, now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Then, cursed is every one that does not trust in him. He that is not "for him is against him," and not only against him, but his Church, and all that belongs to him,— "Thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone, thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked." "Though they break in pieces his people and afflict his heritage," saying, "The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it," yet, "He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off." "Behold,

I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them." Behold they shall gather together, but not by me, whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake,—I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." It is "a righteous thing for God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble" his people; for those who hate them, hate him, and the reproaches which fall upon his people, as such, are cast at him. And in the day of judgment, they are charged with having done to him what they did to them; or with having neglected him in things in which they neglected them: for they are united to him, and are members of his body, and "living stones" in that same building in which he is the chief corner-stone; so that they, as a Church, are safe from all that the malice of men can design against them. They shall be enabled to overcome all their enemies.

But they are safe, not only from the malice of men, but also from that of Satan, who, "as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour." Though all men should combine against the Church, they can effect nothing—and though associated with them, Satan, with all his fallen train, should come in to bear down all before him by an inundation of infidelity, impiety, and wickedness, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him; and call together his forces to oppose his progress, and "put him to flight." The "armies of the living God," though Satan may defy them, going forth in God's name and strength, shall return victorious. Clad in the armor of God, they shall be mighty in pulling down the strongholds of Satan. The contest between Christ and this "enemy" of his people, was once tried, and Satan was overcome. His head was bruised; and now when he attacks Christ's Church it will be safe. There will always be a place of safety found, even though floods of water should be sent forth to destroy it. To whatever artifice or stratagem resort may be had, it will be a vain resort: for even "the gates of hell shall not prevail against" the Church. Though these should be thrown open and evil spirits innumerable,

like locusts, should darken the air, they will be too weak to stand against Omnipotence—Christ “is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.” His understanding is infinite, so that he can frustrate all the counsels and machinations of hell:—for *gates* are sometimes used to denote *counsels*, because at the gates of cities was the place where consultations were sometimes held.

Zion need never fear, for God is able to save her, and he is willing to save her. He assures her that he will never forget her. He says, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.”

In addition to the assurance of being *safe* at all times, the Church has the promise of *vast accessions* to her numbers, not alone of *professed* Christians, but of those who are *really* Christians. Christ “shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; and shall justify many.” To him it is said, “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” “Men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.” “Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders: and kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet.” “Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. 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.” Men shall fear the Lord “from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun”—“the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth.” If we look at these promises of the enlargement and prosperity of the Church, and then consider the state of religion in the world at present, or what it has been in any past age, we shall find that these times are yet to come: that there will yet be a greater accession to the Church, both in numbers and piety. If we look over the world and mark those countries which are

called "Christian countries"—if, on examination, we find many of these, a short time ago, nay, even now without the Bible in their houses, and that of those who possess it but few are concerned about the contents of it—if we look at the whole number of professed Christians, and see what a "little flock" they are when compared with the whole population—and if we could go further and distinguish between *real* and only *nominal* Christians, it is believed that it would be found that, though the triumphs of the Gospel are still going forward, this age is very far from coming up to the descriptions referred to. When that time shall come in which Satan shall be bound for a season, and prohibited from deceiving the nations, then, if not before, the times here mentioned shall be realized.

Those who mourn for Zion have reason to take comfort to themselves: they give evidence that they love Zion, and they that love her shall prosper." Those who hate her have reason to tremble! Those who love the Church and mourn over her divisions and the errors which mar her purity, should not be discouraged, but, trusting in the promises of a time of enlargement and purity to come, they should go on to do with their might what their hands find to do. Though they may see iniquity abounding, it is their duty to oppose it, as far as they have it in their power; and whilst the enemies of truth are combining their forces against it and the Church, let the friends of truth, wherever they see a "banner displayed because of the truth," flock to it, and array themselves against the enemies of God and his Church. Though there are many things at the present time that ought to be deplored, and are deplored by those who are truly the friends of the Redeemer and his Church, there are others which ought to be subjects of gratitude and joy. In various ways the light of truth is beginning to be shed on lands which have "long sat in the region and shadow of death." The command of our Savior, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," is still considered as obligatory, and efforts are making to comply with it—many are now making exertions that the "earth may be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." And whatever the immediate effects may be, the "good seed" will have been sown in all places; so that, when the rains and dews of heaven shall descend; when God shall send a "time of refreshing from his presence," it will spring up and bring forth an abundant harvest. Amen.





*Rev. Mr. Davidson*

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OF THE

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## S E R M O N   V I .

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### THE SAVIOR'S GIFT—PERMANENT PEACE.

BY REV. JOHN HEMPHILL, D. D.

*Formerly Pastor of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Congregation of Hopewell and Connections, Chester District, South Carolina.*

"Peace 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." *John 14: 27.*

Dying words are peculiarly emphatic, and leave an extraordinary impression upon the persons addressed. But what are the dying words of the greatest or best of men when compared with these dying sayings of our glorious Redeemer. It is true there are different opinions with respect to the precise time in which the things recorded in this and the preceding chapter were transacted. It is generally taken for granted that these things took place at the Passover Supper, that same night in which our Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed. But some divines are persuaded that the things recorded in these two chapters were chiefly transacted when at the supper in Bethany, which was two days before the Passover, *Matt. 26: 7*, or at a more private supper on the night immediately before the night of the Passover, when it is supposed none but Christ and his disciples were present. The beginning of the 13th chapter they allege, is clearly in favor of this opinion, where the evangelist intimates that the things he was about to relate had taken place before the feast of the Passover. But what doubt soever there may be with regard to the precise time in which the things recorded in these two chapters were transacted, yet it is evident, and universally granted that these are among Christ's last lessons and farewell sayings to his disciples, and what he said then to the twelve he said unto the Church, to every individual who was then, or should afterward be entitled to the name of a disciple. Having loved his

own he loved them to the end, and so after having finished his public discourses, in which he suffered the contradiction of sinners against himself, he immediately entered into a private conference with his disciples for their consolation and instruction, being now about to depart from them. Christ knew how much his disciples were interested in him, how dear he was to them, and how deeply they would be affected with his departure from them, and so he applies himself and his discourse in a manner exactly suited to their circumstances; which may serve as a lesson to ministers to suit their discourses to the state and circumstances of their people. Christ was so set upon the happiness of his people that he seemed for a time to forget himself, even although he well knew that in a very short time he must enter upon such a scene of suffering as we need not pretend to describe. Yet notwithstanding this, he here discovers no apparent concern about himself. His bowels were so moved for his disciples, and his heart was so set upon doing the work for which he was sent, that he always, even unto the last, preferred his Father's business, that is, the glory of God, and his people's good, to his own comfort or ease.

At this remarkable period the disciples were in great distress, their hearts were filled with sorrow, and sorrows even greater than they expected were just at hand. But now Christ Jesus in an acceptable time interposes with suitable admonitions, directions and promises, for quieting and preventing their excessive grief—"Let not you heart be troubled" saith he, in the 1st verse of this 14th chapter, and then, to dispel and prevent their exorbitant fears and troubles of mind, he tells them how to act and what to expect.

The disciples, partly through disappointment of the earthly kingdom of which they had still dreamed, partly through ignorance of the necessity and design of Christ's death, and partly through tender affection to him, their dear Master, were filled with anxiety vexation and fear. Christ had been such a father, such a friend, such a teacher, and such a source of supply in all cases, that the disciples knew not how to do without him; they were ready to say, If he is taken from us what have we more? If they are bereft of him, they are bereft indeed: and this would have been an awful truth if Christ had left our world totally and finally; if he had left it not to return again, or if he had left it without any helper or source of supply in his absence, then his followers would have been

of all men most miserable, then they would have been orphans indeed. But our Lord tells his disciples that this is not the case; he will not leave them orphans. He let them know that he was about to leave them, in order to prepare them for that important hour. But saith he, "I will not leave you comfortless," (or orphans, as the word may be rendered,) verse 18th. He would come again to them, he would visit them in a variety of ways; and among other things he would send them the Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, verse 16th. The Spirit from the beginning had been engaged in ministering the blessings and comforts of the new covenant to all the heirs of promise. But after Christ's ascension his influences were to be more extraordinary and extensive—the disciples especially, were to be remarkably furnished suitably to their peculiar circumstances, and the extraordinary work in which they were to be engaged—and so they were on the day of Pentecost, when the appearance of cloven tongues of fire sat upon them, and "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."—Acts, 2: 3. As the promise of the Spirit was of the greatest importance, it being that upon the accomplishment of which the application and enjoyment of all the other promises depended, it is again repeated in the 26th verse, and then follows our text, "Peace 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."

To banish the inordinate troubles and fears of the disciples is the thing primarily designed throughout the whole of this chapter. The first verse begins with "Let not your heart be troubled," and this verse concludes with it. In the beginning of this verse we have a most powerful antidote against such fears and troubles, even the peace of Christ which is directly opposed to all such perturbations of mind, and is the best remedy against them. This is the legacy Christ left his disciples at his death, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." "*My* peace," because I alone purchase it, and by my Spirit I apply it—I, the great testator of the new covenant, leave my peace with you—I, the great administrator of that covenant, give this peace unto you. This peace comprehends all your hearts could desire, everything either profitable or comfortable for you, and this is sufficient reason for you to moderate your grief. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you"—this might be as a note of attention to the disciples, making them

take heed to these important words, "peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you;" or it might serve to prevent any mistake that might have arisen from the manner of expression. When Christ said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," it might have been understood as meaning no more than a common expression of friendship, being now about to depart from them. But here he implicitly tells his disciples that although he spoke to them in a manner something similar to that which had been long in use among friends, both at their meeting and parting, yet he designed more by it than merely a friendly wish or an expression of civility; and therefore he saith, "not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The world may often use the words "peace be unto you" as a mere formality, but this is not the sense in which I am to be understood—you shall have, in reality all that is included in the words when taken in their most unlimited sense, and this infinitely more than the wishes of men, however ingenious, or than the enjoyments of the whole world can afford. The world with all its fulness cannot give true peace of mind; this is mine to give, and this peace I leave with you. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." We are not to suppose that our Lord was here teaching or tying up the disciples to that stoical apathy which would have men to be altogether senseless or unconcerned about their condition. Such a doctrine he never taught, either by precept or example. To be troubled both for sin and misery, whether it be our own or that of others, is a duty taught in Scripture, but it becomes sinful when it is immoderate, and when it is not duly proportioned, and it is the disciples' mistaken and immoderate fears that our Lord would have prohibited. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid"—he had given them many great and precious promises, and had made over his peace unto them, therefore they ought not to grieve as those who have no hope.

Our troubles from evils felt, and our fears from evils expected, should be all within proper bounds—they should never be such as would make us despair of help from God, nor neglect the use of such means as may be lawful and proper in our circumstances—whenever our fears and troubles exceed these bounds they are sinful.

Omitting any farther exposition of the words, the doctrine I deduce from the text and design to illustrate is this:

The peace of Christ is the best remedy against all the inordinate troubles and fears of the world. To illustrate and prove this proposition we will show,

I. What this peace is.

II. How Christ and the world differ in giving peace,—“not as the world giveth, give I unto you.”

I. We are to show what the peace of Christ is, or, what is included in that peace which Christ hath purchased, and in due time confers upon all the elect of God.

This peace consists of two parts, namely, external and internal peace; or peace with God and the creatures, and peace with ourselves.

Christ's peace includes peace with God. If this were not the case, it could afford little consolation to the distressed soul. Peace with God is a special part of that peace which Christ has procured for the saints. It is the foundation of all true and permanent peace. They who have peace with God can never be without real peace, although they may not always have the sense of it; and they who have not peace with God can never enjoy real peace, whatever vain conceits they may have about it.

For seeing God is absolute sovereign of the universe, possessed of almighty power, and having all things subject unto him, it would be utterly vain and foolish to expect peace from any quarter while God is our enemy. Such an expectation must be the fruit of gross ignorance—it would be expecting that from the creature which it hath not to give. For no creature can give either peace or trouble, only in so far as God pleaseth. “Is there evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it?” God directs, restrains and overrules all things for the accomplishment of his own good pleasure. If, then, there be anything real in Christ's peace, anything truly comfortable, anything distinguishing it from the peace of the world, it must consist in peace with God and what results from it. God was the party offended, to him alone vengeance belongs, and therefore with him peace must be made before any of our rebellious race can enjoy it. But this is our consolation, that peace is made with God—Christ hath made peace with God for us by the blood of his cross—he thus appeased God's wrath that burned against us, and engaged his favor in our behalf.

When God made man he was well pleased with him; peace was

then man's natural, his creature right. For man being entirely the workmanship of God himself, who is infinitely perfect and whose works are all perfect in their kind, he could not be the object of God's dislike. God made all things very good, and so, very pleasing unto himself. Besides, as a further evidence of God's friendship for man and of his peaceful disposition he entered into certain articles of peace with him, which is commonly called the covenant of works. If this covenant had been kept, it would have insured our peace forever. But alas, it was little more than ratified when it was violated. We, in the person of our representative, soon broke these articles, and cast all these cords behind us, and entered into alliance with Satan, God's first and greatest enemy, upon which a most inveterate war commenced. God arrayed himself in vengeance, and man hardened himself in wickedness. The heart of man was set in him to do evil, so that nothing but deeds of hostility could be expected—man would sin, and God must punish. For God being infinitely holy, just and true, as well as infinitely good and gracious, he could not suffer such wickedness to go unpunished, he must deny himself before he could let such workers of iniquity pass with impunity. Man was determined to hold out to the last against God; the thoughts of his heart were evil, only evil, and continually evil, so that there could be no peace between God and man until God was appeased and man's nature renewed. Thus by our perfidy we lost our peace, and we would never have recovered it if Christ Jesus our glorious Mediator had not interposed. He it was who restored peace unto Israel—all who enjoy true peace have it through his mediation alone. He, as our second Adam, a second representative, entered into new articles of peace with God for us, which is sometimes called the covenant of peace. In this covenant Christ engaged both to fulfil the precepts and endure the penalty of the first covenant upon which condition an eternal peace was to take place between God and his chosen people. This condition Christ perfectly fulfilled as is evident from his state of exaltation, therefore the promised peace is infallibly secured. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." Christ was chastised for our breach of the peace—he did, and suffered in our stead, what was infinitely sufficient for maintaining the honor of God and his law, and for supporting the dignity and energy of his moral government. This was the satisfaction that God

required, and when this was given, then he could say, although he had been angry his anger was turned away. By means of this satisfaction, God is reconciled to his chosen in Christ their head and representative, and is engaged by compact to reconcile them unto himself in due time. But how is this; may some say, is God reconciled to any before they are reconciled to him? To them we reply, although God is not actually or in the same sense reconciled to any individual before conversion, as afterward, yet he is reconciled to them, in a certain sense from eternity. He is not reconciled to them in their personal and individual capacity until they become actually members of Christ's body, being united to him by faith, but he is reconciled to all his elect in Christ, their representative from eternity. God was offended with us in Adam, our representative before we came into existence, but his displeasure took hold upon us in a different manner after we came into being—before this it only respected us in our representative, but now it is charged upon us in our own persons. In like manner that peace and friendship which God designs for his chosen extends no farther than their representative until their conversion, but after that it extends to their own persons. God, from all eternity, designed to be at peace with his elect—Christ purchased this peace for them, the Gospel offers it unto them, but they are never properly, actually, and in their own persons subjects of this peace until they be united to Christ by faith. This is that which gives them a right to actual friendship and fellowship with God. Before this they were still branches of the old stock, in a state of alienation from God, classed among the wicked to whom God saith, "there is no peace." But now they are engrafted into the true vine and accounted righteous in the sight of God,—now God can take pleasure and delight in them, embrace them with divine friendship and be at peace with them. Before this they were considered enemies, and treated as such; but now they are friends, and treated as friends.

Thus we have seen that God is reconciled—and also by what means and in what manner God and man come to be at peace with each other.

But besides this peace with God which believers have in and through Christ, they have also peace with the creatures. Whenever man broke his peace with God and became his enemy, then the whole creation marched out against him, as being a rebel



against their common Sovereign. Poor, wicked man was now entirely in an enemy's country, justly obnoxious to destruction from everything around him. The angels, who delighted in him while he delighted in God, now marched in front against him—the cherubim are immediately stationed in paradise to oppose him, and a frightful, flaming sword was brandished against him. Other creatures, both animate and inanimate, which had before been man's willing subjects and kind benefactors, were now his inveterate foes. The earth itself espouses the Lord's quarrel and fights against man with its thorns, thistles, and barrenness. But all this is from the Lord who created all things for himself and employs them as he pleaseth. Even men themselves were at variance with each other, hateful and hating one another. All this is the fruit of our perfidy with God. As soon as we forfeited our peace with him we forfeited our peace with his creatures, whose are all creatures, and in whose hand are all their ways. But how should our hearts exult and magnify the Lord, seeing by his grace we have it to say that when sin and its miserable effects abounded, grace and its happy effects did much more abound.

No sooner is peace restored between a man and his Maker, but hostility between him and the creature ceases. Those which God had before employed as instruments of death against him, he now employs as instruments of life and peace. Angels are no longer enemies but friends sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation; and it might shame us to hear how much more they are delighted with our peace than we ourselves are. These blessed spirits were so overcome with joy at the prospect, that they burst forth into rapturous praises when our glorious peacemaker was about to engage in the actual procurement and ratification of this peace: "Glory to God in the highest," say they, "peace on earth and good will toward men." Nor are the other creatures any longer pernicious—they are immediately employed in favor of those who have made peace with God. "In that day," saith the Lord, "will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground," even in the day in which he betroths his people unto himself. Hosea 2: 18.—"At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh; neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth. For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field; and the beasts

of the field shall be at peace with thee." Job 5: 22, 23.—Yea all things shall work together for good to them who are at peace with God. Romans, 8: 28. Even wicked men and devils are not excepted, all shall work together for good to them who are in a state of peace and friendship with God. The miseries and afflictions that pierce the wicked are so many arrows of indignation from the hand of an avenging God, but when afflictions are sent unto the righteous, they are only as necessary medicine seasonably applied by the hand of their skillful physician, who is also their tender friend and father, and who makes all things, even the most distressing, finally issue in their good and his own glory.

Thus all who are at peace with God have such peace with the creatures, even the most cruel and malicious of them, that they cannot do them a real injury, but are obliged to contribute to their profit—so that although the saints are not in a state of real friendship with such creatures, yet they are in a state of indemnity with them, and have advantage from them.

But what shall we say of that real peace, that sweet harmony and friendship which prevail among those persons who are at peace with God. While they were enemies to God they were enemies to each other, biting and devouring one another: Gal. 5: 15. But now their character and conduct are changed—love to God and man is their reigning principle—old things are done away and all things are become new. But we cannot now discourse of that harmony, unity, friendship, benefit and happiness which they who are at peace with God have in, by, and to each other.

Internal peace is the next thing included in Christ's peace, or that peace which Christ Jesus procured for and confers upon all the chosen of God. This internal peace, although but imperfectly known in this world, yet it is better known by many than can be expressed. An experienced and inspired apostle says it passeth all understanding. Phil. 4: 7. It was this peace that the disciples needed at Christ's departure and such peace he gives them. Their hearts were troubled and their minds agitated with perplexing fears, so that no peace could satisfy them or suit their case but what included peace of mind—without this they would have been still comfortless. But Christ tells them that he will not leave them comfortless; he would send the Comforter unto them, by whose

operation they should have much joy and peace of mind. Christ has not only procured external peace for his people; but he had also secured internal peace for them: he has made it over to them in his last will and by his Spirit confers it upon them in that measure which infinite wisdom has ordained. Now this internal peace, or which is the same thing, peace of conscience, is a fruit of our external peace, our peace with God, and is a principal part of the happiness which believers enjoy upon earth. It is a sweet and holy tranquility of soul proceeding from faith in God's favor and friendship, —from fellowship with him in his ordinances—and from conformity to his law.

1. Peace of conscience proceeds from faith, or a firm trust in the favor and friendship of God as reconciled in Christ. This is the way in which the soul has the first and most permanent peace—this is the door through which all true peace enters into the soul. All the real peace that the soul at any time or by any means enjoys is consequent upon faith and inseparable from it. It is true the soul may have sweet experience of this peace when it does not distinctly notice or mark these particular actings of faith which accompany it, yet faith is still in exercise when peace is so experienced, whether its actings be particularly noticed or not,—for as our common food must pass through our mouths before it becomes nourishing to us, so all our spiritual nourishment and comfort must pass through the mouth of faith before we can have the enjoyment of it. The saints enjoy unspeakable peace, but it is in the way of believing; they have joy and peace in believing. "Being justified by faith," saith the apostle, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"—God, out of Christ, is an enemy, "a consuming fire," and it is impossible for any soul to have peace while it views God as its enemy, for peace and a sense of imminent danger cannot dwell together.

But no sooner has a person accepted of Christ for righteousness and life than he has God for his friend, and it is by viewing God as such, and trusting in his favor and friendship, that the soul can at any time enjoy true peace and tranquility. The wicked enjoy a kind of false peace which proceeds from a mistaken notion that they are in a safe and happy condition. But the true peace which the saints enjoy, proceeds from their confidence and trust in the favor of God as reconciled to them in their surety, Christ Jesus,—and

this is no false, no mistaken ground of confidence like that upon which the wicked rest, but it is really a safe and immovable ground of trust from which alone true peace proceeds. "There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus" and there is no want of peace in the soul, when in the lively exercise of faith it can rely and confide in God as its father and friend in Christ. Then it is that it can adopt the apostle's bold and extensive challenge—"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God that 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." What, then, should perplex and distress the believer? The moment that he is united to Christ by faith, the new covenant with all its fulness is his. The fulfilment of its condition is imputed to him by which he is justified, and legally, although graciously, entitled to all that is promised to the believer, which comprehends all his salvation and all his desire. Such a person has good reason to say with the Psalmist, even in the most dark and discouraging seasons, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God." God will certainly perfect what concerneth such persons—for to this he has engaged himself by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, and this he did for the express purpose of satisfying and comforting his children—"Wherein God," saith the apostle, "willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Heb. 6: 17, 18.

But although every believer has an immutable, an invariable ground of peace, yet there is none of them who have not frequent interruptions in the enjoyment of this peace as may be seen from the history of the most eminent saints recorded in Scripture; and some have the comfort of this peace so seldom, that they are said, through fear of death, to be all their life-time subject to bondage. Now if we would know the reason why the saints' peace is so much and so frequently interrupted, one principal reason is want of faith—for want of faith occasions fear of death, and the fear of death prevents peace of mind. Hence we observe, that as strong and lively faith is the principal mean by which we first come to the ea-

joyment of internal peace, so it is the principal mean of retaining it, and recovering it when lost, and the want of faith is what principally occasions any interruption in our peace of mind.

But besides faith there are also other concurrent means for the enjoyment of this peace, the want of which are also occasions of its interruption. These means are fellowship with God in his ordinances, and conformity to his law. God delights to meet with his people in his ordinances, and there to speak peace to them. Sometimes in reading his word, or in hearing or meditating on it, he speaks comfort and joy to the soul, and sometimes in praying or receiving the sacraments, and so of other duties, but especially in "breaking of bread." In the ordinance of the Supper, the believing soul is often filled as with marrow and fatness. There the Lord is wont to make himself known to his people—there they often enjoy the kisses of his mouth, the sweet expressions of his love. How often does the Holy Ghost, the true Comforter, fill the believing soul in this and in other ordinances with that peace which passeth all understanding—often does such a soul utter in terms of extacy and admiration, what it is not able to describe. "Whom have I in heaven but thee," saith holy Asaph (in the 73d Psalm,) "and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Sometimes the soul is so overcome that with Thomas it can say no more than, "My Lord and my God"—and sometimes these ordinances are so filled with consolation that the soul is ready erroneously to say, "this is my rest forever; here will I dwell."

But although God's instituted ordinance is a mean through which he often pours the wine of consolation into the soul, yet according to his own sovereign good pleasure, and for wise, holy and gracious ends he may, and frequently does withhold his sweet embraces even in these ordinances. Hence the believer often complains of walking in darkness. But the principal occasion of these hidings is some defect or mistake in ourselves, "for the Lord doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men."

But he is a jealous God, "He will be sanctified in them who come nigh unto him, and before all the people he will be glorified." And because his people are often defective in this therefore he is often absent from them—a proper regard and due attendance on God's pure ordinances, is a mean of his own appointment both for obtaining and maintaining peace of mind, and also for recovering it when

lost. But when man himself is defective on his part, then God for his own glory and our good hideth himself from us, and by this means teaches us to know the worth of his gracious presence by the want of it, and happy it is for that soul which learns properly to improve such lessons—who learns from it to exercise faith more rigorously and steadily on God, in Christ, who giveth and blesseth ordinances at his pleasure, and are brought by such desertion to endeavor more earnestly to maintain fellowship with God, their beloved friend, in his ordinances. In times of desertion we should endeavor to imitate the spouse. She would neither rest without her beloved nor faint in his absence, but pressed on from one to another until she found him whom her soul loved; and when she found him she would not let him go until she brought him unto her mother's house, into the chamber of her that conceived her. She desired to have him present in the Church and caressed by it. She wished to recommend him to all persons as she had opportunity. Then she says, I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up nor awake my love until he please. She then knew what it was both to have and want the sweet expressions of his love. Nothing is so distressing to a holy soul as an absent God, and such absence is never so much feared until it has been often experienced. On this account desertion experienced has a tendency to stimulate the believer to double his diligence in the right use of those ordinances which God has appointed for holding communion with his people, and in which he often speaks peace to their souls, and thus desertion, although a hard lesson, is by the grace of God made a profitable one.

But besides that peace which the believing soul enjoys in the due observance of religious institutions, it has also great peace in a strict, evangelical conformity to the other parts of the divine will—"Then shall I not be ashamed," saith the Psalmist, when I have respect unto all thy commandments"—and again it is said by the prophet Isaiah "the work of righteousness shall be peace and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." Every person feels a present satisfaction from acting in an honest and upright manner—but it is only when obedience is evangelical that it can minister true peace to the soul. When we are enabled to trust in God as our reconciled father in Christ, and render filial obedi-

ence unto him as such. This obedience speaks true peace to the soul. Such obedience is done in a proper manner, from right principles and motives, and to right ends—therefore it is an evidence of our being in a state of favor and friendship with God; which is the only thing that can make either God's actings toward us or our actings toward him truly comforting. For as the soul is not entitled to true consolation from anything it either does or enjoys unless God and it be reconciled to each other, therefore, if the soul be rightly exercised it can not have peace from any of its actings or enjoyments except it view God, with whom it thus has intercourse, as its friend. For seeing it is owing to friendship being settled between God and any person, that that person is entitled to comfortable fellowship with him, so it must be in a believing view of this friendship that either the benefits which God confers in his ordinances, or the obedience we give to his law can speak true comfort and peace to the soul. There is no real consolation but what is always mixed with faith, even although this faith is not always distinctly perceived; and the more thoroughly active such confidence and trust is, the more satisfaction and peace that soul will experience which is enabled to exercise this fiducial trust. We have now seen a little of what is included in Christ's peace both external and internal—we have also seen that firm trust in God as our God, fellowship with him in his ordinances and conformity to his law are the means by which we are both to attain and increase our internal peace, and recover it when lost.

II. Our next general division is to show wherein Christ and the world differ in giving peace.—“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.”

Whether we take it for the men of the world or the things of the world, still our Lord's words will hold good—“not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” Men of the world often wish peace to each other, either from habit or ceremonious custom, when it is a matter of indifference whether they obtain their wish or not. They are often under no concern whether the person do or do not enjoy the happiness they wish them. But this is not the case with Christ, our blessed peace-maker. Our peace was not a matter of indifference to him. He was concerned about it from eternity, and was delighted in the contemplation, according to Proverbs 8: 31. In due time he humbled himself unto the death, even the death of the

cross to procure this peace. He continually intercedes for it, and by his Spirit he confers it. Certainly then, Christ is earnestly concerned in that peace which he wishes to his people, and confers upon them. He has a fellow-feeling with them in all their troubles, fears and infirmities, and so does not amuse them with empty compliments; what he proposes them are the expressions of his heart. He does not mock or flatter with high-sounding words and pompous flourish, but with important realities. In this respect Christ and the world of mankind differ in giving peace. But this difference runs higher when we recollect that the men of the world often intentionally deceive each other in falsely pretending they wish one another peace, when in reality they wish the contrary. Their words are sometimes sweeter than honey, while at the same time in their hearts are drawn swords. They can give Joab's kiss and strike his dagger. In words they can wish peace when war is in their hearts. But no such things can be said of Jesus, "who is our peace." He it was who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.—1 Peter, 1: 22. If he had been capable of duplicity or sin of any kind he could have obtained no peace for us. For then he could have been no more than a changeable creature, a finite being—therefore his doing and dying could not have been of infinite value, and so could not have satisfied for our infinite offense and procured peace for us. Hence we see the error of those who say that Christ might have sinned as well as Adam. For in order that he should make an infinite atonement for us, suitable to our infinite offense, he must be God as well as man, in one person, which he certainly was—and then, being God as well as man in one person, it was impossible that he could sin. "He who knew no sin"—he who could not practice any sin—"was made sin for us." He is our perfect pattern, who never deceived or injured any. He never speaks peace with a design to impose upon us, or take an advantage of us. This is a gross immorality too common among men in all ages, not excepting the present. For it is too well known how remarkably prevalent deceit, imposture and fraud are in our day. But our glorious Immanuel was infinitely distant from anything of the kind—"he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."

But again, although the men of the world may be sincere in their pretensions, and for a time really wish our happiness, yet it is no uncommon thing to find them promising and again retracting, do-



ing and undoing, one while wishing our peace and contributing to our enjoyment of it, and again wishing and contributing to the contrary, when perhaps the true reason for such a change is only to satisfy some ill humor, or serve some peculiar purpose of their own. But Christ is infinitely free from mutation. He is Jesus, the same yesterday and to-day, and forever. His promises are not yea and nay, they are all yea and amen. Has Christ promised peace? then he will not alter the word that has gone out of his mouth. There is nothing either in him or in us that could cause such a change. He is neither a mutable nor a mercenary friend. He never expected to be benefited by us for we cannot be profitable to him as one man may be to another. There is nothing in him that could occasion a change. The grand adversary could find nothing in him—no kind of wickedness or imperfection by which he might tempt him to a change. Nor can the changes of his people cause any change in him toward them—"having loved his own, he loved them to the end." If the peace that Christ procured for us depended upon our good behavior, then we are just brought back to the old covenant of works again—which is, "do and live." But it is our consolation that this is not the case. Now we live and do—work and happiness are still inseparably connected, but the order is inverted. And although the believers' changes may and do occasion an interruption in the enjoyment of internal peace, yet their complete and eternal peace is infallibly secured. It was not on account of anything in us, or done by us, or expected from us, that Christ procured peace for us and offers it to us. This is peace;—it is altogether of free grace—"we love him because he first loved us"—and as his love is unchangeable we may be assured that he will perfect peace in all those to whom he designs peace or in whom he begins it—agreeably to this he prays, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me."—John 17: 24. It is his will that they should have perfect peace, and for this purpose he will have all those for whom his peace was designed and procured to dwell with himself in heaven, where they shall enjoy that complete and eternal rest that remains for them—for all the people of God. Thus we see that Christ does not change his friendship. He does not promise and retract, do and undo, like men. But when he saith, "peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," then all who accept of Christ as his peace may rely upon it

that he will be as good as his word—none shall be disappointed who trust in him. It is true they may experience little peace while they remain in this valley of tears. But be this as it may, they shall at last all be brought to the haven of perfect rest on high, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest—where all tears shall be forever wiped away, and they shall enjoy an uninterrupted peace through an endless eternity.

But again, although the men of the world were honest and steadfast in their intentions—were heartily concerned and earnestly desirous to make us happy, or give us peace, yet they may be in such circumstances as entirely to incapacitate them for accomplishing their wishes. In this also Christ differs from the world in giving peace, for he can never be under any incapacity. His will and power are inseparable, and the latter is equal to all the demands of the former—"I will, be thou clean," saith he, and immediately it was effected. Christ our redeemer is God—Man, Immanuel, who could neither err in willing nor be defeated in performing. He carries the keys of hell and death—all things in heaven and earth are put into his hand—therefore he cannot be frustrated in any of his wishes or intentions. Men may say peace, peace, when there is no peace; or they may wish peace when they cannot confer it, but it would be blasphemous to impute any such things to our blessed peace-maker, who is God as well as man, and who had the Holy Spirit poured out upon him above measure, and is so infinitely distant from any kind of imperfection whether intentional or accidental. Thus Christ and the world of mankind differ in sincerity, honesty, steadfastness and ability.

But if we turn to the things of the world, still it will amount to the same thing—"not as the world giveth, give I unto you." Many have been deceived with the false pretensions of men, but far more have deceived themselves with false expectations from the things of the world. Why has the majority of mankind such a lawless thirst after worldly enjoyments, while the things of God and their own souls are almost, if not altogether, neglected? certainly it must be from an expectation that worldly enjoyments can give peace and rest to the soul. This is the object of every man's pursuit. Happiness or peace is what the whole human race is eager to obtain—but in what this peace consists, or how it may be had, unassisted reason in our present imperfect state is not able to determine.

Many have been the searches, researches and opinions about it, but all in vain,—until the Scriptures unfold the mystery. These show us that our happiness or chief good is not to be had in worldly things; that it is not by our poor, imperfect exertions or the world's benefits that we are to obtain peace and rest to the soul, but it is by Christ alone that we can have righteousness and peace. "In the world," saith he, "ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace."—John 16: 33. But although God graciously points out to us in his word where our true rest is, and how we are to obtain it, yet natural men have such a rooted enmity against the purity and grace of the Gospel that they despise this rest which is clearly exhibited in the Gospel, and will have none but what is of their own choosing and comes by their own exertions. Hence many take rest in imperfect morality, and others in their superstitious devotion; but the greater part of mankind seem to expect it from the honors, profits and pleasures of the world, like that rich fool in the Gospel who said, "soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years," but we see he was wretchedly disappointed, and so will all those be who follow his example. But although it is evident, both from experience, reason, and revelation, that the things of the world cannot give true rest to the soul, yet the bulk of mankind do by their conduct discover that they are seeking and expecting it from these things. For men would not be so eager to obtain the honors, profits and pleasures of the world, if they did not prefer these and the happiness they expect from them to all other things. Men would not from time to time have risked their lives, and stained human nature with deeds of injustice, bloodshed, deceit and violence, in order to obtain these things, did they not expect a satisfaction and happiness from them, which they have not to give. Some, with the young man in the Gospel, prefer riches. Some, with Haman, can have no peace unless they be revered by all about them; and others take up their rest in the grosser pleasures of sense, saying, let us eat, drink and be merry. But as the eye is never satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing, neither can the soul find real contentment in the things of the world, even although the whole world with all its enjoyments were at its service. Nay, let worldly enjoyments, men and angels, all combine to give true peace to the soul, still they will be found under an infinite incapacity to give it. They cannot remove sin which

is the cause of our misery, and since the cause remains in its full force the effect cannot be prevented. In spite of all their exertions sin will still remain in its condemning, reigning, and polluting influence. Nothing less than that which is infinite can satisfy for the guilt of sin, nor remove its power or pollution—and therefore, although the whole creation were in combination, yet it being still but finite could not atone for our offense, nor engage the friendship of God in our behalf; and unless this is done it is impossible for us to enjoy peace. For as soon will light and darkness, love and hatred, become one and dwell together, as sin in its condemning and reigning power, and true peace, dwell together in the same soul. God hath declared that there is no peace to the wicked, and that he is angry with them every day. Wicked men may amuse and deceive themselves as much as they can, with a false peace, but God will be true if all men should prove liars and deceivers—and therefore it is certain that the wicked shall enjoy no real peace.

Upon the whole, it is evident that the world with all its inhabitants and fulness is neither able to procure peace for us, nor confer it upon us. This is competent to Christ Jesus alone, who hath procured peace for all his people, and confers it upon them in due time. He had, therefore, good reason to say, "not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The world can give nothing but what is temporary—all its honors, profits and pleasures are uncertain and perishing in their nature; so also is the peace which they confer. But Christ gives durable peace;—he gives eternal peace, eternal life, eternal honors and eternal pleasures. The dignified relations in which Christ places all those that enjoy his peace, and the endowments which he confers upon them, exceed all description. They are related to, and have communion with God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost—they have angels for their attendants, and saints, who are the excellent ones of the earth, for their companions. They are honorable here, but much more so in a state of glory, where they shall be all made kings and priests unto God and admitted to far greater intimacy with him. But it doth not yet appear what we shall be, neither do we yet know what we shall enjoy. For although many of the saints on the earth experience much joy and peace in believing, and have sweet intercourse with God in his ordinances, which are pleasures with which the world intermeddled not, yet these are but pre-libations or foretastes of that fullness of

joy and those pleasures which they shall eternally enjoy at the right hand of God. Thus the honors, profits and pleasures which accompany Christ's peace, infinitely transcend those of the world, as well as his peace itself infinitely transcends the peace of the world. So that in whatever sense the world and its gifts are taken, still there is an infinite difference between Christ and the world in giving peace. All those who have Christ's peace have everything truly honorable, profitable and comfortable. All things are theirs—they are Christ's and Christ is God's—certainly, then, the peace of Christ is the best remedy against inordinate fears and troubles of mind. And it is wholly the doing of the Lord, and marvelous in our eyes.

What, my brethren, can be more interesting to every one of us than the doctrine we have been now hearing? This remedy, this peace which Christ has provided, is not only an important truth to be believed, it is also a sweet cordial to be enjoyed—our happiness is wrapped up in it, and eternal misery is the portion of that soul who does not in time come to the enjoyment of it. Let each of us, then, promptly put the question to ourselves—where have we taken up our rest? whether we have drank of that wine of consolation which eternal wisdom has mingled? or have been satisfying ourselves with those dregs which are of the adversary's preparing? To determine this we must consider what our views of matters are, where our dependence is, and how we have conducted. Have we ever experienced Christ's peace? then we must have been convinced that by nature we are children of wrath even as others, in a state of enmity with God and he with us. That there is no way in which that enmity can be removed but through the mediation of Christ—for by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified—and there is but one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, so that there is no other way of reconciliation but in and through Christ alone. This view we must have of the matter. These are truths which must be believed. Nor is it sufficient to credit this representation as being in itself true and agreeable—we must also acquiesce in this way of reconciliation, each for himself, before we can have peace from it; we must accept of Christ and his righteousness by faith, as our own, our only, and our desirable way of reconciliation with God, and trust in him as being thus reconciled for his promised favor and friendship. This is the channel through which our peace must run if it be of the right kind—

whether it be in attending upon divine ordinances or from obedience to divine precepts that the soul enjoys peace still it must come through the channel of this believing application. There is no genuine, permanent peace, whether it comes by the more immediate and instantaneous actings of faith, or through a longer chain of means, but must still proceed from this appropriating faith. This faith is that which makes the believer suck honey out of those divine ordinances and precepts, from which the legalist and the hypocrite can extract nothing better than poison. The believer does not, like the legalist, expect peace for his doing—neither does he, with the antinomian or libertine, expect peace without doing. He looks for no true peace but in attending to his duty, and yet expects all his happiness and peace for Christ's sake. Both the legalist and antinomian would sever what God has inseparably connected. The one would have peace by works without faith, the other would have it by faith without works—both are disappointed. But the believer neither expects nor wishes for any other peace than that which is connected with both faith and works. He is so well pleased with this way of enjoying peace, which God has ordained, that he would not choose to have it altered, nor desire peace to come in any other way. And although his defects both in believing and obeying are often grievous to him, and occasions the hidings of God's face, yet still he is disposed to commend God and to blame himself,—“I esteem thy precepts concerning all things to be right,” saith the Psalmist—and Paul says, “the law is holy and the commandment holy, just and good, but I am carnal, sold under sin.” Those who experience Christ's peace are brought, to delight in God and his law, and so are not disposed to find fault with it. They are also made to delight in the people of God—all which are evidences of their being at peace with him. “We know,” saith the apostle, “that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” It is happy for the believer that love to the brethren is one of the characteristics by which he is to judge of his state, for he can often draw consolation from this when every other comfortable evidence is buried out of sight. Let us, then, take some such method of examining ourselves, comparing our conduct, both internal and external, by the word of God, which is our only unerring rule, and see whether we have reason to conclude that we have chosen Christ's peace, or taken up with some

legal, presumptuous or hypocritical peace, which, like a dose of opium, may put to rest for a little while; but whenever the conscience is awakened, which will be either sooner or later, then like a giant refreshed with sleep, it will be more violent and terrible than ever, and if God in his mercy prevent not in time, it will eternally roar and condemn and never more be silent.

But again, our text and doctrine speak comfort to the doubting believer. This was the primary design of our text, and Christ is still saying by it to those who are fearful and faint-hearted, to his doubting and trembling followers, "Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." Why are you afraid, or from what do your doubts arise? We hope you do not doubt God's ability and willingness to give you peace. He has promised rest to all who come and accept of it,—“he is not a man that he should lie.” God never has nor ever shall disappoint any who put their trust in him. He is able to save to the uttermost, and he will never forsake the soul that seeks him. But, saith the troubled soul, although all this be true, yet I fear I am not among those whom God has enabled to trust in him—for I cannot love him as much as I ought, or would even wish to do—I cannot delight in him, his ways and his people sufficiently—I am not enough enamored with Christ and his peace, nor am I duly concerned about the operations of the Holy Spirit—divine ordinances are but as dry breasts—in these I seek my beloved but cannot find him—I attend these ordinances as Hannah did the feast, but can eat nothing, can enjoy no comfort, no refreshment. Well, granting all this to be true, is there no hope concerning this thing? Must you on this account expunge yourself out of the list of God's friends?—certainly you have not sufficient reason for this. Ask the best of the saints, they will readily acknowledge that in everything they fail and come short—and times of desertion have been common to them. Job went mourning without the sun, and so did David. We have heard how Asaph, in the 73rd Psalm, and the spouse, in the song, were distressed. You would not, on account of these things, conclude that these persons were not God's favorites; neither ought such things make you conclude against yourselves. If your defects and the want of God's comfortable presence be your affliction, if you are saying, “O that I knew where I might find him,” and are earnestly desiring with the Psalmist that God would restore unto you

the joy of his salvation, these things are evidences in your favor instead of being against you. For none but the children of God are ever employed in this manner—and although such may have weeping for a night, yet they shall joy in the morning. Trust in the Lord and be doing good—perhaps, like the spouse, you may go but a little farther until you find him whom your soul loveth. This is God's own direction to the disconsolate soul, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God."

This is the way in which peace is first obtained, and it is the true way of recovering it when lost. Our experience and the sense of our true state are variable and so cannot be a certain and invariable source of comfort. But God, as reconciled in Christ and held forth in the promises of the Gospel, is still the same and invariable ground of confidence and source of comfort, the true resting place and the only permanent source of peace. Here let the doubting Christian take up his rest, and be no longer faithless but believing—no longer bowed down with heaviness and grief, but be glad and rejoice for the day of his redemption draweth nigh, when all fears, doubts and complaints shall be entirely removed, and ye shall enjoy perfect peace, world without end.

Again, from what has been said we may see the wretched stupidity and madness of all those who despise Christ's peace, saying, either by words or by their conduct, that they care for none of these things. Some despising and rejecting it altogether, others saying it will be time enough hereafter to make peace with God—others presumptuously flattering themselves that they shall have peace, walk in the imagination of their own hearts. But such, unless they repent and amend, shall all certainly perish,—that which a man soweth the same shall he also reap. We have already seen that it is impossible for any person to enjoy true peace, or to escape everlasting burnings unless they make peace with God—who ever yet hardened themselves against God and prospered? I hope there is none hearing me, who is so hardy as to wish to enter the lists with Jehovah—but this you must either do or make peace with him. You are now at war with him, and you know not at what moment the vials of his indignation may burst forth upon you; at any rate, it will not be long if you do not take hold of his strength and make



peace with him. The danger is too great to admit of delay—flee, then, as for your lives to the hope set before you in the Gospel—to Christ the true refuge, where you shall be safe from the avenger—acquaint yourselves with God and be at peace with him. The strongest motives may be urged to press you to a compliance with this salutary admonition. Eternal death, with all its horrors, stares you in the face driving you to comply, and eternal life, with all its charms, invites your compliance—the greatness of the price that peace cost, its freeness to us, the astonishing love, grace and mercy exhibited in it, are very engaging motives to compliance. Scripture, right reason and experience earnestly press you to comply. Ask those who have experienced this sweet peace, they can tell you it is preferable to all mountains of prey—no possible enjoyment to be compared with it. But another awakening motive is the shortness and uncertainty of the time in which peace may be had. We know not what a day may bring forth—now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Why do you delay? “Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.” Is salvation worth having? is God worthy a hearing? Why then risk perdition, and weary out God with your sinful delays? Hear what he says to you. “Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.” He is now standing with open arms, entreating and beseeching the worst among us to come to him and be saved—come and partake of his rest, come and take of the water of life freely without money or price. Be persuaded, then, to comply, and agree with your adversary while he is dealing so graciously, while he is in the way—if not, be assured he will deliver thee to the judge who shall cast you into prison, from whence there is no escape.

Finally, let all those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, who have experienced the sweetness of Christ's peace, be continually employed in saying, O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away and thou comfortest me. Let such be still engaged with the Psalmist in saying, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” Your peace has the whole glorious Trinity for its author, and is a blessing of infinite value—therefore it merits your highest praises and the utmost care to abstain from folly. This is what the Spirit saith

unto the Churches, "The Lord will speak peace unto his people and to his saints, but let them not turn again to folly."—Psalm 85: 8. Happy are they who duly attend to this exhortation, and are enabled to keep their garments clean in this perverse and crooked generation, when occasions and temptations to sin, which is the most consummate folly, swarm daily around us—when so many among us and around us can pass over almost anything but religion without censure. When infidelity, immorality and impiety, even the grossest abominations, are so generally relished in our age and nation—and when the most pernicious errors are obstinately and openly maintained by many who would be accounted religious, and reckon themselves its greatest friends. Be exhorted, then, all ye to whom the Lord hath spoken peace, all who have learned the truth as it is in Christ, and tasted its sweetness to guard against every appearance of evil—watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Traps and snares are laid in your way; your steps are watched; your mistakes are marked—your hearts are deceitful—your follies and failings are hardening to the wicked, grievous to God and his people, distressing and discouraging to yourselves. See, then, that you turn not again to folly. Trust in the Lord at all times, for with him is everlasting strength. Learn the law humbly at his mouth that you may not be imposed upon by your own conceits or those of others,—endeavor to keep consciences void of offense toward God and toward man—remember still to rejoice in Christ Jesus alone, having no confidence in the flesh. This is the way to abstain from folly and to maintain that peace which you already experience. These are wisdom's ways, which are ways of pleasantness, and her paths, which are paths of peace. Let us all endeavor to tread these paths, and then we may expect to sit under Christ's shadow with great delight, and find his fruit to be sweet to our taste.

**NOTE BY THE EDITOR.**—Dr. Hemphill emigrated to this country from Ireland shortly after the close of the Revolutionary war. Though almost penniless when he arrived, he managed not only to support himself, but to acquire an education. He graduated at Dickinson College, Pennsylvania, in May, 1792, in the same class with Rev. John M'Jimsey, D. D., of the Synod of New-York. Together they studied Hebrew and Theology with Rev. Alexander Dobbin, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Dr. Hemphill completed his Theological course with Rev. Matthew Lind, Greencastle. He, together with Dr. M'Jimsey, was licensed to preach the Gospel, at March Creek, on

the 27th of May, 1794. As he was expected to go South, he was ordained in October following, at Greencastle, Pa.

He married a daughter of Rev. Mr. Lind, and after visiting the South and returning to Pennsylvania, he removed his family to Chester District, South Carolina, and was settled as Pastor of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Congregation of Hopewell, and connections, South Carolina, where he remained thirty-six years.

Dr. Hemphill was not considered an eloquent preacher, in the common acceptation of that phrase; but his mental powers and reasoning faculties were considered of a high order. Dr. Macdill, in an article in the United Presbyterian, estimated his powers as not far inferior to those of Dr. Mason. He was eminently an efficient and laborious Pastor—preaching, visiting, and catechising. His success is seen in the number raised up under his ministry. Many congregations in the West and South-West contain families whose fathers and mothers were brought up under his ministry. Though he commenced poor in this world's goods, he found the Lord a good master. He brought up a large family, and was enabled to educate three of his sons, Rev. Wm. R. Hemphill, of Due West, South Carolina; James, who embraced the legal profession; and John, now, I believe, Chief Justice of Texas.

Dr. Hemphill: departed this life on the 20th of May, 1832, in the 71st year of his age.

## S E R M O N V I I .

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### THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST NECESSARY.

BY THOMAS PALMER, PROBATIONER,

*Formerly in charge and Pastor elect of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Urbana, Ohio.*

“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory.”  
*Luke, 24: 26.*

SIN and suffering are intimately connected in the moral government of God. Though punishment does not invariably follow the commission of crime, yet the common consent of mankind testifies that such is its reward. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” is a dictate of reason as well as of revelation. The barbarous Maltese, when he beheld the viper fasten on Paul’s hand, said, “No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.” That an innocent person should suffer is contrary to our sense of natural justice: and were we assured of his entire innocence, both *natural* and *legal*, it would be an impeachment of the moral government of God to say, *he did suffer*. God acts not as a cruel tyrant among his creatures, inflicting punishment when none is due: “The judge of all the earth will do right.” If these premises be correct, why ought Christ to have suffered, “who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth?” Add to this difficulty the state of feeling among the Jews respecting the Messiah and the subject is still more perplexing to the Jewish mind. At that time the Messiah was indeed expected to come. Traces of this expectation are even to be found among Gentile nations as well as among the Jews. The seventy weeks of Daniel had expired when the Lord was suddenly to come to his temple. When Jesus, therefore, appeared, the hearts of many rejoiced that the “desire

of all nations had come." But many stumbled. Their mistaken views of prophecy had clothed Messiah with a character incompatible with that of the humble Nazarene. Their chief error lay, in attributing to a *temporal* what the prophets spoke of his *spiritual* kingdom. They expected their Messiah to descend, with all the pomp of regal dignity, even more glorious than Solomon, and unfurl his banner on the heights of Zion and conquer as "the King of kings"—"we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel;" but since his death all their hopes had fled. No wonder that they were sad in heart, and gloomy in countenance. All their hopes centered in Jesus, and he was laid in the tomb. Had he not risen from the dead, the new religion would have been crushed, and extinguished forever. To re-invigorate their faith, about to expire, and confirm the truth of his mission, Jesus rose from the dead. To his faithless disciples he replies, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." The word "fools" is, perhaps, more severe and reproachful than the corresponding Greek. The original denotes one who is unwise—and slow to understand and receive moral and religious truth. It is so translated in Romans 1: 14—to the wise and to *the unwise*." Lest any might suppose Christ to have violated his own precept—given in Matthew 5: 22, we remark that the word translated "fool" in that verse is not the same with this. The word here rendered fools corresponds more closely to our word "simple," than any other in our language. "O simple ones"—and slow of apprehension—"to believe all the prophets have spoken."—"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

In the exposition of these words we shall inquire,

I. What are the things which Christ suffered?

II. Why was it *necessary* that He should suffer?

III. What is meant by the expression, "And to enter into his glory."

I. What, then, are the things which Christ suffered? We answer, in the language of the Shorter Catechism—as being the most brief and comprehensive definition we can give. "His being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, and undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross, in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time." A brief illustration of these particulars is necessary for the better understanding of our subject.

1. His being born, and that in a low condition. Jesus Christ did not bring his human nature with him from heaven, as some ancient heretics madly dreamed. He was born of a virgin, and though miraculously produced by the power of the Holy Ghost, he was a partaker of our nature. He was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. "Inasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." "It behooved him, in all things, to be made like unto his brethren." But where, do you ask, is there humility or suffering in this? Remember, He of whom we speak is the Lord of glory—the King of kings and Lord of lords—God over all and blessed forever. "For," says an apostle, "though he were in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation, (literally, he emptied himself,) and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful men, and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross."—Phil. 2: 6—8. He, who was God over all, has stooped to mingle with his creatures—the Creator has been born of the humblest of his creatures. He suffered the temporary obscuration of his glory—that glory which he had with the Father before the world was. The highest princess would be unworthy to give birth to the Son of God, and a royal palace too ignoble for the place of his birth. But what shall we say of his birth, of the betrothed of a poor carpenter, and of the place of his nativity, a manger? Can he who stoopeth to behold the things that are in heaven and earth, thus humble himself to be born of a woman in a place devoted to cattle? God, indeed, was manifest in the flesh, and such were the lowly circumstances of his birth: "He was born and that in a low condition."

2. "He was made under the law." This is an important fact, and accounts for the other part of his sufferings. "He was made of a woman, made under the law." Whence, you ask, does this appear to be part of his humiliation and suffering? I answer: if he were a creature, as Arius and Socinius affirm, it would be no part of humiliation: nor was it at all necessary that the apostle should have informed us of the fact. This is the necessary condition of both men and angels, to be under the law of God. But as he was a divine person he was above law. Hence it was an immeasurable condescension to be made under the law, and so be reduced in this

respect, to a level with his creatures. He was made under the law—not merely as a rule of life and standard of holy obedience, but in the form of a broken covenant. Hence he was under it in all the obligations which it imposed, whether preceptive or penal. He became the substitute of guilty man, and so endured its curse. He became our surety, and so was held liable for our debt. The law, being holy, just and good, relaxed none of its rigor, nor lowered any of its demands in consequence of the dignity of his person. Though as God he might claim exemption from the law, yet as our surety and Redeemer, he must pay its penalty, which was death. Hence,

3. "His undergoing the miseries of this life." Of the infancy of our Savior we know but little. Many things, indeed, are recorded in an ancient composition, called the "Gospel of the Infancy;" but they are utterly destitute of foundation, and many of them so silly and absurd, as not for a moment to be believed. No doubt, however, he suffered all that pertains to that state of dependence and helplessness. Before he entered upon his public ministry he was subject to his parents, and no doubt labored with his own hands, and ministered to their support. He is called, in Mark 6: 3, "the carpenter, the son of Mary." How bitterly, then, did he fulfil that law—"in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread?" In his public life he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He bore all the sinless infirmities of our nature. He was hungry and thirsty and weary—"who, though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."—"For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted he is able to succor them that are tempted." "He was, in all points," says the apostle, "tempted as we are, yet without sin." A part, then, of the miseries that he suffered, consisted in the strong temptations to which he was exposed. Immediately after his entrance on his public ministry, he was met and opposed by the devil—Matt. 4: 1-11: "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city,

and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered unto him." Having foiled the devil, he left him for a season, as Luke informs us, chapter 4: 13, "And when the devil had ended all the temptations he departed from him for a season." No doubt Satan soon renewed his assaults against this Potent Adversary who came to destroy his works. Accordingly we find him again renewing his attacks. "The prince of this world cometh," saith the Savior, "and hath nothing in me." John 14: 30. And again, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." Luke 22: 53. But in addition to this, he suffered the indignities and reproaches of men: their treachery and malice, their bitter cruelty and reproachful spitting. Hence the prophet represents him as saying, "Reproach hath broken my heart and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none—and for comforters, but I found none."—Psalm 69: 20. But this was not all. He endured "the wrath of God." All his other sufferings were light compared with this. As the Son of God he was indeed the object of the Father's love; but as the substitute of sinners, and the subject of law, justice must have its demands; the Savior must suffer. Hence the cup of trembling was put into his hand. Hence the agony in which he appears in the garden of Gethsemane; the anguish of soul and agitation of spirit which he felt. Nothing but the burden of our guilt and the appalling sense of almighty wrath, could have caused that trepidation; that mental anguish; that fearful foreboding, when he uttered his thrice repeated prayer, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Ah, what a spectacle is here! The Son of God a suppliant, sinking to the earth under the pressure of his woes! His piercing cry rends the heavens, giv-



ing signs of ineffable distress. But the solemnity of that awful hour was broken by the infuriate rabble, headed by Judas the traitor. They seize him and carry him to the judgment-hall. What reproach, and mocking, and buffeting he endured, you well know, could you but duly appreciate it. During that mock trial he was spit upon, smitten with a reed, crowned with thorns, and, at last, condemned to a barbarous and ignominious death. This leads us to notice the death he suffered.

5. "*The cursed death of the cross.*" The cross was a Roman punishment, inflicted only on the most abandoned criminals. It could not be lawfully inflicted on a Roman citizen; and hence was reserved for slaves, and the vilest malefactors. It was a punishment of the most cruel and barbarous kind; and, as Cicero remarked, "should be banished from the eyes and ears, yea, even from the very thoughts of men." A post was erected about ten feet high, with a transverse piece at the top, nearly in the form of the letter T: to this the arms were bound, and the hands fastened with iron spikes, driven through the palm. The feet were tied and nailed in like manner to the upright post: and thus the wretched victim hung by his torn members, till lingering death put a period to his sufferings. The wounds in the hands and feet, together with the lacerated back, exposed to a burning sun, soon inflamed; and every moment increased the poignancy of the suffering. The burning thirst; the internal excitement; the mental anxiety, are more intolerable than death itself. Hence the prophet puts these words into his mouth: "I am poured out like water; and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax: it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws, and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me. They pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me."—Psalms 22: 14-18. His greatest suffering was unseen. He that was mighty to save now travailed in the greatness of his strength, treading the wine-press alone. The sword of justice was now drawn, under the awful sanction of law, and bathed in his blood: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, the man that is my fellow. *Smite* the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered." At this stroke of justice he utters his piercing, agonizing cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabach-

RECEIPTS FOR THE PULPIT.

OHIO—*Wheat Ridge*, J. D. Compton and S. P. Clarke, vol 3. *Newville*, Dr. J. P. Henderson, William Faris, Wm. Crowner, vol 3. *Madisonville*, Jane Griffith, vol 3. *Sarahsville*, S. McGarry, and 75c on vol 3. *New Concord*, R. Proudfit and Andrew Hanson, vol 3. *St. Clairsville*, Rev. A. Young, vol 3 (and United Presbyterian, vol 6) John Stewart, A. M. Smiley, Wm. Clark and W. L. Duff, vol 3. *Rix's Mills*, D. Forsythe, vol 3. *Carrollton*, Rev. James Golden, vol 3.

INDIANA—*Springhill*, A. Rankin, Mary Logan, vol 3. *Bloomington*, N. Weed, Rev. W. Turner, vol 3. *Ogden*, Alex. P. Hays, vol 3. *Oswego*, D. H. Cowan, vol 3.

ILLINOIS—*Oquawka*, Robert Macdill, vol 3. *Clayton*, Origen Wallace, vol 3. *Springfield*, Dan'l Morgan, vol 3. *Jerseyville*, J. M. Barr, vol 3, and United Presbyterian, vol 6; Catherine Holsenshead, vol 3. *Quincy*, John Lyle, vol 3. *Monmouth*, R. B. Davidson, vol 3. *Sparta*, S. C. Burns, Joseph Brown, vol 3.

KENTUCKY—*Paint Lick*, Col. E. Leavill, vol 3.

TENNESSEE—*Troy*, J. B. Hogue, vol 2.

VIRGINIA—*Cedar Grove Mills*, Col. J. M'Kerry, J. C. M'Kerry, and Wm. S. M'Kerry, vol 3. *Bell's Valley*, A. Graham and D. Davis, vol 3. *Kerr's Creek*, J. G. Dixon, vol 3. *Lexington*, John Sproul, vol 3. *Triadelphia*, James Vance, vol 3. *Bealer's Station*, John Hosaic, vol 3.

NORTH CAROLINA—*Crowder's Creek*, Robert Love, vol 3.

SOUTH CAROLINA—*Bethany*, Rev. E. E. Boyce, vol 3. *Clark's Fork*, Wm. M'Elwee, vol 3.

PENNSYLVANIA,—*Mt. Pleasant*, P. Warden, vol 3. *Newville*, Jane Scouller, vols 2 and 3. *Coultersville*, Rev. W. P. Breaden, vols 2, 3 and 4. *Erie*, Rev. J. H. Pressly, vol 3, and U. P. vol 6; Sarah King, M. Pollock, Jane Hughes, James Hughes, Wm. E. M'Nair, J. T. Russell, Enos Thomas, and Mrs. Jane M'Cracken, vol 3. *Waterford*, W. C. Smith, Wm. M'Kinley, J. and R. Hood, T. Moore, Alex. Moore, vol 3; J. C. Smith, do, and U. P. vol 6. *Mercer*, T. J. Carpenter, vol 3; Rev. W. T. M'Adam, vol 3, U. P. vol 6; Col. J. Kerr, vols 1 and 2. *Sugar Creek*, Rev. H. H. Thompson, vols 2 and 3, and U. P. vols 5 and 6. *Pittsburgh*, G. Scott, and J. S. Frizell, vol 3. *Wilkins*, James Duff, jr., vol 3. *Elizabeth*, Eb. Henderson, and Rev. S. Jamison, vol 3. *Turtle Creek*, Mary Clogston, S. E. Shaw, S. Shaw, vol 3. *Allegheny*, H. Duff, J. L. Craig, Hermon Dehaven, Samuel Kerr, Dr. J. T. Pressly (4, copies, and U. P. vol 6) vol 3; James Crawford vols 2 and 3. and U. P., vols 5 and 6. *Chambersburgh*, Wm. Armstrong, vol 3. *Logan's Ferry*, J. Aber, vol 3. *Noblestown*, Mrs. M. Berry, vol 3. *Tinker Run*, T. Shaw, R. Ekin, and M. C. Ekin, vol 3, and U. P. vol 6.

NEW-YORK—*Oxbow*, Janet M'Robbie and R. Darling, vol 3.

GEORGIA—*Cross Keys*, John M'Elroy, vol 3, and U. P. vol 6.



thou?" And again he cried with a loud voice, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost. The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, the earth did quake, the rocks were rent, and preternatural darkness overspread the earth. Surely, "the God of nature dies!"

"The sun beheld it? No. The shocking scene  
Drove back his chariot: Midnight veiled his face—  
Not such as this, not such as nature makes:  
A midnight nature shuddered to behold;  
A midnight and new! a dread eclipse, (without  
Opposing spheres) from her Creator's frown!  
Sun! didst thou fly thy Maker's pain? or start  
At that enormous load of human guilt  
Which bowed his blessed head, o'erwhelmed his cross,  
Made groan the center, burst earth's marble womb  
With pangs, strong pangs! Delivered of her dead.  
Hell howled, and heaven that hour let fall a tear: [man  
Heav'n wept, that man might smile! Heav'n bled that  
Might never die!"]

Lastly,—“He continued under the power of death for a time.” After his death, he was taken down from the cross at the instigation of the Jews, because it was the preparation, that the body might not hang upon the cross on the Sabbath-day. And Joseph, having begged and obtained it, laid it in his own sepulcher. In this state the Savior continued about forty hours, guarded by the Roman soldiers, lest his poor, irresolute, trembling disciples should steal him away. Who is this that occupies the tomb of Joseph, guarded by the Roman soldiery? Is it a prophet, or a king? Nay, I say unto you, more than a prophet: greater than all the kings of the earth. Why then do the shades of death envelop him, and silence reign in his solitary tomb? He has now visited its shades to grapple with the destroyer in his den. “The lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed”—the prince of life cannot be held the prisoner of death—the grave acknowledges his power—he bursts the bars of death, and triumphs over the grave. “The Lord is risen indeed,” say his disciples, “the Lord is risen indeed.” He has “destroyed death and him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil.” These are things which he suffered.

The second thing proposed is to inquire,

II. Why it was *necessary* that he should suffer these things?—  
“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things.”



1. It was necessary, in order to *fulfill the law of Moses*, which typified his death—and *the prophecies* concerning him. “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer.” God had appointed all the types of the Mosaic law with a special respect unto Christ the great anti-type, who has fulfilled all righteousness. The sacrifices of the law, though offered according to the divine appointment, could not take away sin. “It is impossible,” says Paul, “that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.” The law had but a shadow of good things to come. It dimly shadowed forth Christ and his sufferings as the meritorious ground of our acceptance with God. The law, indeed, made nothing perfect, but the bringing of a better hope did. He is the substance, the realization, of all that was shadowed forth in the ceremonial law. It was a shadow of things to come, but the body is Christ. These positions are laid down and maintained by the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews. in the tenth chapter: “He taketh away the first,” the sacrifice of the law, “that he may establish the second”—his own sacrifice. “By the once offering up of himself he hath forever perfected them that are sanctified.” The Mosaic dispensation, though divinely appointed, was not, in itself, perfect—but looked forward to the sacrifice of the body of Christ—“the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!” Without this it would not only have been a burdensome, but a useless service. To give efficacy to this law, in behalf of all believers under it, Christ accomplishes all that was the object of their faith by making an atonement unto God, and rendering satisfaction to his law and justice in their stead. God appointed this law to exhibit, to the faith of believers, Christ symbolically slain, and to demonstrate that “without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Hence, on the faith of what Christ should ultimately do and suffer, they were justified and accepted through the forbearance of God.” To fulfil this divine constitution Christ must suffer: and so, in himself, hath abolished the law of commandments—contained in ordinances, nailing them to his cross.

2. *The truth and faithfulness of God* were pledged to fulfil the promises made to his Church. To Adam he promised that the Seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, which is the devil and Satan as John explains it—and also intimates that the serpent should bruise his heel. Those who interpret this of the literal enmity that exists between men and serpents, and of the bruising of the heads of serpents, and the biting of the person's heel, pay as

little regard to common sense and sound interpretation as to piety. It is an obscure, but a glorious promise of Messiah, and of his sufferings and victory. Christ is truly and properly the *seed of the woman*, though not of the man. His heel denotes—an inferior part—his human nature, which alone could suffer. It was bruised by being nailed to the cross. This was the temporary triumph of Satan. “Hell smiled, and heaven let fall a tear.” But the triumph was momentary: Messiah was strongest in death; He crushed the serpent’s head. He spoiled *principalities* and *powers*, and made a show of them openly; triumphing over them in his cross. By the serpent’s head may be understood, the power, the dominion and sovereignty which he exercised as the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience—leading them captive at his will. Christ has destroyed death and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. This promise which God gave to our common father, Adam, had a respect to all mankind. It was again renewed to Abraham—“In thy *seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” The apostle Paul tells us that this “seed” is Christ. It was renewed again to the children of Israel by Moses,—“A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall command you.” Again, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and to him shall the gathering of the people be.” Again, “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots, and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious,"—thus pointing out David's illustrious son. Thus prophecy, like the morning dawn, increased in brilliancy and glory till the spirit of Isaiah pours its noontide radiance on our dark and apostate world. The scenes of Messiah's sufferings are there portrayed as if by the light of history. "Surely," says he, "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 by 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"—"He shall justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." How obviously necessary, then, that Christ should suffer these things. All the sufferings he endured were in consequence of bearing the iniquities of many; of his being wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; and suffering the chastisement of our peace, that we might be healed. "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer." This argument the apostle frequently insists on, and enforces among the Jews and all who admit the inspiration and authority of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms: for they all speak of Christ.—Acts 3: 18. "But those things which God before hath showed by the mouth of all his prophets—that Christ should suffer—he hath so fulfilled." Acts 10: 43. "To him gave all the prophets witness."—Acts 17: 2, 3. "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them (of Thessalonica), and three Sabbath-days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead." What an important and yet inexhaustible subject! which occupied the inspired apostle three days to explain and prove. Again, Acts 26: 22, in his testimony before Festus and Agrippa—"Having therefore obtained help of God, I continued to this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that he should



be the first that should rise from the dead, and shew light unto the people and to the Gentiles." See Acts 28: 23. Again, 1 Cor. 15: 3, 4, "For I have delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." To fulfil the promises of God, and verify his predictions, Christ must suffer—the just for the unjust—that sinners might be brought nigh unto God. The purposes of God's mercy made in Christ before the world was must be accomplished. The plan of salvation devised of God—the offspring of wisdom and love—required this as its glorious consummation. This leads us to remark,

3. "The *nature of the covenant of grace* required that Christ should suffer these things." In it Christ became the surety of sinners, and hence must obey and suffer in their stead. They were not only bound to obey the law in all its claims, but were exposed to its penalty, which was death. That law was holy, just, and good; and therefore its demands could not be lowered or mitigated without its ceasing to be what it was: hence, it would become unholy, unjust and bad, and could not command obedience to its precepts. The Savior adds to it his solemn sanction,—“Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Its claims cannot be lowered: “For he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all.” And still the fearful threatening hangs over the head of the transgressor—“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.” Surely, if this be so, “by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified.” Surely we are all hopelessly and helplessly lost, if no deliverer, no surety, no redeemer be found, to deliver us from the curse of the law. Jesus interposes, saying, I have found a ransom: deliver from going down into the pit—“Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; a body hast thou prepared me.” In this covenant engagement, then, the Son has bound himself over to justice as a sacrifice for sins. The law knows not the person of any man, but only his actions. Hence, when Jesus takes the place of the guilty, the penalty is rigorously exacted. The sins which he bore must be punished, either in the transgressor or the substitute. To ratify that great covenant for the salvation of man, the surety suffered, bled, and died.

4. "It was necessary that Christ should suffer to satisfy *the justice of God*.

This, indeed, is the grand and central point to which all the others converge. It was necessary that Christ should suffer by divine appointment, as typified in the Mosaic law. It is also an obvious inference from prophecy: for what God has expressly foretold must be accomplished. Also from the nature of the covenant of grace. The Son, having undertaken the redemption of sinners, must suffer, from the nature of that covenant, in their stead. But his sufferings "were necessary, although they had not been predicted; for the necessity of events does not arise from the prophecy which announces them; but from the nature of things, or the Divine constitution."—Dickson on Acts, p. 252. But the justice of God required a satisfaction to be rendered to its claims, founded on law and covenant, before pardon could be extended to the guilty.

Justice is an essential attribute of God; or, in other words, divest him of this and he would not be what he is. It necessarily pertains to the nature of God. Justice is manifested in three things.—1. That the laws of God are right or suitable to our natures and relations. 2. That they are enforced by proper sanctions. 3. That they be impartially executed.

A failure in any of these points is an impeachment of the justice of God—it is contrary to his nature. When, therefore, man transgresses his righteous law, does not his justice, of which he cannot divest himself, bind him to execute the penalty? A penalty is annexed to the law—and can he be just if he fail to execute it? Before mercy can be extended to man, the demands of law and of justice must be met and satisfied. Christ came to effect the salvation of man: hence there was a moral necessity that he must suffer. He has manifested the righteousness of God, "that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission:—"Ought not Christ, therefore, to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?"

We are now to inquire,

III. What is meant by the expression, "And to enter into his glory." Were I a Socinian, here I must stop. What possible sense could be attached to the expression, if Jesus was a mere man, I know not. But he is Immanuel, God with us: therefore, he can again enter into the glory which he had with the Father before

the world was. It is *his* glory—it is also called his Father's glory—it is the glory of the triune God, in which no created being can partake as Jesus does. By the glory of God, we understand that bright display of his perfections which has been made by him in creation, providence and redemption. To enter into his glory then we understand of his solemn reception, by the Father, into the highest heaven—to the throne of his glory—to the right hand of power—to be crowned with the highest honor, and power, and dominion. All things are made subject to him. He has a name that is above every name that is named, either in heaven or in earth. His dominion is everlasting and he ruleth over all. On account of his sufferings and death he was crowned with glory and honor. He is far above all principalities, and power, and might, and dominion. He is over all the works of God's hands. This is, briefly, what is meant by entering into his glory.

In conclusion, we have shown, that Christ suffered—to be born, and that in a low condition. Though he were rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. That He was made under the law. He fulfilled its demands, preceptive and penal. “He was made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law. That he endured the miseries of this life—pain, fatigue, hunger, and thirst. “He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”—“His countenance was marred more than the countenance of any man, and his form more than the sons of men.” He endured the wrath of God due to us for sin, the load of which made him exclaim, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful.”—“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.” The cursed death of the cross—“cursed,” says the Scripture, “is every one that hangeth on a tree.” This excruciating and ignominious death he suffered in anguish inexpressible. And lastly, He continued under the power of death for a time. The Lord of life and glory was enveloped in the shadow of the tomb.

Why did He suffer these things? The grand object was the salvation of men. Why was it *necessary* that Christ should suffer these things. It was necessary to fulfil the law of Moses and give efficacy to the legal sacrifices—in the faith of which all the saints of old were justified. It was necessary to fulfil the prophecies—which are but the announcement of God's purposes. What God

has spoken must needs be accomplished. The nature of the covenant of grace required that Christ should suffer these things. He agreed, in covenant with his Father, to redeem sinful, guilty men, and therefore must meet the claims of law against them: "He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Lastly, the justice of God, immutable and vindictive, required satisfaction. Thus, and thus alone, could "God be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

From this subject, thus presented, we may infer the following important truths.

1. We infer, The awful nature and great demerit of sin in the sight of God. "God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon sin." He has declared it the abominable thing that he hates: He has by his judgments done much to manifest his hatred of it; but nowhere can we find such a terrible commentary on the demerit of sin, God's hatred of it and unalterable resolution to punish it, as in the sufferings and death of Christ—"He spared not his own Son when he delivered him up in our stead."

2. We infer, That sin will not go unpunished. God has declared "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished" and the demands of God's law and justice must be fully satisfied. "He will by no means clear the guilty"—He spared not his own Son, how should he spare the sinner?

3. We infer, That by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified. If righteousness come by the law, then *Christ* has died in vain." If there had been a law given which *could* have given life, verily righteousness should have been *by the law*—it would have been entirely unnecessary that *Christ* should have died. When there was no other way of escape from the destruction sin had wrought, God gave his Son.

4. The love of God is here most illustriously displayed. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish; but have everlasting life."

5. The love of Christ in laying down his life is here exhibited. "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friend." But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners—enemies—Christ died for us.

6. We may infer, Our obligation to love God, who first loved us; and that we are under obligation to obey his commandments,

not only from a principle of duty, but from principles of love and gratitude. Christ says, "*Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*"—"If ye *love me*, keep my commandments"—"If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." There can be no greater debt of love and gratitude than that which redeemed sinners owe to their Savior, Jesus Christ; whether we consider the price paid for their redemption, the value of the redeemed soul, the eternal weight of misery from which they are redeemed, or the eternal, immeasurable, inconceivable happiness of which, through his redemption, they are heirs.

7. We may hence, also infer, Our deplorable condition if we neglect this great salvation. There will then remain "no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation that shall consume" us. We must fall, then, into the hands of justice, without any advocate to plead our cause. Justice which, as we have seen, took its course *on Christ*, will take its course on us: and the Savior himself will be avenged on us for trampling upon him, rejecting his offered mercy, and counting his blood an unholy, or common thing. "Kiss the Son, lest *he* be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his anger is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

8. We may also infer from what has been said, That the sure foundation of our hope of salvation is in the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. His righteousness alone can cover our guilt—His blood alone can atone for sin—"other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"—"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

9. We may infer, That it is vain to trust in the mercy of God, without an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Our God is a consuming fire," and "pours out his fury on the heathen, and in the families that call not on his name." The only way of approach to God in safety is through Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man—"There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." The sword of justice, unsheathed for the destruction of sinners, was wielded against Christ, and the punishment of sin that would have ruined us forever was borne by him. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man

that is my fellow: smite the shepherd." It is when we approach the mercy-seat with the blood of Jesus Christ—when we pray, "Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine Anointed," that we find God propitious: not else. The sinner that hopes in *the mercy* of God alone will find himself in the hands of a justly incensed God; of a God whose every attribute, even his mercy, will be arrayed against him. Then, though never before, he will find it to be "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." *This* is our hope: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins." Let us put our trust in him, being assured that they that do so shall never be put to shame. Amen.

## SERMON IX.

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### THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD.

BY REV. WILLIAM DAVIDSON,

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“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.”—Mark 16: 15.

“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession; thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”—Psalm 2: 8, 9.

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”—Daniel 2: 44.

“They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.”—Daniel 12: 3.

“He which converteth the sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”—James 5: 20.

“He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth, may rejoice together.”—John 4: 36.

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise.”—Prov. 11: 30.

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.”—1 Thess. 2: 19, 20.

**VERY DEAR BRETHREN:**—To success in a great undertaking, it is desirable to have these three things clearly before the mind, the work to be done, the way and means for its accomplishment, and the motives which should inspire our efforts in the prosecution of the enterprise. Now the spirit of the missionary enterprise is a spirit of obedience to the injunction of the texts which we have just read out, and of simple dependence upon the promises they contain.

1. It aims to evangelize the world. It goes forth into the lanes and alleys, the highways and the hedges, and seeks to bring in all, as many as it can find, both bad and good, that they may be nour-

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Missionary Sermon, preached before the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church, in Pitts-burgh, A. D. 1852.

ished on the bread of life eternal. The missionary enterprise proposes to carry the Gospel into every country in the world, without any exception, where it is not already, whether Pagan, Papal, or Mohamedan, whether civilized or savage, barbarous or refined, and win for it a permanent foothold there.

Nay more; it proposes to carry it not only to every *country*, but "to every *creature*" under heaven. It has undertaken to explore every neighborhood, to unfurl to the breeze the broad and blood-stained banner of the cross from every hill-top, and to lift aloft the accents of redeeming love from every plain. It has resolved to carry this "good news" of "salvation to the chief of sinners," to every home, and to tell it over and over again in the language wherein he was born, to every one individual in the whole world, and to urge its reception with argument and importunity, and to allow of no plea or pretext for rejection or delay at all. It is proposed, by going round with the Gospel message from land to land, from house to house, from man to man, and by persisting from generation to generation in this work of faith and labor of love, to reclaim our wretched world from ignorance, error and sin, and from all the evils that darkle in their train, and win it back again to knowledge and truth and holiness, with all the blessings, that in glory and joy, do ever cluster around them. It has been resolved by the helmeted and greaved and girded soldiery of this holy warfare, never to give up in this battle for the good and the true, until all the ranks of darkness are driven from the field—until every obstacle to human holiness and happiness is removed—until every throne of despotism is overturned and every temple, reared to Paganism and Antichrist is utterly subverted, its foundation ploughed like a field, and sowed with the good seed of everlasting life, and every chain, and caffle, and dungeon, every rack and stake and infernal machine of a grinding unrelenting papacy and priesthood, are broken to shivers forever, and that man of sin and son of perdition consumed by the breath of the Lord and destroyed by the brightness of his coming, and until (God according the efforts of His Church,) the Prince of Darkness shall be driven to his dungeon, mankind freed from his delusions, and earth keep jubilee a thousand years.

Nor is this a half-hearted or an ill-considered resolution. The Church, the whole Church, more than ever, since the days of Primitive Christianity, is cherishing in her children the same mind that



was in Christ Jesus, who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor that we through His poverty might be rich: and she is resolving that with God's help, she will be discouraged by no difficulty, disheartened by no sacrifice, shamed by no malicious slander of her men or means or motives, and vanquished by no possible accumulation and intensity of defeat and disaster, until she has gained her purpose. She has put her hand to the plough, she has lifted it up to the Most High God, and though she may yet "be broken in the place of dragons and covered with the shadows of death," I know she never will go back from her high mission until the name and fame of her Jesus, shall be as familiar as a household word in every land and tongue and tribe of earth; until it shall wander with the wandering Scythian, and the wild Arab hear it in his tent, and bow himself down and worship; until the jubilan song of salvation shall go up like a shout of nations from the whole earth into a sky that bends smilingly down to embrace a renovated and a once more rejoicing world.

2. Now from this bold sheer statement of what it is which the missionary enterprise proposes to do, it is perfectly manifest that it is a superlatively good grand and difficult undertaking. But, notwithstanding this, we are authorized to declare that it will be accomplished even to the uttermost tittle. Do not object to me the superhuman difficulties in the way. I know them and do not blink them literally; it were easier to remove mountains than to do it, but it will be done, and done too, by a handful of earnest single minded men and women, who, destitute of the prestige and eclat of learning, or power, or station, to carry them through, go forth leaning in simple faith on the strong arm of the God of salvation; for their trust is not presumptuous, they have a sure word of promise from Him who cannot lie to sustain it. They know that though they mourn as they go forth bearing their precious seed, yet the harvest cometh, when they shall with shouts gather home the sheaves. They know that the incorruptible seed which in weariness and weakness they are scattering among the nations—the handful of corn which, in pains and prayers, they are casting abroad on the tops of the mountains, shall ere long shake with prosperous fruit like Lebanon, and that they of the city shall flourish like the grass of the earth.

Truly, this enterprise does seem too great for sober men to en-

gage in: it looks like some splendid dream of Fairyland; it seems like some magnificent but shadowy Utopia, which can never be realized; but the event shall justify and glorify the undertaking. The dry bones shall live and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army. The world shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall do homage before Him. The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and of Seba, shall offer gifts; yea, all kings shall fall down before Him, and all nations shall serve Him; and from all the nations, and from every creature that is in heaven and in the earth, and such as are in the sea, there shall go up a voice like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderings, saying Amen, Alleluia to the Lord God Omnipotent and to the Lamb forever and ever.

The glorious Captain of our salvation has gone forth with His bow and His crown and His milk-white steed, followed by His trained and tried and trusty bands, and He will not return until the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and until society shall be reorganized and regenerated; the Church clad in a glorious robe of living holiness like a bride adorned for the marriage of her husband, and purity and peace and blessedness shed all abroad. He will not return until sin and error are driven from the world; until the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them—until the cow and the bear shall feed, and their young ones lie down together, and the old lion eat straw like an ox—until the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the unweaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den, and there be none to hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain. He has gone forth saying, Behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in my people, and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner though an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them; they shall not build and another inhabit;

they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

3. But, we must remember that we are to be fellow-workers with God in this undertaking. The work will be done, but it will be done by the instrumentality of the Church. It is of divine origin that she shall be the medium for dispensing divine blessings to a lost world. Whatever may have been the reason for it, we are sure that this treasure has been committed, not to the keeping and the control of the angels, nor yet is it dispensed by the immediate interposition of divine power, but it is put into earthen vessels, and it will be borne only where we carry it. True, it has been decreed in heaven, and as surely as there is power in the arm of God to execute His purpose, the light of life will be carried to the ends of the earth; men shall be blessed in it, and all nations shall call it blessed. But then that this may be so, a great work is to be undertaken and carried on by the Church—a work of toil, and suffering, and sacrifice, such as has not been witnessed since the days of Primitive Christianity—a work which will, which does, call for strong men and for tender women, to sacrifice many a comfort and take their lives in their hand, and go forth in number and purity, like the stars of heaven—a work which requires that life and labor be expended like water upon it, and gold and silver and all precious things heaped up like the stones of the field—a work that even now in many places requires, and before long probably will require in almost every place, that the persecution and the fell hate of all Pagan, Papal, Mohamedan and Infidel powers, be patiently endured and triumphantly overcome.

I say these things must be, for be assured that to attain our purpose there must be a far more entire devotion to the work throughout the Church, and on the part of almost every individual member of it, than has yet been attained to. Every man must be taught to feel that something is expected of him—that he has a work of strenuousness and sacrifice to go through with, that God expects him to look not only on his own things, but also on the things of others; that whether he will or no, he has been appointed his brother's keeper, and has been burdened with the fatigues and the tremendous responsibilities of one who has the care of souls. Every individual of either sex and of every age, must be taught that there is some

better and higher prize for him who wins in the race of life, than riches, and honor, and splendor, and pleasure. Each one must be taught that upon him rests the whole burden of the command to preach the Gospel to every creature, and so to preach it that men shall believe.

Let us then, my friends, during the remainder of this hour, lay ourselves open to the influence of some of those high considerations which mightily persuade us to give our body and soul and substance, our whole heart and mind and might, to the single work of glorifying God in the conversion of the world, and in the upbuilding of his kingdom on earth.

I. And here not to insist on the command of God, which with every high-minded man is the greatest consideration of all, it deserves to be considered that *it is for this work, and for this work only, that we are left in the world after our conversion.* Do you doubt it? What then is the reason that God when He converts us from sin, and adopts us into His family and makes us blessed in His love, does not immediately take us home to heaven? Why does the God who loves and pities with more than a parent's tenderness, leave us here in this sad wicked world so long? Why does He who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and who is afflicted in all our afflictions, leave us to endure sorrow so long, when He could remove us so easily to the land of rest and purity and joy? Why is it that instead of being taken away to live with our Father and our friend, we are left for many a weary year, to breast the storms of sin and sorrow that blacken and beat around us? It cannot be that God does not see, nor the God of Jacob know, of our woes and our wailings; for He that formed the eye, shall He not see? He that formed the ear, shall He not hear? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall He not know?

Nor yet are we left here midst our sighings and tears, because our merciful and faithful High Priest is indifferent to our outward trouble and our inward heart-aches; for the mother could easier forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb, than He could forget us. We are as the apple of His eye to Him. We are graven upon His palms, and our walls are continually before Him. Nor yet can it be, because He wishes not to have us with Him, because for this He ceases not to pray in the holiest of all, that He may have us with Him where He is to behold His glory!

Then why is it? Why does not God take us away as soon as we are justified? What day He restores to His favor and His family, why does He not take us to the enjoyment of His love in the bosom of His family? Let me not be told that time is requisite for our sanctification; that after we are accepted in the beloved, and restored to divine favor, a purifying process is requisite to make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and that this is carrying on from our conversion on up to our beatification. For although the facts be so, yet why hath God ordained them thus? Why are so many scenes of sin and sorrow to be endured? Surely not because the process could not have been finished sooner. Surely no one will presume thus to limit the power of Israel's Holy One. Surely no one will deny that by one mighty wonder-stroke of grace from His arm of salvation; by one instantaneous illapse of omnific energy from the Good Spirit, He could sanctify us at once as well as justify us at once—could fit us for heaven and take us home on the very day when He rescued us from sin and death—could fit us for heaven and take us to His blessed bosom, the very day when He converts from sin, and frees from wrath, and makes us His children. Let the case of the thief on the cross, of all those who have ever, like him, obtained mercy in their hour of extremest need, and of all elect infants dying in infancy, be my witness that I err not.

I return then once more to my question, and ask why is it, that God's own dear children are left in such a wicked weary world as this, for so long a period? And I would like to have an answer from you,—ye whose main object, and whose main business, is to build up a fortune and a family in the earth. Answer me, brethren, ye who give a little while morning and night to family and secret religion, and one day in seven to the performance of sacred duties, and a few dollars annually from the proceeds of a good farm or a prosperous business, to sustain and diffuse religion; and then give the whole balance of your thoughts and toil to the wretched and ruinous business of living *to* yourselves and *for* yourselves. Answer me, ye who, the brief hour of devotion over, give heart and soul, and strength, to your corn, and crops, and cattle, to your clerks, and clients, and customers, and constituents, to deeds and documents, and books, and bills of lading and exchange, and all this merely and avowedly, that you may drive a thriving business in the

world, that you may wax as fat as grease, that you may spread the sheen and glory of your house afar; and all this, whilst from morn till night God is scarcely in all your thoughts, and His love and church, and the salvation of souls, held as subordinate concerns, altogether. Now my friends, tell me if you can, why God has left his children—His own dearly beloved children, so far away in this land of darkness, for so long after he had lifted the light of his countenance upon them, and put into their hand the title deed to heaven. Surely, surely, it was not that they might pursue the objects which are engaging you.

It is well to be diligent in business, and this we do not reprove, but the selfish and earthly motive that prompts you to it. Let us ever remember that we are spared here, not that, like the rich fool, we may heap up treasures "*for ourselves,*" and then eat and drink them for many a day; not because it is better to be toiling for lucre here, than triumphing through the pavilions of our many-mansioned home on high; not because we could not have been sooner freed from sin, and fitted for companionship among the glory-bearing family in heaven. Not because His heart is not turned within him, and his repentings kindled together when he hears our lamentations; not because it gives our great Deliverer no joy to take us from this land of night and death, and bring us home to be with him, to behold his glory.

No it is not on any of these accounts. We are continued here that we may be employed in missionary labor; continued here, because He would in infinite condescension, have us to enjoy the privilege of being fellow-workers with himself in the grand enterprise of redemption;—continued, because He is graciously pleased to share with us the toils and the triumphs of an achievement so wonderful, that even in its incipiency it sets all heaven agaze, and sends thrill after thrill of joy among all her radiant shouting population:—an achievement than which we know of no greater than it, or equal to it, or like it at all, not even among the matchless awful wonders of a wonder working God. He has continued us here that He might share with us the toils and the eternal triumphs of a work, that sheds a new glow and glory, even around the brow of Godhead—a work that shall forever add a new luster and loveliness, even to the beaming glories of the Elysian fields—a work, that among all the works of God, stands out like Dwahalagiri among the mountains, in peerless and solitary grandeur. Such is

the end for which He leaves his children here, even that they may preach the gospel to every creature, and be co-laborers with Him in the great work of saving souls.

II. And now let us reflect, in the next place, on *the worth of the soul, which we are left here to save*. The salvation of the soul is precious; and there is no other work which will prove, at last, so illustrious and so immortal as this. The patriot who founds or saves a state is justly held in honor among men. But such a work is not worthy to be compared with the work of saving one soul; for the eternal interests of one individual, is worth not only more, but infinitely more, than the temporal interests of all the individuals that compose a state, or compose the world itself. Nay, to save the soul from ruin, were a greater and a better work, than to save the great goodly world itself from annihilation. More than this; it is within the limits of sober affirmation to declare that all the material suns that shine, and all the material worlds that roll round them, are not worth one soul. They shall perish, but it remaineth. They shall wax old and vanish away; they are sickly and will die; but it abideth forever; and shall mayhap, go on forever, increasing in greatness and glory and joy, until at last, it shall, in very grandeur, out-blaze them all; or if lost, it shall forever sink downward in darkness and misery and sin, until the groans of its ever-accumulating and endless agonies, shall ultimately exceed the universal death-throes of perishing nature.

A soul! What is it? At what shall we value it? God has given us no data from which, nor rule by which, to estimate its value. But He has not left us altogether without a witness. From what He has done for it, and will do, we can see something of the price He fixes on it.

When He created it, He formed it in his own image. He made it not after the likeness of the angels that excel in strength, nor of any of the thrones or dominions or powers of the world on high,—none of these, in His repute were fit to be the father of the human soul. But *Himself* was the grand model after which he fashioned it. His own ineffable essence was the form after which he created its essence; His own marvellous attributes the form after which he fashioned its attributes. Now consider what it is for a being to be created, in essence and in excellencies, after the image of the great God—of Him who fills immensity and inhabits eternity, who

stretches out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing; whose glory no eye can see and live; from the insupportable splendour of whose epiphany, when He shall come forth, the heavens and the earth shall dissipate into smoke, shall vanish into nothing, shall flee away and “*no place* be found for them.” Consider, I say, what it is to be created in the image of this great God; and remember that great as God is, infinitely great past finding out, still the human soul, in its pristine luster, was the perfect picture, the daguerreotype-likeness of its great Maker. His own created excellencies were the mold in which he formed and fashioned the attributes of the human spirit, and the die He used to stamp it with.

But as if He had not yet given sufficient emphasis to the testimony which he bore to its value; as if He could never weary of working for his last and dearest of the works of his hand, see what a glorious world He has built to accommodate it, in this its first and humblest state of being, for but a day:—a great green goodly world, a world of hills and valleys, and plains, of mountains and rivers, and floods, of minerals and vegetables, and animals; a world of singing birds, and waving fields, and lowing herds, and nibbling flocks, and verdant vales, and babbling brooks, and roaring plunging water-falls; a world of oil, of olive, and honey, of figs and dates, and pomegranates; a world whose stones are iron, and out of whose mountains one may dig brass, where one may eat bread without scarceness and not lack anything in it, and where the outgoings of the morning and the evening rejoice over us with an uninterrupted and a sempiternal joy;—and all this just as the birth place and the cradle of the nascent soul, and just for a day; all this magnificence and splendour and beauty, piled up, heap upon heap, as with the gorgeous and prodigal hand of the Eternal, in order that man might be accommodated for an hour, a short hour, as befits him who wears the high image of his God.

And then look too, at the casket which He has formed to hold the jewel—these bodies of ours, fearfully and wonderfully made. Look at that knowledge of wise invention whereby he has formed and fitted together these vessels, and viscera and vesicles, these sinews and limbs, and ligaments, these muscles and tissues, and tendons, these ganglions and glands, and granulations, these—but there is no exhaustion to this argument; there can be no utterance



given, by human tongue, to the fullness and force of the testimony which God hath borne to the value of the soul.

But why do we speak of the value set upon the soul in its primeval and unfallen excellency? *Look at the goodly price fixed on it now even in its ruins.* It has fallen far and foully from the high glories of its Eden home. It is only the mere wreck of what it was, a splendid temple fallen into utter decay. But even in its fall it is a great price at which he estimates it. I cannot understand, and therefore I cannot declare the value he fixes on it, *even now.* I am, most entirely unable to comprehend the length and the breadth, and the height, and the depth, of His love for it; but I know that it is a love stronger than death, that it is a jealousy crueller than the grave, that the coals of it are coals of fire that hath a most vehement flame:—I do not know what this love is, but I know that it is a fire of ardor, which many waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown; that it far transcends the love of a mother for the darling idol babe she dotes on; and transcends the uncalculating, the all-confiding, and the wonderful love of woman for the arm she leans on; that earth hath nothing equal or like it at all, that it is an infinite, eternal and unchangeable love.

I do not know, and I am sure, I shall never be able to know, how much He loves;—but this I know, that He grudges not the choicest treasure in the universe to save it. The Father so loves it, as to give his own, His only, His well-beloved son to humiliation and shame, and pain and death, to deliver it; the Son so loves it, that he is willing to breast and brave the whole brunt and burden of Almighty wrath that it might be spared; the Holy Spirit so loves it, that He is willing to take up his abode in it, and put up with many a wrong, and many a sore indignity, that He may save it from sin and woe, and win it back again to holiness and God; and the angels so love it, that thrill after thrill of holy joy, flashes like the electric pulses, through all their shining ranks as the news is borne home to heaven that another and another soul is saved.

I cannot tell aright of the worth of the soul, I am not able to grapple with this great idea, it is too high for me. But I know its value to be such, that all heaven on the one hand, and all hell on the other, are stirred and excited, and that there is carrying on between them a keen and deadly contest for who shall have the prized possession. I know that the Devil and all his legions, have

been watching and working and warring, by day and by night, for these six thousand years that they may wrest it away everlastingly, from its allegiance to its God. I know that God the Father, and Christ the Saviour, and the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier—the Triune Jehovah-Sabaoth does from his high throne, make bare His arm of salvation; that He musters his angels and marshals his cherubims, and yokes his chariots, and bids them forth to watch over the heirs of salvation, to defend them from the wiles of the devil, to lead them in the good and right way, to minister to their necessities, to console them in their sorrows, and to help them on in their journeys to their heavenly home.

Said I not well that it is a goodly value at which the soul is valued? And is it not reasonable that we devote our every energy to the good and godlike work, which the Sovereign Master has assigned to us, in this greatest and best and holiest of undertakings. Remember that these souls, with all their mighty wondrous powers, and with all their keen and deathless susceptibilities, are in a very important sense, intrusted to your care, and their whole eternity, of heaven or hell, made, in a very important sense, to hinge upon your fidelity. Remember that God has made every one of you his brother's keeper, and that if you withhold from him the Gospel which you might have given, and the appliances which you might have brought to bear upon him, he shall perish in his iniquity, but his blood shall be required at your hands. Is it not time then to be up and doing? Is it not time that every one of us, man and woman, old and young, would away with our indifference, and devote all the energy and all the influence which God may give us, to the great work of saving souls? But,

III. *There is no other undertaking in which we may be so useful.* If you wish to be useful in your day; if you desire that the world shall be the better that you have lived; if you wish to leave a monument behind you when you are gone; give yourself to the work we urge: A soul! What is it to *save a soul*, with all its unknown and unmeasured powers and susceptibilities, from uttermost wrath and bring it home to heaven? To understand this we must be able to conceive aright of the terrors of the wrath to come, and the blessings of the beautiful vision. We must be able to comprehend the horrors of the hopeless Hell from which it is saved, and the floods of splendor and joy, that are in that regal heaven into

which it is admitted. You must first have gone on a dreary tour of observation through all the dismal regions of despair. You must have measured the volume and the violence of that fire, which, like a stream of brimstone, is kindled by the breath of a sin-hating and a sin-avenging God. You must have seen the soul as it lays, pinioned down by the bolts of red and crisping wrath, on its bed of burning marl, and have marked its restless weary contortions, and have listened to its hopeless groanings. You must have seen the worm that never dies, as it coils and ever tighter coils, around the black and swollen and throbbing heart, and have marked those fangs, all dripping down its horrid jaws the big black drops of death, with which it stings and ever stings, the heart that must endure it; and you must have noted how all the infernal furies at once, gather round it as it suffers and sinks, and faints away, and howl and glare, and stamp, and gnash upon it, until oppressed with a load of misery which it cannot bear, it sinks down from the lowest deep, into a still lower depth of drear damnation; and you must compute and comprehend the weary years of evermore, through all of which the lost soul will swelter and writhe and sink down from one depth into another lower still, pressed ever lower and ever harder, in the breaking billows of a bottomless perdition.

And when you have examined and understood all this, then you will begin, and only begin, to comprehend what it is to save a soul. For, to understand it fully, you will have to go on a tour of observation as limitless, and, by two infinities, more pleasing than the former. You must have winged your way outward and upward among the stars, and beyond them, into the paradise of God. You must have gone on a blissful survey of the land where all sin is forever banished and all sorrow forever unknown; where the spotted hand of the assassin stains not, and the gloating eye of the seducer glares not, and the Father frowns and hides his face no more, nor leaves His children lone and desolate; where there is no curse nor crying nor sorrow nor pain; where the inhabitants shall not say I am rich, and shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more, nor the sunlight on them, nor any heat; where the black pail and the funeral sob, and the blighted hope, and the broken heart, and fatherless, houseless, homeless orphanage and widowhood, are nameless things and cannot enter; where the redeemed return and come with songs, and with everlasting joy upon their heads, and

stand in that blissful Presence where there is fulness of joy, and at that Right Hand, where there is pleasure forever-more. You must have looked upon the jasper walls, and pearly gates, and golden streets, of the glasslike City, and have seen its broad and deep, and flowing River, and the Tree of Life, as it blooms in celestial beauty, and yields its fruit the live-long years of heaven. And, above all this, and beyond it all, you must have tasted the joys, not human, not angelic, nor the joys of Cherubims, nor the thrones and dominions of highest created being—but the joys of their Lord, even of the glorious and mighty Lord, into the whole of which, the parable of the pounds assures us they shall be admitted. Matt. 25: 21. And then too, you must compute and comprehend the limitless roll of eternal cycles, through the whole of which, that soul, immortal as its Sire, shall live and luxuriate in the ineffable blaze and glory of its God, nearer the throne and louder in song, than the greatest and goodliest of the thrones on high.

But when you have done all this, you have only made a distant approach toward estimating the greatness and goodness of the work performed in the salvation of *one* soul—"some distant approach," I say, for indeed it is nothing more. You have estimated the great things done for that one soul; but you have not estimated the great things, which, in saving it, have been done for other souls.

Every soul has an influence either for good or for evil, upon all the souls around it. It is a law as all-prevailing in the moral, as is the law of gravitation in the material world, that mind influences mind universally and forever. Every human being has influence, and shall forever have, on all the human beings around it. Each of these shall go forth and become a centre of influence to another circle of immortals, pervading each of them with something of the spirit which it itself has been leavened. Each one of those goes forth to influence others in turn. And a tone, a look, puts in play a series of efficient causes that go on multiplying their results of glory or of shame, as they sweep onward, and sweep ever through the fields of a limitless progression.

Now to convert and save one soul, is to stay this endless, and endlessly increasing stream of evil which influences on the one hand, and to pulse forth a tide of perpetual, and of perpetually increasing good, on the other. To convert a soul from sin, is to

stay a river of death. It is to staunch it in its bitter fountains, and turn all its channels to powder, and dust. It is to smother down a kindling volcano, and stifle it to death in its burning home. It is to stop the march of an all-devouring pestilence that it go not forth, and pour abroad its deadly virus; curdling the life-blood of souls. It is to shut down a flood-gate and dry up a sluice of endless crime and misery in the empire of God.

But this is not all. To convert and save one soul is not only to stay evermore the spread and the flow of a deluge of burning and bitterness; it is to put into full jet and play a sempiternal fountain of purity and life and loveliness. It is to put into operation a train of influences for good, that, as resistlessly as the sun sends down his golden rays upon the earth, shall radiate a beaminess and a blessedness upon all around it; until the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for it, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. To convert and save one soul, is not only to awaken another song of celestial symphony in the bowers of the blessed, but that song shall awake another and another, and while the world stands, still another, until every hill and dale of the fadeless Paradise, shall grow vocal with the living symphony, tremble and sway hither and fro, to the accents of an anthem, loud as mighty thunderings, and sweet and glad as the tones of heaven's Eolian that thrills in the bowers above.

Now, brethren,—do I exaggerate? Do I color too highly? Am I raising hopes that are doomed to disappointment? Ah! believe it not. This is from the Tempter, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, I do not exaggerate. I am not even equal to the weight and the grandeur of my theme. You know in all your heart and in all your soul that the half has not been told. There is a depth and breadth and power in my argument which neither the strength of man nor angel can sustain. There are unspeakable things wrapped up in my theme which eternity alone can unfold; and which eternity will be unfolding forever. Why then are we, why is almost the entire Church so cold and sluggish and heartless, in the glorious Godlike work? Let us remember the part with confusion and sorrow; and let us fill the future with efforts which shall bear some proportion to the greatness and goodness of the work which is before us.

IV. Let us in the next place consider, that *there is no way in*

*which we can secure so great a reward to ourselves as by devoting all our powers to this work. Because,*

I. *It is a work, the success of which is certain.* The sure word of promise sealed by the blood of the well ordered covenant, makes it so. We have good reason to believe that never did Christians carry this Gospel into a neighborhood where it became not the power of God unto salvation to some. It is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. It is an incorruptible seed, living and abiding forever. As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither again, but watereth the earth and maketh it to bring forth and to bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so is that word. It returneth not void to Him that sent it, but accomplishes that which He pleases, and prospers in the thing whereunto He sent it. Be assured, my brethren, this is a good work and a sure reward. Not so with any earthly enterprise. The hand of change and decay is laid heavily on all things here below. There may be a form and a phantom of earthly bliss and beauty before you. It may light its eye with the beams of love, and wreath its cheek with the smile of joy, and beckon you to its throbbing bosom; but even while you catch and deliriously clasp it to your aching heart, as if in derisive mockery, it will vanish from your view, and leave you a weary disappointed, broken-hearted man.

But not so with the enterprise we urge. Know that to him who soweth righteousness there is a sure reward. We are certain that even though you mourn, as you go forth, bearing precious seed, yet the harvest cometh, when, with shoutings, you shall: gather home the sheaves. It is a position which all scripture and all history will substantiate, that never did the Church make an earnest effort, without being met, by God, with a corresponding blessing. And this we may expect again, and expect ever. Prove me now, saith God, and see if I will not pour out a blessing, until there be no more room to receive.

Reflect also, that whilst the reward of this work is sure, *it is also greater*, than all other rewards. The man who engages in it shall have—not fame, nor riches, nor splendor, *but "souls for his hire."* And who can tell the priceless blessedness of such a recompense? no one! And yet it may seem to give us a dim and distant view of it, to reflect that it was just such a line as this that led the glo-

rious Jesus down from the bosom and blessedness of His Father to tabernacle among men. He who made the soul and who knows its value, did not think the humiliation and shame and suffering and death of the atonement, too much to pay for its redemption. No eye hath seen, no tongue can tell, no finite understanding can comprehend, that eternal and ineffable communion in glory, which the Son had with the Father, before the world was. But whatever it may have been, we know that He was willing to leave it all.—Nay that before the hills were created, and before there were any fountains abounding with water, He exulted in the anticipated undertaking, that he rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and His delights were with the sons of men. Wonderful value of an immortal soul! when he who knows its worth, is willing to leave the fathomless, shoreless, limitless gulf of glory and joy that are in the bosom of the Godhead, and go forth to a work of toil and struggle, and of such a deep endurance as the universe had never seen before, and will likely never see again, and yet rejoice in the undertaking. Yea, even when the breaking billows of wrath were overwhelming him, when the immense fires of an all-devouring justice were licking up the life blood of his soul, when wicked men and all the demons at once, were upon him, when he was left to tread the wine-press of the wrath of God alone, when all the energies of infinite wrath were put forth to the uttermost against Him, when He lay sweltering in the heat of a fire which shall ere long melt down the mountains and lick up the oceans, and burn to heaven, when amidst strong crying tears and blood, He reeled and staggered, and sunk down to die, beneath the presence of a load that will by and by drag you sun from his fiery home, and grind this great rock-ribbed iron-bound globe to powder,—we are assured that even then, He saw of the travail of his soul, *and was satisfied!* Yea! “the recompense of reward” sustained Him in that trying hour; and He *gladly* endured all. O my brethren, what is this wondrous, Godlike, deathless thing we call a soul! and what must be its mighty priceless value; when, even Jesus is willing, and glad to save it, even at so great a sacrifice!

These things are too high for me. I cannot apprehend, and I am sure I shall never be able to apprehend, the whole richness of his recompense, who shall have souls for his hire. But one thing I know. It is a hire for which Emanuel was willing to empty Himself of his

glory, and breast and brave the malice of earth, and the fury of hell, and the terrible fierceness of the wrath of the Almighty God, that He might earn a covenant title to it; and when His work is done, possessor of heaven and earth though he be, yet it is *with exceeding great joy* that He exhibits the fruits of his toil, at the throne of His Father, saying, "Behold I and the children which thou hast given me!" Dear, dear, fellow-laborers, in this high undertaking, if ever again we are discouraged, by the toils and sacrifices that our work requires at our hands; let us remember our reward at the last; let us look to Jesus who, for the joy of such an hire, did cheerfully, eagerly, wade through every gulf of burning and of bitterness, that he might claim it as His.

3. In fine, This reward is not only surer and greater than all rewards beside; *it is also the most lasting of all.* To have souls for our inheritance is indeed to provide bags that wax not old, and to lay up a treasure eternal in the heavens. It is better to have souls than to have worlds for our hire, not only because they are worth more, but also because they will last longer.

It is, perhaps, a very general feeling among men, that our universe shall last forever; insomuch that some theologians\* have conjectured that the happiness of heaven will be largely increased by a study of the existent works of nature; and as they are probably infinite, (such is the plausible supposition) therefore finite minds may profitably spend eternity in their contemplation. But we are by no means sure of the correctness of such expectations. We have never been told, and therefore do not know that matter shall be eternal—that suns shall shine and worlds shall roll forever. We know of at least one world, that the hand of change and decay is upon it, and that it is passing away; and who is wise enough to say that this shall not be so with other worlds. As for the heavens that spread over us, we know that they "shall wax old like a garment," and "be folded up like a vesture" and "*exist no more.*" We know that when the time arrives for the epiphany of Him who sits on the great white throne, that this earth and these heavens shall vanish into annihilation, that "they shall flee away, and *no place* be found for them." Now who is he that can give us infallible assurance that the same thing shall never happen to every heaven and to every earth in the universe of God? Are you per-

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\* See Dick's *Philosophy of a Future State*; Junkin on *Prophecy*, &c.



fectly sure that the present material universe shall stand forever? Who told us that the creative arm and the inventive mind of God are exhausted?—that He has brought forth the master-piece of his power and skill, and that nothing new may ever be expected to come forth from the depths of Godhead—that no other forms of beauty may ever be expected to spring, blazing out from the light inaccessible, and gleam in glory as they roll afar? I say *where*, and who is he, gifted with the immense intelligence of knowing that none of these things shall ever be; but that the present material fabric is destined to shine and wheel, a grand, immense monotony forever. For myself, I am but of yesterday and know nothing. I have never been closeted in council with my God, and am not able to tell of His secret purposes. But God is infinitely great, and “his years are throughout eternal generations;” and doubtless there are conceptions and purposes higher than the heavens above our thought, that exist away down in the depths of his uncreated essence, to hereafter be manifested forth before the wondering eyes of the glorified spirits that worship around him. But whatever may betide—though world after world pass away, though universe after universe, each differing in essence and in attribute, and each grander and lovelier than its predecessor should come to the birth and live and die and pass away, like the sickly and short-lived generations of men—still, through all those immense, bewildering transitions the soul shall live; and he who “*has souls for his hire*” shall live to luxuriate in a sure, a great, and an everlasting recompense.

Let us then, my friends, imbue our souls with these sublime considerations. Let us reflect on the undoubted authority and command of God, that we give ourselves to this work. Let us consider that we are left in this world of sin and sorrow, after our conversion, for no other reason conceivable by us than that we may engage in it; that there is no way in which we can effect so much good; and no way in which we can secure so great and so lasting a recompense; and then following the dictates of reason, the intuitions of conscience, and the high behests of inspiration, let us here and now, by an inward covenant bind our souls to prosecute this work with a single eye, and with all our might, until it please a merciful Master to unwreath his yoke and bid us to rest.

# S E R M O N X.

## BREACH OF COVENANT, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

BY REV. J. S. COWPER,

*Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod of New-York.*

'So He drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubims and a flaming sword,' &c.—*Genesis*, 3: 24.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The great work was finished and the Divine architect looked abroad and pronounced it good. One event rose up after another in beautiful succession until at last the platform was completed in Eden, and man stepped forward in the image of his Maker, leading to the altar his future companion in the full bloom of a holy and intelligent beauty. But scarcely have we had time to present our gratulations when an enemy intrudes with insidious gait and pestilential breath, and stamps on the fair creation the image of the beast and infuses a virulent poison into the very being of the fairest and the noblest of that creation. "Adam where art thou? Who told thee that thou wast naked. Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat." Interrogatories which bespeak a sad change.

We have, in the transactions between God and man, all the constituents of a covenant. The *two parties*—God and man. The *condition*—perfect obedience. The *reward*--life. The *penalty*—death.

It would be a mockery on the part of the Creator to treat with one of his creatures on an unfair footing—it would be a lowering of the divine standard. We dare scarcely suppose such a thing without coming too near the confines of blasphemy. Were I to admit this, I must also admit that God is unjust and imperfect, and that revelation contradicts itself, and I am then left in the dizzy

whirl of idle speculation. Nay, forbid it; let God be true and every man a liar: for he did indeed make man upright, but they have sought out many inventions. It must be granted that man was created with a liability to fall; this arises from the nature of a created being. Every creature, the very highest and purest, is liable to fall, unless God has pledged himself to the contrary. As to those who object to the smallness of the test of obedience—the eating or the not eating of the fruit of a certain tree—let me say, they do not appear to have a proper estimate of the exceeding broadness and excellence of the law of God. To my mind the apparent insignificance of the test places the holiness and the justice of the Supreme Judge and Lawgiver in a more beautiful and exalted position; and his goodness is also seen, for in obeying there would be no sacrifice, no privation, no hardship. The fruit was as good for food and as pleasant to the eye, but perhaps not more so than that of the other trees; and there was nothing sacred in it that might be profaned by human touch. Hence there was nothing like the exercise of tyrannical authority, but simply the divine command. Man, being a free agent, was the proper subject of that command—he was bound to obey the entire moral law which written on his heart, and it pleased God to sum up his obedience in one point, in one positive precept, without at all interfering with the moral precepts, but rather to shew man's regard for the naked authority of God. Thus the matter rested. Two objects were presented, the good and the evil—thus shewing that man was a free agent—had he not possessed liberty of choice he could not have yielded moral obedience, he would have been a mere machine—and then as a machine, or as those objects which are regulated by physical laws, he would have glorified God, but no farther.

I know some one may ask why did not God do more, why did he not fortify man against all temptations, instead of leaving him balanced between good and evil? I do not know why, and I will not ask my Maker; but without doubt he had a reason in his own mind. That reason may be given us in the future state, when we shall be better able to comprehend it than at present. One thing—it does not appear that the unclouded intellect of Adam started any such query. He was doubtless satisfied with the proposed condition; and the nearer we get to the fountain of truth and light, either we get a deeper insight into those things or more faith and

more humility, and a more implicit trust in God. But you might also inquire, Why did God endow man with a power, the abuse of which might involve him in misery. And in order to be consistent you would have to admit that God did wrong in making such a creature as man, and that the master-piece of creation was the only one that reflected on the wisdom and goodness of the Creator—but the very wrecks of humanity shew their unwillingness to come to that conclusion, for we see them still clinging to life with more than instinctive tenacity. It is better to live, say they, than to die. All we have we will give for our life. We care nothing about the future—we do not believe in a hell—we fear not the pains of death; we only want to live—because life is sweet.” How passing sweet must it have been to our first parents in paradise.

Having spoken of obedience, the condition of the covenant, glance for a moment at the *reward*—eternal life, immortal felicity. Man could not then, any more than now, have any claim on God—he owed everything to the author of his existence—from him he had received all his powers, physical and moral; and, in short, the idea of merit on the part of a creature in this sense is altogether absurd. But God gave him the power to acquire a right to everlasting happiness, and had he fulfilled the condition during the time specified for trial, then he could have come in the strength of the promise of God and laid claim to the reward. Whether that would have been translation to heaven of himself and offspring we know not, although it seems not improbable.

The not obtaining the reward then, we have seen, was no fault of God, but lay entirely with man himself. God created him perfectly holy, with no defect or tendency to sin, but with entire ability to keep every iota of the law. Motives of the fittest kind were set before him, the trial was easy, and the reward fully equivalent to the penalty. God could have kept man from falling, it is true, but he was under no obligations to do so: and seeing that he had entered into a covenant with him and given him ability to perform the conditions of that covenant, he was bound to do no more. Nay, it was perfectly consistent for the Almighty to hold on in the even tenor of his way. Interference would have nullified the whole transaction of a covenant, and would have placed God in the light of a mother, experimenting with her little charge, trying whether or not it can walk, and finding that it is losing its balance, she



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# THE PULPIT

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## ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN

## CHURCH.

CONSISTING OF

SERMONS BY THE MINISTERS

OF THE

FOUR SYNODS OF THAT DENOMINATION.

EDITED BY

REV. JAMES PRESTLEY.

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catches it in her arms. Such ideas of the All-wise Jehovah would be unworthy of a rational creature—even of one under the effects of the fall—and how unbecoming the noble father of the human family, standing out as he did in the pride of a holy and vigorous manhood, having his loins girt about with the girdle of his Creator. God did indeed break the fall of man, else immediate perdition would have been his doom. This leads me to speak of the penalty.

A penalty is not essential to the existence of a covenant, and may be left out, as in those covenants between man and man in which the only consequence of a failure, on the part of him who had engaged to perform a particular service, is that he loses the reward. But merely not receiving a reward can hardly be styled a penalty. In the other case, however, a penalty was attached; because man was under the highest obligations to obey, and justice, in the event of disobedience, demanded satisfaction.

I may now remark, that the first immediate consequence of the fall was the opening of the eyes—"they knew that they were naked." Now, while this referred in part to their bodily nakedness, as seen from their making unto themselves garments, yet the chief nakedness was of a spiritual kind. Had it been only the former, Adam need not have said, I was afraid, but I was ashamed. His confession runs thus—"I heard thy voice in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked."—I felt I had done wrong, my transgression came up before me, I could not hide it, I knew thy pure eye would behold it and thy fierce wrath would burn, and I hid myself; but my wickedness still finds me out, and here thou settest my secret sins in the light of thy countenance. Long ago as that was, and old as the Bible is, I question whether there is any real difference yet in the nature and consequence of sin. There is first the secret desire to do the abominable thing, the desire to know and experience something that is forbidden; and we either reason ourselves into the commission of the crime, or we are reasoned in by others. Inducements are invariably held out by one or other of the soul's adversaries—madness arises in the heart, blindness gathers over the vision, the deed is done. Reaction takes place, the veil is rent in twain, the maniac having spent his force reels backward, clasps his forehead and would fain shut out the light of truth and conviction, fearfulness takes hold of him, he cannot lift his eyes, and he vainly attempts to hide himself from the All-seeing Jehovah.



The next consequence is the *summoning of the culprits* into the presence of the judge. The defence of the prisoners is listened to and the sentence pronounced. I need not repeat the evasive plea advanced by both the man and the woman. The same trait of nature is to be met with every day of our lives, and it is only an aggravation of the offence. How much more honorable and safe, humbly, yet promptly to answer—Guilty, my Lord. “How should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.” Judgment was given according to the already received and approved standard of immortal truth and justice. You shall die according to your own agreement—“Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.” Death physical, death spiritual, death eternal is the penalty. In fact, the execution of the sentence had begun the very moment the unholy desire had taken possession of the heart. It began to shew itself in a cowardly fear and shrinking. The body began to feel the effects of sin, and as they walked through the garden, they discovered that now to them the rose had a thorn and the bee a sting; and above all, the writhings of conscience rendered their situation intolerable: so that God in his compassion, as well as his justice, drove out the man. That is the last consequence mentioned.

In reading the history one is apt to think that man was driven out lest he should put forth his hand and pluck the fruit of the tree of life. Now, that tree was nothing more than a symbol and seal of immortality, and could no more give life than can the water at baptism regenerate the heart and sanctify the soul. No more could the fruit of that tree give life, than can the symbols of the broken body and shed blood of our Redeemer in the Lord's Supper. But Adam had just as little right to eat that fruit after breaking the covenant of his God, and *unchurching himself*, as those have to sit down at the Lord's table to partake of the elements who in the sight of God and man have violated their covenant engagements, and shewn most conclusively that they have neither part nor lot with the people of God. If they once had, or seemed to have, they have now forfeited their privileges and most righteously would be driven out, and most mercifully too. Supposing they come and partake, will that give them life? Will it give them life even if they should think so? Nay, would it not be an aggravation of their offences and an act of high-handed presumption for them thus

to intrude? And would it not be merciful to drive them away from vain refuges and false hopes; to send them to their own place, and thus give them a little space to repent, if happily they might seek after God. This appears to be the way God reasoned—"Behold the man is become one of us, to know good and evil"—alluding indignantly, if not ironically, to the bait held out by the tempter—"Ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil." "The man is become one of us, forsooth:—how deplorably has he been deceived—how sadly misled—and perchance his knowledge will cause him to stretch forth his hand, take of the fruit of the tree of life and live forever"—i. e., with the intention of living forever—and again he would find himself deceived. Poor man, let us not aggravate his calamity, let us send him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground, and to seek employment more befitting his condition; there is no hope of salvation for him here, let him seek it elsewhere; he has no right here—here he would not be happy; every walk and bower would remind him of his former condition; the fruits of paradise would not now be relished by his perverted taste; the music of its minstrels would now grate upon his ear or sound so sad and plaintive as to cause his spirit to faint within him, and that spirit could not again be revived by the sweet communings of his Maker, one glance of whose countenance would cause the sinner to shrink, to shrivel, and to die. No, the man must be driven out, and driven out he was. Justice said, thus it must be: and mercy said, it is well: and although Satan exulted in the bruising of man's heel, yet his shout of triumph was stifled by the breaking of his own head. Behold justice tempered with mercy—see it even in the occupation of the man—"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." He is kept in mind of his origin and his destiny, and labor is a relief to his body and his mind; the circumstances are adapted to his new condition, and a blessing is extracted from the curse. The better to keep him in his appropriate sphere and the more effectually to guard against the indulgence of false hopes and vain desires, the law and the Gospel are hung out in burning hieroglyphics—"God placed at the east end of the garden, cherubims and a flaming sword." That sword was the emblem of vengeance and it would continue to gleam and to glitter, and to threaten the destruction of man, who should attempt to approach the tree of life, until an almighty substitute should be found to take the place of the devoted

victim and receive into his own bosom that sword, ordained for the punishment of man's transgression. It was brandished around the tree, impatient of vengeance; but, blessed be God's name, it glanced on the cherubims, and hope was rekindled in the bosom of the offender. The cherubims I take to be the same as the four beasts spoken of by John in the Revelation, or the four living creatures spoken of by Ezekiel, and which, I think, are emblems of the ministry—"And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man, the face of a man, and the face of a lion, and the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle." The face of a man, because to man is committed the ministry of reconciliation: with man he has to negotiate, and his bearing must be frank, manly, and conciliating. At the same time he must be bold as a lion; he must bear the banner of Him who is the lion of the tribe of Judah. He goes forth king of the forest, shaking the dew from his shaggy mane, pressing his feet upon the prey, and striking terror into their hearts by the thunder of his voice. Like the ox he must bear the yoke of his master, and patiently plod and labor in his service, and expect to be goaded often, when he is endeavoring to labor to the best of his ability. Especially must his teachings point heavenward, for heavenward he will at last take his flight. The mortal man will lie down in his narrow house, the ox will go to the stall of his master: and the lion will crouch and lie down in his lair; but the eagle will soar aloft, poise her pinions on the pure ether and bask in the rays of eternal day. So the soul will return to the garden of delights; the sword will be returned to its scabbard, and he who dwelleth between the cherubims shall shine forth. Then, like the voice of many waters, will be heard the new song—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

The consequences of the fall to the human family, or the representative character of Adam, is too broad a field to enter on at present. Let us rather take it for granted that we are all under sin, the children of wrath even as others. That we are all as an unclean thing, and that our iniquities like the wind continually carry us away. Then from the depths of our ruin and degradation let us look up to him who sits between the cherubims. Where

you find the bane, near by you may find the antidote—beside the nettle is to be found an herb that will heal its prickly stings—so not far from the father of lies was the God of truth—not far from the insignia of the first preacher of heresy and abomination, might be seen the emblems of the ambassadors of Christ. God is mysterious and incomprehensible; but just, and wise, and good—“though clouds and darkness are round about him, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne; mercy and truth go before him.” Law and Gospel are wrapped up together. “The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.” The sword which turned every way glittered on the cherubims, hence it was emblematic of the law. The lightning flashes along the edge of the precipice to show the belated wanderer the danger of his way, and it bids him hasten back to his abode, lest the storm break upon his head. That is all the law can do, yet it is much. It shows the driven out man the folly and the danger of wandering from God, and that his only safe course will be to turn about and fall before the rod that smites. The small voice from the cherubims bids him draw near and clasp the knees of his justly offended Father. The strokes of the rod will then fall lightly; nay, he is too near the heart of God to receive any farther injury. The voice says, “Art thou not guilty and hell-deserving?” “Yes,” is the answer; “but have mercy on me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.” The soft answer framed by the Spirit of God turns away wrath; God creates the clean heart and renews the right spirit; and then the tongue sings aloud of his righteousness. The law brings the wandering sinner to Christ; Christ takes him up and leads him back into the garden; yea, brings him into the New Jerusalem, and places him on the right hand of our God.

Some of you profess to have been brought back: your eyes were opened; what did you see? Did you behold the nakedness of your soul? How did it appear? Was it not full of all uncleanness, hatred, and variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings and all other abominations;—and could you for a moment endure the sight? Or did you turn away with loathing and disgust? What met your eye? Fair fields and goodly prospects? or behind you a sword; before you, hell and destruction? What did you do? To what one did you turn for help? To retreat was

impossible, to advance was certain death. What a pass you had come to, to cross swords with the Omnipotent, or to rush into the flames. You glanced wildly before and behind: and in an instant you doubled your instrument and flung the fragments to the ground. That was well. Who dares contend with the Almighty? Who that tries the unequal combat shall prosper? He makes the mountains feel his wrath, and they forsake their seats. He touches the hills and they smoke. "Behold, the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. How then can man be justified with God—or how can he be clean that is born of a woman." But your conqueror bade you look up, and instead of encountering the fierce glance of his wrath, you met the smiles of forgiveness and love. You arose and shook your garments from the dust, and entered heart and hand into the service of your God. Driven out, indeed, but redeemed and soon to be brought back; fallen, but not utterly cast down; faithless once, but now believing; despairing once, but now elate with hope; hating once with a bitter hatred, but now loving with a love divine; houseless, homeless, friendless once, but now befriended by the God of glory, and possessed of earnest and foretastes of that "inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away: reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might:" a work yet remains to be done; the enemy that caused your exile must in his turn be driven out—"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood—but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickednesses in high places." Go forward, then, to battle and to death, victorious death, and the Lord go before you and be the breaker up of your way, and let your last breath bare on it the shout of triumph—"O death! where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory? thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

But my impenitent hearer, I have yet a word for you. Can it be that you imagine yourself in the garden, while you are feeding, or rather starving, on those husks? Ah, you are laboring under

the poison of sin; and instead of growing better, you are every day becoming worse. You are wandering farther and farther from the fountain, and sinking deeper and deeper into the miry clay. Your transgressions are accumulating, and unless grace prevent, you will go down to perdition. Let hell be figurative or literal, there will be no difference as to the pain—exclusion from heaven will be pain enough. Conscience-gnawings will be more excruciating than cancer—the plagues of the heart more intolerable than the scorplings of the pit. How the soul shudders at the bare mention of such things. Flee, then, to the city of refuge, lest the avenger of blood overtake you. May I leave you now, or must I still reason? God stops to reason, why may not I? One moment, then, let us reason together—let us start on common ground—salvation is the one thing needful for you as well as for me. God is the author of salvation; on this we are agreed. Salvation must be effected in God's own way; that way is through Christ in the use of the proper means; these means are made effectual by the Spirit in the ordinances of God's appointment; these ordinances are instituted in the Church; here the oracles have been deposited for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Now, if any one is saved out of the Church, that is with God. You are not likely to be that one; you have no right to expect any such thing, you have no right to expect any special miraculous interference in your case. It will be wise and safe for you to take God at his word, and to walk in his prescribed way. You are a lost, wandering sheep, but the voice of the Shepherd calls you back. Come unto me, thou guilty, polluted and helpless offender; come, thou driven out rebel; come, thou chief of sinners, cast down the weapons of your rebellion, look up to him who sitteth between the cherubims. In fine, listen to the sum and substance of law and Gospel, the Alpha and Omega of all preaching, while it sounds out from the excellent glory, and be admonished: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned."

## XI.

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### APOSTACY—WHAT IS IT?

BY WILLIAM CASKEY,

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“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth, which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing: whose end is to be burned.” Heb. 6: 4-8

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” The religion of the Bible is pre-eminently a revealed religion. Its mysteries are too profound, its themes too stupendous for the finite mind of man to have evolved. Neither the plan, the means, the design—none of all the doctrines of redemption—from their very nature, could ever be the subject of man’s dictation. Where else than in the sovereign will and good pleasure of God, was it possible they could originate? This is the pure fountain of truth whence they have been revealed to us. For it was God “who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, and hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.” The Scriptures are this revelation. They are the truth of God, sacred as his veracity. Let not, therefore, presumptuous man add thereto, lest he be found a liar; and God add unto him the plagues of his judgments. Nor let his sacriligious hand pluck thence one truth; lest the Lord also “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.” And shall not he be counted guilty of adding to the Divine oracles, who impiously ingrafts on their language, opinions foreign to the truth which that language evidently teaches? And does not

he take from them, who, in unbelief, reject any of their manifest doctrines? How shall such, if they persist, escape an awful retribution?

It is the mark of a sincere follower of Christ, that he not only search assiduously these records from the pen of inspiration, but that he also unhesitatingly yield the assent of his mind with the consent of his heart, to whatever is there revealed. Though the elemental truths of religion are brought down to the capacity of the weakest Christian, yet even these truths cannot be known, nor will they be understood without plying the proper means. Moreover, there are not only elemental truths, but there is also a gradation of higher doctrines—not only milk for babes in Christ, but also strong meat for those who are of full age. Yea, more; into the mysteries of redemptive love the angels desired to look. It is a vast theme for eternity to unfold.

Now these revealed truths of God are sought out by all those that take pleasure in them. The Christian does not feel disposed to rest in present attainments. He would grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He feels disposed to say with Paul, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after. . . . Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are *behind*, and *reaching forth* unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ." And that we may acquire an accurate knowledge of what is revealed—that we may advance in that wisdom which pertains to our eternal interest; in following after—in reaching forth unto those things which are before—in pressing toward the mark, when we study and investigate the word of God for this purpose, we must have a scrupulous guard over ourselves—our ideas—our motives—our feelings. The one prominent, leading, absorbing object, must be to arrive at the truth—the truth, not as it accords with our independent views of what is right, and wise and noble; but the *truth* as it is *revealed*. Men may be warm disputants, and contend only for victory. And such not unfrequently settle down in opinions upon which, once in their cooler hours, they would have looked as chimerical.

Prejudice and prepossessions must be laid aside—thrown to the winds. We all know what an influence they have to bias the mind



in the common affairs of life. How easily a man is induced to yield his assent to what he *wishes* to be true! But how hard to any but an humble, honest man, to yield to manifest truth, if he have once committed himself, and has other interests in the opposite scale.

But the truth, when perceived, must be received in the love of it, as the sacred word of that God who is love—as a transcript of his will to us, holy, righteous, and good—worthy of our warmest approbation. Though one should be convinced of a truth, if there be a hatred of it, he immediately sets his ingenuity to work to explain it away; and by taking isolated cases he may wrest the Scriptures until they seem to bear testimony for him. He may get away from the hated doctrine! He may finally delude himself into the belief of a contrary opinion; but it is with an appalling sentence hanging over his head. God, who cannot lie, and will not be mocked, has solemnly declared: “because they received not the word of the truth, that they might be saved. . . . For this cause God shall send them strong delusions that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Now it becomes every candidate for eternity, to see to it, that while he investigates the oracles of divine truth, his mind be not clogged with such influences. These, and not the abstruseness of the doctrine itself—these, and not its inexplicable nature, form the greatest barrier to the proper understanding and the cordial reception of the truths of the Gospel. This much we infer from what the apostle has said at the introduction of the exhortation in which the subject of this discourse is found. His language is, “Of whom we have many things to say and *hard* to be uttered, seeing *ye are dull of hearing*.” The difficulty was not in announcing the doctrines, but in the disposition of the hearers not to receive them. And this is spoken in connection with the fact, that though they had abundant means, and ample opportunities to become teachers, yet “they had need that one teach them again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.” And that Christians should remain in a state of pupilage—mere babes in Christ—is not only dishonorable, but is also an extremely dangerous symptom. Hence the apostle exhorts them to advance in their Christian course, while he leads the way to a knowledge of the complete Gospel system. “Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us

go on unto perfection." But, after being sufficiently instructed in the elementary doctrines of Christianity; after having had sufficient evidence of their truth; if any draw back, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him." It is unnecessary to expend any more labor on such, in "laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment;" because their case is hopeless. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

In this passage an important principle is brought prominently to view.

1. Here is a class of individuals marked out by certain characteristics. They "were once enlightened." They were theoretically instructed in the doctrines of the Gospel. "They had received the knowledge of the truth." Nor was it a mere speculative knowledge. It had some real effect in producing convictions of sin; in reforming the life; and in leading to a profession of Christianity. This much appears from the fact that they are supposed to fall away.

But they have also "tasted of the heavenly gift." What this heavenly gift is, we can not certainly determine. But the expression can not with propriety be interpreted to mean the Spirit in his miraculous influences, who is sometimes called the *gift* of God; for then there would be no difference in its meaning from that of the next clause, "partakers of the Holy Ghost." Christ, however, is pre-eminently "*the heavenly gift*," in whom, and by whom are all other gifts of God to apostate man. He is the gift of God. For "God so loved the world that he *gave his only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." And he declares, "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. I am the living bread which came down from heaven." And as in this gift are summed up all others, they taste of it, who participate in any of the blessings of the Gospel.

A third characteristic of the persons of whom the apostle speaks, is, that they "were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." In the apostolic age of the Church that remarkable prophecy was fulfilled. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God,) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. . . . And on my servants and on my hand-maidens I will pour out, in those days, of my Spirit, and they shall prophecy." There was not only an effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles and disciples on the day of Pentecost, but subsequently multitudes of others also became partakers of him, in his extraordinary influences. He was thus communicated by the laying on of the hands of the apostles; as at Samaria, and at Ephesus; and even without the imposition of hands, was he communicated; as to the Gentile converts while Peter was preaching in the house of Cornelius. And those who thus received the miraculous powers of the Spirit, "were made partakers of the Holy Ghost."

The fifth verse appears to be explanatory of what is said in the fourth respecting those persons. The apostle had said that they "were once enlightened and had tasted of the heavenly gift." Now these expressions are explained and qualified to mean that "they have tasted of the good word of God." They have experienced some of the consolations which its gracious tidings pour into the soul. They indulge some hope of those celestial blessings with which its promises are so richly laden. He had also said that they "were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." And this he now limits to being partakers of his miraculous powers, which were granted so abundantly in "the world to come," or in the period of the Gospel dispensation. The persons, then, who are here described, had full evidence of the divine origin and nature of the Christian religion.

But it is supposed that they abandon the Christian profession: "If they shall fall away." This can not refer to any particular act of sin into which men, through the power of temptation, may possibly fall. For the Lord Jesus himself has said, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Moreover, Peter fell into sin in this sense, yet he was renewed again to repentance, and that speedily. But this falling away is wilfully in the face of all this light and evidence, to apostatize, from the profession of Christianity, and to become manifest enemies to Christ. And in so

doing "they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." They approve, by their conduct, the actions of those who did crucify him. And they do what they can to expose him to the greatest ignominy and contempt.

Now if men enjoying such high privileges as have been stated, apostatize, in the manner here supposed, their case, at least as far as man has any thing to do with it, is hopeless. This truth is solemnly announced in the passage under review. "For it is impossible . . . to renew them again unto repentance." The means of grace have already been exhausted upon them in vain. And if the best and most efficient medicine can not check the disease while it is comparatively weak and the patient is yet in his vigor, how inefficient must the same medicines be when the disease gets the mastery and prostrates the man? He must go down to the chambers of death. "There is a sin unto death: I do not say he shall pray for it. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but certain fearful looking for judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries."

II. Now a question of no common interest here forces itself upon the mind. Does the passage under consideration prove that any who have once been regenerated, ever thus fall away,—thus apostatize? If it prove anything in favor of the affirmative of this question, it proves too much to suit the views of most persons who support that opinion. For if it prove that men actually fall from a state of grace, it proves also with equal conclusiveness, that they can never again be recovered. Hence it becomes them, as well as those who favor a contrary opinion, to clear the passage of difficulty.

And in the discussion and decision of this question, the last—the ultimate appeal, is "to the *law* and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no *light* in them." The word of God alone is the supreme arbiter in matters of faith. It is the highest court of appeals, all whose decisions are final and irreversible. "And we know of nothing that goes further to nullify this standard of truth, or to dethrone it from that supremacy which it should occupy, than the habit of subjecting the interpretation of its passages to any other principle than that all its parts *must consist* and be in harmony with each other. The literal sense of one of its announcements must be sustained or qualified only by

the literal and equally authoritative sense of some other of its announcements. And what discovery can be more pleasing to the Christian, than that by which the apparent inconsistency between two places is so cleared up that all necessity for encroaching upon the literal sense of either of them is completely done away." Let us then compare the passage under consideration with other passages of the holy oracles. We find it solemnly commanded by the faithful and true witness, "My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall *never perish*, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Paul is no less explicit on this subject. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Again, in rapturous exultation he exclaims: "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 I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The meaning of these passages is obvious,—the language is unequivocal,—the decision irreversible. These three passages in their connection agree in sustaining the doctrine that the revelation between Christ and believers can never be dissolved, that they will never come short of eternal life. How then shall we reconcile them with the passage under consideration? The task is by no means impossible. There is a principle prominently set forth in another passage, which if applied, will remove the apparent inconsistency, while it also leaves all these to be understood in their plain and literal sense.

The apostle John, by the same infallible Spirit of inspiration, says of those who fall away, "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." Here the fact of their falling away is taken as conclusive evidence that they never were Christians except in appearance—that they never were regenerated—

“born again.” Apply then this principle to the case before us. It is supposed that the persons whose attainments the apostle here describes “fall away.” And upon that supposition we are warranted to conclude, according to the declaration of the Holy Spirit, God himself, that they *never* were any thing else than counterfeit—spurious Christians.

And is it possible, you inquire, that they could have these qualifications and still be unregenerated? Let us try their characters. “They were once enlightened.” And so are all who have the Gospel. Even a critical knowledge of the Scriptures may be obtained, and not unfrequently has been possessed by the avowed enemies of Christ and his doctrine. And at the close of the second chapter of the second epistle of Peter, it may be seen what influence this knowledge may have upon men while yet strangers to God: “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” Here the apostle applies the principle already stated: because “they are again entangled” in sin, and because “they turn from the holy commandment,” he takes it for granted that they have not been sheep of Christ. For he immediately adds: “But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” They had escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” yet their natures and dispositions were unchanged—they were only dogs in sheep’s clothing, or washed swine, as their subsequent actions unequivocally testify.

And though they “were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,” yet so also are they who experience his common operations. Moreover many were favored with the extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit, so that they could work miracles, and say in the day of judgment, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works?” But hear their sentence pronounced by him who judgeth according to truth: “Then will I profess unto them, I

*never knew* you: depart from me ye workers of iniquity." Christ says, "My sheep hear my voice and I *know* them." But though these persons had wrought miracles, the declaration is "I *never knew* you." With all their gifts they never were members of his family. They never were real Christians.

But they are also said to "have tasted the good word of God." And so did the stony ground hearers in the parable of the sower. "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." Though he experienced joy on the reception of the word—though he had tasted that it was good, yet he could not endure temptation; and for an obvious reason, he had no root in himself. And he is well represented by the stony places which are incapable of sustaining vegetation. He was never the good ground which produces fruit. And the very terms in which the description is couched, evidently indicates that these persons are not such as live by feeding upon "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." They "have *tasted* the heavenly gift:" they "have *tasted* the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." But there is a difference between tasting (a little) and eating as food for the nourishment for the system. The stony ground hearers, of whom we have just spoken, *tasted* the word: they had a transient, agreeable relish of it. But mark the difference between this *tasting* and the language employed by the Savior himself: "I am that bread of life. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye *eat* the flesh of the Son of man, and *drink* his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso *eateth* my flesh, and *drinketh* my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that *eateth* my flesh, and *drinketh* my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him. . . . This is that bread which came down from heaven. . . . he that *eateth of this bread shall live forever.*"

And in the context immediately connected with the passage under consideration, we have an illustration introduced sustaining the same position. "For the earth which drinketh in the rain which cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which

bearth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." Two portions of land are equally watered by the frequent showers of heaven, and warmed by its genial rays. They also received equal care and tillage from the hand of the husbandman. And each shows its real nature and quality by the productions which it yields. The one by the abundance of its fruits proves itself to be good ground—a fertile soil—that it has received blessing from God. The other produces naught but thorns and briers, unequivocal evidence of its sterility—evidence that it still labors under the original curse of God. And this cultivated earth represents professors of religion, upon whom have come the waterings of the Gospel, and the means of grace. Those who bring forth the fruits of righteousness, evidence by their works that they are the sons of God. They receive blessing; but such as give themselves up to "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God," testify by their fruits, that they have been merely nominal Christians; though from false appearances we had once judged otherwise. The thorns and briers of apostacy give indisputable evidence that their hearts, like the sterile soil which has not been reclaimed, have never been changed from hearts of stone to hearts of flesh. All the means brought to bear upon them have not changed their nature.

In the ninth verse there is further evidence that those who fall away, never were in a state of grace. There the apostle adds: "But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." There were better qualifications in the characters of the Hebrews to whom he wrote, than he here ascribed to those who were supposed to fall away. These persons, then, could not have had true grace, for what better qualification is it possible that others could possess? But we are not left to conjecture. It is "things that accompany salvation." Literally, things that have salvation—"things which have saving grace in them, and eternal salvation indissolubly annexed to them." And is it not a just inference that the persons described have nothing which accompanies salvation—that all their qualifications may be possessed of it.

And it should be most distinctly marked, that in describing the character of these persons there is not one word said of *love, faith, repentance*. But love is one of those things which accompany sal-



vation. "For," adds the inspired writer, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed to his name." Love is the animating principle in all good works. Without it, miracles, alms, martyrdom, are but chaff before the wind. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, (love—the same word in the original) I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

They are not said to possess faith; but, "without faith it is impossible to please God. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that hearth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Nor is it said that they exercise repentance. But this is another grace in the Christian character, without which there can be no salvation; and with which salvation is inseparably connected. "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. Godly sorrow marketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of. Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

These are things which accompany salvation; and from the language of the ninth verse it is incontrovertibly true that they are not possessed by those who are here supposed to have fallen away. The persons, then, whose attainments are enumerated in this passage of the word of God, are destitute of those things which enter into, and are indispensable to the very existence of vital godliness. And they are not assumed to be real, but, with all their attainments, only professed Christians.

It is a principle in the Divine government, that the greater the privileges and benefits enjoyed, the greater will be the punishment for dereliction in duty. Christ said to one of the cities in which many of his mighty works were performed, and which, as to privileges, was highly favored, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down unto hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in

Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee." Now applying this principle to the subject before us: unquestionably the greater the favors enjoyed, the greater the influences which have been brought to bear upon the heart, the greater must be the sin of apostacy, and its punishment proportionably greater. Hence, if unregenerate men, who thus apostatize, can never be renewed to repentance, how much greater the impossibility of renewing those apostates (if such could ever exist,) who have once been regenerated? Would not their sin be aggravated an hundred fold? and their doom be so much more certain and terrible!

And in view of these highly momentous truths, with what circumspection should we guard against the first departure from the path of duty, which may be the first step in the path to ruin; and with what solemn earnestness and ardor should we press on for farther and higher attainments in the Divine life. To stop short in our present state of advancement, whatever it may be, or to retrograde, is dangerous, and may prove deeply disastrous. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

NOTE—Mr. Caskey was licensed to preach the Gospel as a probationer for the holy ministry, by the Presbytery of Chillicothe, April 22nd, 1841, and having preached with entire acceptance for one month, his health failed; and he died of consumption on the 8th of May, 1852, at St. Augustine, East Florida. This discourse is presented in the Pulpit, not as the best specimen of sermonizing which he has left, but because it gives a plain and Scriptural exposition of a passage not generally well understood.

## S E R M O N   X I I .

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### C O N F E S S I O N   O F   C H R I S T .

BY REV. DAVID PRESSLY,

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“Whoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.” *Matt. 10: 32.*

“THEM that honor me I will honor,” is the positive and emphatic declaration of Him who is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Every individual of the human family—it matters not what may be his condition, or rank or circumstances in life—is destined to fulfil certain important links in the adamant chain of divine providence, and act a conspicuous part in the great drama of the world’s history. Jehovah exercises a special superintendence over all the events of time. While He surveys the agitation, the convulsion and the overthrow of the vast empire, He also beholds with equal vigilance, the falling of the faded leaf. While He contemplates the sun, the moon, and the planets pursuing their brilliant careers through the trackless regions of space, at the same time not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice. He tells the number of the stars—He enumerates the hairs of the head and He knows the thoughts of the heart.

Man is the subject of God’s government, and is placed in the world under the most solemn responsibilities. For their improvement or abuse he must finally account before the impartial tribunal of heaven. A minute record of the thoughts, words and actions of every individual is taken by an unerring hand and carefully preserved in the counsels of eternity. These minute records will display the rectitude of the divine government, and exhibit to the assembled world the justice of God in pronouncing the eternal

doom of every individual, whether that be, "Enter into the joys of your Lord," or "Depart, ye cursed into everlasting fire."

In the economy of divine grace, God has so arranged it, that man's comfort and happiness in time and his joy and glory in eternity, depend upon the union which he now forms with his Son, Jesus Christ. He who, in time, gives the homage of his heart and the obedience of his life exclusively to the Savior, will, in eternity, be exalted, honored and blessed. His voice may never be heard in the senate chamber, or in the legislative hall; his name may never be recorded in the annals of his country's history; and his influence may never be felt beyond his immediate vicinity in the world—yet his name will be recorded in the Lamb's book of life, and his character will be embalmed in the book of God's remembrance. When princes and rulers and kings shall have been weighed in the divine balances and found wanting, then he shall be brought out of obscurity, acknowledged before the world and crowned with glory, honor and immortality. "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."

The language of our text is too plain and obvious to require any explanation. According to modern usage the time to confess is employed when we speak in reference to something that is prejudicial to our character or interests. For instance, we confess our crimes, our faults and our short comings in duty. In the New Testament the word confess is often used in the same sense with the word profess. Hence in 1 Tim. 6: 12, 13, the apostle says: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession." The word which is translated profession in the 12th verse, is in the 13th rendered confession.

We will use the term in its scriptural acceptation. To confess, then, is to make a public declaration of our faith in, and adherence to, certain truths or principles. To confess Christ, is to acknowledge our guilt, and embrace him as the Savior.

Having made these observations in relation to the language of the text, we will invite your attention,

I. To the being or person to be confessed.

II. To what is meant by confessing Christ before men.

III. The encouragement that is promised to those who confess Christ before men.

I. The being or person to be confessed is the Lord Jesus Christ. "Whosoever, therefore, will confess me." Where is the mind that can comprehend, where is the tongue that can proclaim, and where is the pen that can portray his excellence, his greatness and his glory? He is God manifest in the flesh, the promised Messiah, the consolation of Israel, and the desire of all nations. In the contemplation of his character, the minds of angels are lost in wonder, admiration and joy. If we turn to those delineations which are given of him, by inspired prophets and evangelists, we discover that the vocabulary of language was examined to find words sufficiently plain and appropriate to celebrate his praise and proclaim his worth. The flowers of the vegetable world—from the fragrant rose of sharon to the beautiful lily of the valley, are passed under review to obtain suitable emblems to represent his excellency and display his loveliness. When possessed of such words as were selected by the Holy Spirit, and when surrounded with the most beautiful imagery in nature, the sacred writers proceed to give a description of his character. The heart expands with the most joyful emotions, the understanding becomes enlarged, and it constitutes at once their master effort. The enrapturing language of the prophet Isaiah is: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Again we hear the same delighted prophet asking, when in beatific vision he beheld the Son of God returning in triumph from the bloody scene of Calvary, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?—this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?—I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." If we consult the New Testament, we will discover that the character of Christ is regarded in the same important light by apostles and evangelists, that it was viewed by patriarchs and prophets. There he is represented as being the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person, and as elevated in authority and power far above the angels of light. The inhabitants of heaven unite in "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." As the character of Christ infinitely transcends the comprehension of the finite mind, we will attempt nothing further but leave fresh in your hearing these glowing descriptions of him, which have been recorded by the finger of God. Jesus Christ, the well-beloved Son of God, the great theme that pervades the inspired oracles, the sinner's advocate and Savior, is the being or person to be confessed. Having considered the character of the person to be confessed, we will invite your attention, in the second place, to

II. What is meant by confessing Christ before men? To confess Christ before men in the estimation of many persons professing Christianity, is to receive baptism, have a name enrolled on a list of Church-members, and partake at regular intervals of the Lord's Supper. It is true in each of these outward acts, Christ is in one sense confessed before men. The Church and her ordinances are institutions appointed by him. But if a connection with the Church and the regular observance of her ordinances are not accompanied by a corresponding and consistent deportment, Christ is, in reality, not confessed before men. He is not honored, but insulted. Attendance to only the outward acts of religious worship, is not only useless but highly injurious. It aggravates guilt, and increases the wrath of God. It constitutes the most solemn mockery in the sight of him who claims, and will receive nothing less than the sincere devotion of the heart. When an individual in the exercise of faith and repentance is induced to make a public acknowledgment that Jesus is the only Savior, when he seeks a connection with his Church, and when he receives the sacraments and adorns these outward acts by a uniformly pious and zealous life, then he really and truly confesses Christ before men. The spirit of this injunction is not complied with until he is embraced before the world, the institutions of his Church faithfully observed, and the principles of his kingdom maintained and defended.

The duty of confessing Christ is always the same, but the manner of its operation changes with the state of his Church and the condition of the world. The truth of this remark will be more clearly understood after we shall have given a few illustrations. For instance, there was a time when the world was only partially enlightened by education; men became elated with their superficial

attainments in philosophy; the divine origin of the Christian religion was denied; and human reason was enthroned above the voice of God. The Bible was pronounced a fable, and death declared an eternal sleep. The awful sentiment was proclaimed in loud accents to the world, "There is no God." This was a bold attack upon the foundation of the Christian's faith. It was a fiend-like attempt to destroy the fountain of all his hopes. To confess Christ at this particular crisis, made it necessary that his followers should maintain a firm position against the enemy, and prove by the miracles that characterized each dispensation of the Church—by the fulfilled prophecies, and by its internal evidences, that the Bible was, what it claimed to be, a revelation from heaven.

But opposition to Christ and his Church never ceases. The adversaries of the truth, when compelled to abandon one position, soon collect their scattered forces and renew the contest. Hence we notice another attack upon the faith of the believer. This was made in a manner less daring than the preceding, but equally as dangerous and fatal to the interests and prospects of the Christian. It possessed the external appearance of friendship. The Bible was admitted to be a divine revelation, but the divinity of Christ was denied. A plausible concession was given, and then a violent attempt made to tear away the diadem of glory from the Redeemer's brow, and debase him to the level of a moral philosopher. This was an effort to deprive the believer of the anchor of his soul. To him the divinity of Christ is everything. In the darkest hour of earthly calamity, and when experiencing the agonies of dissolving nature, his soul remains tranquil and happy in the belief that his Redeemer is a divine personage, able and willing to save. Deny the divinity of Christ and the religion of the Bible will then represent a system as cold, as dark and as gloomy as a world without a sun. At this particular juncture, to confess Christ required that his advocates should fearlessly assert his Divinity and prove by the plain and numerous declarations of the Holy Scriptures, that he was God manifest in the flesh.

We could refer to other assaults that have been made against the Church, but these illustrations are amply sufficient to attest the truth of our remark.

To confess Christ before men requires a life of activity in his service. His friends must be always at the post of duty and firmly stationed between the nearest invading foe and citadel of salvation.

III. We will invite your attention, in the third place, to the encouragement that is promised to those who confess Christ before men. "Him will I confess also, before my Father which is in heaven."

Obedience to Christ does not fail to secure his approval and remuneration. The believer is deeply sensible that his best performances are defective, and a review of them increases his humility and self-abasement. But it is to him a great source of consolation to know that his humble and imperfect services are not disregarded by Him who has promised that "he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax."

At his second coming Christ will make the most public manifestation of his regard to those who have given their allegiance to him. It is to that solemn and closing event in the history of the world, that he alludes in the language under consideration. Then He will confess them before his Father which is in heaven. But we must not infer from this that He will not confess them, or give some indication of his special favor to them before the arrival of that awful event. The plain teachings of his word, and the history of his people would not warrant this conclusion. In a variety of ways, while they are encountering the trials, temptations and calamities of life, He affords indubitable evidences of his love and protection. A few of these may be specified.

1. He confesses and honors them as citizens of the world. He often permits them to enjoy uniform health and prosperity. Their undertakings are crowned with abundant success, comfort flows in at every inlet, and their cup runs over. They honor the Lord with their substance, and with the first fruits of all their increase; their barns are filled with plenty, and their presses burst out with new wine. They possess the confidence and esteem of their friends, the favor of their enemies is conciliated or restraining bounds are set to their malice. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

Or does the Sovereign Ruler of the universe call them to pass through the diversified scenes of his apparently adverse providence, their trials serve only to display their genuine worth, and their humiliation is made a process preparatory to their exaltation. The transient triumphs of their enemies are only the prelude to their honor and aggrandizement. We see these truths exemplified in



the lives of Joseph, Daniel, and his captive associates. These pious youths were fondly attached to the religion of their fathers. Although they were borne away from the hallowed associations of their childhood, no allurements or dangers could induce them to forfeit their allegiance to the God of Abraham. When surrounded with the magnificence of the court, the idolatry of their rulers, and the corruption of the age, they kept themselves unspotted from the world. They nobly stemmed the corrupt tide of public opinion, and faithfully served their Master in heaven. He did not leave them destitute of some witness of his fidelity. The cheerless prison, the lion's den, and the fiery furnace displayed the extent of their oppressor's cruelty, and, in these places, they enjoyed the brightest attestations of Divine protection. From solitary confinement, from the presence of beasts of prey, and from consuming flames they came forth to excite the astonishment and command the respect of the world.

2. He confesses and honors them as subjects of affliction. Suffering is the common lot of the human family. "Man is born to trouble." The followers of Christ cannot plead an exemption from it. His language to them is: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Their afflictions are salutary. Christ has promised to sustain them in them and to purify and bless them by them. Their lives bear testimony to the fulfilment of his promise. "We glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; which hope maketh not ashamed." "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

3. He confesses and honors them as passengers through the valley of the shadow of death, "It is appointed unto men once to die." The thought of it fills the mind with seriousness and solemnity. The flesh fails, the heart sinks, the life expires and the soul enters the unknown world. Kind physicians can afford no relief—sympathizing friends cannot prolong the time, and every earthly resource is of no avail. In this, the hour of their greatest emergency, Christ does not fail to honor and support his people. His promise is: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plague, O grave, I will be thy destruction." Their assurance is: "Yea, though

I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." When the body is sinking beneath the pressure of disease, and suffering the pangs of dissolution, He enables them to look with the eye of faith to the bright inheritance beyond the grave, and say: "We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." How often have the wicked, in view of their happy departure exclaimed: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

But those manifestations of his love which Christ extends to his followers, as citizens of the world, as subjects of affliction, and as passengers through the valley of the shadow of death, are only foretastes, and are not to be compared to the glory to be revealed. Hence, in the language before us, they are left out of view, and he refers directly to that honor which he will confer upon them at his second advent, when he will come to judge the quick and the dead.

The world is fast hastening on to a grand consummation. The period will eventually arrive, when the merciful designs of God to his Church shall have been fulfilled, and the last child of grace shall have been brought into the fold of Christ. Then the commissioned angel of heaven will announce to the universe the end of time.—The Son of God will descend "in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." The inhabitants of the world will assemble before his awful tribunal, to hear their final destiny proclaimed. Those who have confessed Him before men will then be seen at his right hand, clothed with his unspotted righteousness. They shall give an account of their stewardship, and shall receive, in the hearing of that vast concourse, the joyful sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joys of your Lord." When those who have neglected Christ, and abused his mercy, shall have been banished from his presence and with shame and despair shall be calling upon the mountains and rocks to fall upon them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, then shall they ascend with him to his Father's house, in which are many mansions—"and so shall they be ever with the Lord."

Beyond this we cannot penetrate. Nothing has been revealed. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the

heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

In conclusion—Those of us who have been awakened to a consciousness of our guilt and danger, who have fled to Christ as the only city of refuge, and who have confessed him before men, by making a public profession of his religion, should be deeply thankful for past mercies, and renew our zeal and devotedness to his service. We shall make it the highest ambition of our lives to serve Him who loved us and gave himself for us—"It is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

To the ungodly and impenitent, we will address our closing remarks. We have humbly attempted to proclaim to you the character of Him who claims the affections of your hearts, and the services of your lives. We have endeavored to explain to you the duty of confessing Him before men. We have also directed your attention to the encouragement he has promised to those who obey his injunction. We now commend the subject to your candid and prayerful consideration. Your best and highest interests are in fearful jeopardy. Your happiness in time and eternity is inseparably connected with the course you now pursue. In the kind providence of God, you are permitted to enjoy many opportunities to forsake the world that lieth in wickedness, and join yourself to the Lord in the bonds of an everlasting covenant. Will you be persuaded to embrace these opportunities. Will you not enter into friendly relations with Him, whose favor is life, and whose frown is death. Will you not confess Him, whose presence illuminates heaven with more than the seven fold splendors of the meridian sun, and the absence of whose regard envelopes hell in the blackness of darkness forever! "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him." "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it."

## S E R M O N X I I I .

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### THE SHULAMITE—THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST.

BY REV. JOHN W. DUFF.

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“What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.”  
Song of Solomon, 6: 13, last clause.

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures silver, beautiful in themselves, their brilliancy is increased by a contrast with what, although precious, is esteemed as inferior, when garnished with material of more intrinsic value, and more gorgeous appearance. And while “every word of God is pure,” suited for every situation, and wants of His children; yet the very dress in which the truth is conveyed,—the language in which it is clothed, is no unimportant consideration, in estimating the effect it is naturally fitted to produce; hence the Scriptures, dictated by infinite wisdom, are presented in every variety of language and figure, which is calculated to arrest the attention, convince the understanding, or enlist the affections. It is in the word of God that truth is presented in all the glowing imagery which could only be collected, mingled, harmonized, and drawn in all the vividness of life, by the unerring hand of inspiration; and which pencilled by the colors that flow from the fount of light, sheds a blush of more exquisite loveliness over her features, winning the affections of the beholder, as well by the gracefulness of her ornaments, as by the majesty and dignity of her person. It is in the Scriptures that History has bought her choicest gifts, Reason collected her brightest gems, and Poetry culled her richest and her sweetest flowers, to adorn and beautify the page that records the Love, the Wisdom, and the boundless Mercy of Jehovah, to the sinful and rebellious inhabitants of our world. Thus it is that the advancing Christian, as the darkness of

his moral sight is removed, is ever beholding in the Bible something new. He raises the rich drapery of one scene, only to meet a more gorgeous still, behind,—he gains an eminence to behold new beauties spread out their attractions, and fix in a still deeper and more enraptured gaze his admiration of that master hand, which has lavished so profusely, all the wondrous things which lie a finished spectacle before him.

This is emphatically true of those books of the Old Testament, which, written with all the boldness, grandeur, and luxuriance, which characterize an oriental poetry, carry, not at once the whole light and power of their instructions to the understanding; and although it is only by comparing Scripture with Scripture, that we can expect to reach through the rich foliage with which they are adorned, to the golden fruit that hangs above, yet assured that they are one of the olive trees planted in the house of God, by his own hand, we will always find something suited to the taste, refreshing to the energies of the wearied soul, something commensurate with the feelings, the anxieties, and loftiest conceptions of a mind exercised unto godliness.

Of these "poetic books," the one in which our text is found, is, no doubt, from the loftiness and grandeur of its imagery, and the boldness and multiplicity of its figures, one of the most difficult to be understood. Composed in the form of a pastoral poem, on what particular occasion it was penned, and who were the original personages to which a reference is had, in the management of its parts, has been the subject of almost as many different opinions as there have been commentaries. For our present purpose one thing is sufficient, and of this we are assured that it is a celebration of the nuptials,—of *that union*—which has been consummated between the Lord Jesus Christ, as the bride-groom, and the Church, as his spouse. The whole has been verified in her history, as well as in the experience of many a devoted follower of the Lamb, and the whole scene will be fully and finally completed, when taken from earth to heaven. The Church, which is the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall be clothed in the pure and spotless robes of her Redeemer's righteousness, and rejoice in the unchanging manifestations of his love to her forever.

After a glowing description of the love which Christ Jesus leaves to his Church, and the affectionate return she makes, in the first

four chapters, we are then informed that she had become cold, and indifferent toward her Lord, when withdrawing himself for a season, she is aroused to a sense of her bereavement, and conscious of her guilt, she immediately commences an earnest, and diligent search, that she might find him, "whom her soul loved." Having discovered him by the eye of faith, and been again restored to his favor, being kindly invited by him to return, that he might again look upon her, she, because of former delinquencies in duty, and humbled on account of her remaining imperfections, replies: *What will ye see in the Shulamite. As it were the company of two armies.*

With regard to the name of a Shulamite, here given to the spouse, it may refer to Solomon as the typical bride-groom, or as it denotes "peace," it may be given in allusion to the peace which reigns in the bosom of the believer, arising from a sense of union with the Lord Jesus Christ, the pardon of sin, and communion and fellowship with him, and this is no doubt the most agreeable to the spirituality of the composition.

As to what is the particular truth, clothed in the figure of two armies, seen in the spouse, there is some diversity of opinion. It has been supposed to have a reference to the two dispensations, the ceremonial, and Gospel; also to the work of grace in its gradual progress in the soul, performed by the Holy Ghost, until its final accomplishment in the day of Christ Jesus. Whatever plausibility there may be in these interpretations, yet they are certainly not such as would appear the plain and obvious meaning of the figurative language employed. The very mention of two armies immediately creates the idea of hostility, the bloody encounter, and all the horrors of the sanguinary conflict upon the field of battle. Hence it is said of the Church, "that she looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners"—as a single army, united, and marching forward in solid phalanx under the great captain of her salvation.

Rejecting these interpretations, therefore, there remains a third, more agreeable to the nature of the figure, and clearly taught in other parts of the Scripture: and that is, the constant struggle between grace and corruption, in the soul of the believer, like two armies, they never cease their conflict from the hour that the Holy Spirit commenced his work, until the last remains of sin are eradicated, and the omnipotence of Divine grace has completed the victo-

ly, when sanctification is made complete in glorification. Hence, conscious that such was her condition, that while the guilt of her sin had been removed by the atoning blood of her Savior, its corruption still retained a partial ascendancy in her soul. She humbly confesses her imperfection, as unable to present to his eye, who searcheth the heart, and trieth the mind, the perfect purity of a spotless holiness. Considering the text, then, with reference to the condition of the believer while in the present life, we shall without any formal division of the words themselves, notice

I. THE NATURAL CONDITION OF THE SINNER.

II. THE CONDITION OF THE TRUE BELIEVER IN CHRIST, IN THE STRUGGLE WHICH IS CONTINUALLY GOING ON IN HIS SOUL, AS REPRESENTED IN THE TEXT—"BY THE COMPANY OF TWO ARMIES."

I. THE NATURAL CONDITION OF THE SINNER.

It was the declaration, of the wisest of men, and that wisdom directed by the Spirit of God, that the result of all his study and investigation, was the melancholy conclusion, "That God had made man upright: but he has sought out many inventions." And that such is the fact, the testimony of Scripture, and the dark page that records the history of our race, abundantly confirm. Fashioned at first by his hand who said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," holiness enstamped upon his soul, shed abroad the brightness of its untarnished lustre and love, pure as that which springs where piety and innocence alone sway an uncontrolled scepter, reigned the supreme arbiter of every thought and act.

Linked to angels, by a rational and immortal spirit, he not only knew, but endowed with full ability, he willingly performed his Maker's will. With an understanding free from every taint of error, the law of God as the rule of his duty, was written in characters of light upon the tablets of his heart, and illumined by the unclouded brightness of the Holy Spirit, he clearly saw, and cordially approved, what was holy, just, and good. With no desire of his own to gratify, no inclination swaying him from the path of duty, his supreme delight arose from doing that which was pleasing to his Maker. Hence his will was in perfect unison with the will of God. Averse to evil, he was inclined only to that which was good: but yet not confirmed in holiness, he was free to choose the former, and reject the latter. But in his soul all was harmony, all was peace, no raging passion disturbed the calm tranquility of his







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# THE PULPIT

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## ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN

## CHURCH.

CONSISTING OF

SERMONS BY THE MINISTERS

OF THE

FOUR SYNODS OF THAT DENOMINATION.

EDITED BY

REV. JAMES PRESTLEY.

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1852.

THE SECOND SYNOD OF THE ASSOCIATE REFORMED CHURCH OF THE WEST

Will meet in *Xenia, Ohio*, on the *first Wednesday of October*, 1852, at *seven o'clock*, P. M.

This will afford a good opportunity to those who are indebted to us on account of the United Presbyterian, or The Pulpit to send us what is due. We assure them that it is greatly needed to meet expenses.

We trust that our expectations of a liberal payment at the time will not be disappointed. P.

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POSTAGE.

We direct attention to the following amendment of the law of Postage. By this amendment any person taking our periodicals in any part of the United States can have them at a postage of *twelve cents a year*; and by paying quarterly *in advance* can have them at a postage of *six cents per year*. P.

[PUBLIC ACT.—NO. 50.]

AN ACT to amend an act entitled "An act to reduce and modify the rates of postage in the United States, and for other purposes," passed March 3, 1851.

SEC. 1. *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That from and after the thirtieth day of September, eighteen hundred and fifty-two, the postage upon all printed matter passing through the mail of the United States, instead of the rates now charged, shall be as follows, to wit: Each newspaper, periodical, unsealed circular, or other article of printed matter, not exceeding three ounces in weight, shall be sent to any part of the United States for one cent; and for every additional ounce, or fraction of an ounce, one cent additional shall be charged; and when the postage upon any newspaper or periodical is paid yearly or quarterly in advance at the office where the same is mailed, and evidence of such payment is furnished to the office of delivery in such manner as the Postoffice Department shall by general regulation prescribe, one-half of said rate only shall be charged. Newspapers and periodicals not weighing over one ounce and a half, when circulated in the State where published, shall be charged one-half of the rates before mentioned; *Provided*, That small newspapers and periodicals, published monthly or oftener, and pamphlets not containing more than sixteen octavo pages each, when sent in single packages, weighing at least eight ounces, to one address, and prepaid by affixing postage stamps thereto, shall be charged only half of a cent for each ounce, or fraction of an ounce, notwithstanding the postage calculated on each separate article of such package would exceed that amount. The postage on all transient matter shall be prepaid by stamps or otherwise, or shall be charged double the rates first above mentioned.

mind, and no unhallowed appetites clamored for gratification. Reason, directed by the bright lamp of an understanding enlightened in the truth, pointed with unerring certainty the path of duty; and the will, obedient to her command, rendered a perfect submission. Every power harmonized in the performance of those services, which, while enjoined by the authority of his heavenly Father, were his supreme delight. And what the understanding thus approved, and the will cheerfully performed, the affections cluster around in all the devotedness of a first, a pure and holy love. Fixed upon one object alone, they ever obeyed the dictates of an enlightened conscience. Love to his God was the pure and holy flame which burned upon the altar of his soul, and shed abroad its enlivening influence, through its every faculty, actuating and sanctifying all its powers. Here it never was true that "the flesh lusted against the Spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." Sin had then gained no admission into that pure and holy place, where innocence and truth were chained in love's embrace. No deadly conflicts then raged in the soul of man, no contending armies then joined in mortal combat for the ascendancy; but harmonious as when the full bands of the angelic choirs strike their golden harps in the rapturous song of praise, the voice of melody, joy and peace arose from the bowers of paradise.

Such was man in a state of innocence, and such would have been the Church of God upon earth, a counterpart of that general assembly which, fair and without spot, now worships in the heavenly sanctuary, had he, by his obedience, "followed on to know the Lord." But how is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed, the crown of primeval holiness has fallen from our heads; woe unto us, for we have sinned! Instead of beholding now a being bright in the purity of innocence, and radiant in the brightness of holiness, we now see a guilty wretch covered with the leprosy of sin,—instead of peace swaying her golden scepter, the clamor of unholy passions is heard rising in stern defiance of control as they riot with fearful eagerness upon the ruin which sin has wrought in the soul. It is not the conflicts of grace with corruption, but the mingled shouts of licentious appetites and disordered affections rushing headlong to gratification. Raising the arm of rebellion against the authority of heaven, man rudely sundered the tie that bound him to his God, and through which alone flowed

those holy influences, which sustained, controlled and harmonized his moral powers, in the discharge of duty, and every pure affection, every holy disposition withered and decayed like the blossom plucked from the parent stem. The noble temple in which the "Most High" had his abode, and on whose front was inscribed "Holiness to the Lord," is now a mass of ruins, its lamps extinguished, and its altar, from which ever rolled the incense of love to its Maker, has been overturned, and the throne of "the prince of darkness," erected in its stead, completing the destruction which sin had wrought. And thus what was once the object of the divine love and complacency is now rejected and forsaken by him who, as he surveyed its loveliness and its purity, as it came from his forming hand, pronounced "it very good."

In the same hour that man transgressed, the work of sin was completed in his soul. He became the willing and degraded slave of Satan,—his understanding, enveloped in the very blackness of darkness, lost all true knowledge of its Maker, the very last ray of divine light was shut out from the soul. The will became perverted; no longer presented by the understanding with that which was good, it cordially chose, and greedily followed that which was only evil, verifying in its full extent, the declaration of the Spirit, "that the thoughts of the imaginations of men's hearts are only evil, and that continually." In the unregenerate man there is not a single emotion toward God, there is not a spark of love to him in the heart, and consequently no desire to know his ways: all is darkness coldness and indifference. Bound fast in the chains of iniquity, he moves not a muscle in resistance, as he is led captive by Satan at his pleasure; "the strong man armed, keeps his house in safety." And though the call of the Savior in the Gospel, is continually sounding in his ears, Return, return, he heeds it not. Wrapped in the stillness and silence of spiritual death, he embraces his chains, with neither the disposition nor the power to break them in sunder, and regain his freedom.

If, then, the word of God, and the recorded experience of his saints, in every age, are not to be entirely cast aside as unworthy of credit, how can it be asserted, with even the appearance of plausibility, that the "company of two armies," here spoken of, are seen in the soul of the unregenerate sinner—that the field of contest is in his mind, a striving of the independent will to choose and

embrace the truth when presented, in opposition to the carnality of perverted and alienated affections. Hence they say that there is a communication of the Holy Spirit made to all men, not even the heathen, who never heard the glad news of a Savior given as a ransom for sin, excepted; which enables them if they but give the co-operation of their own wills, so to improve the means of grace as to secure the salvation of their own souls. In this contest, therefore, between grace and innate depravity for the mastery, the sinner holds the scales, and victory will finally perch upon that banner to which his will is joined as an ally. Thus the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit is made to bow to the caprice of a sinful mortal; and the efficacy of divine grace is made dependent upon a will, which, until renewed, is prone only to evil.

Such is not the doctrine of the Bible. We are there informed, that wherever a good work has been commenced, "it will be performed until the day of Christ Jesus;" and that we shall at last be brought off conquerors and more than conquerors, through him that loved us, and gave himself for us. All the agonies of despair may be felt by that soul which is still spiritually dead; that has never experienced one ray of divine light let in upon the darkness that enshrouds the understanding; nor beheld in a saving manner one of those truths which are only spiritually discerned. A consciousness of guilt and a fear of wrath to come, may cause the cry for mercy to arise; but it is the cry of the slave, who despises and hates the hand he implores for aid, and not the entreaty of filial affection, arising from love to God and trust in his promise.

It is in *the true believer* alone, that there is an earnest desire for the presence and favor of the Redeemer. Like the spouse he can say, "I sought him whom my soul loveth." Brought by faith to behold him as the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely, in all his struggles and contests with indwelling sin his language will be, I will hold thee, and I will not let thee go until thou bless me. What then is the awful state of the unregenerated and unconverted sinner? Buried in his carnal security, he sleeps the sleep of death; not of that death which shall be broken at the sound of the last trump, but the sleep of spiritual death, from which he will awake only at the call of the Holy Spirit; or when, forever too late, he shall lift up his eyes in torment. Although to such the call is now addressed by the blessed Redeemer as he stands at the

door and knocks, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light;"—yet, until by his spirit he open the heart, the call will neither be heard nor obeyed.

II. WE NOTICE THE CONDITION OF THE TRUE BELIEVER IN CHRIST, IN THE STRUGGLE WHICH IS CONTINUALLY GOING ON IN HIS SOUL, AS REPRESENTED IN THE TEXT BY THE "COMPANY OF TWO ARMIES."

To such as have in the least attended to the operations of their own minds, whether they are Christians, in the true sense of that term or not, there must be one thing perfectly familiar: that is, the lofty elevation to which they have been raised on certain occasions, in comparison with the dullness and lifelessness with which they have been characterized on others. The full flow of a powerful eloquence may have borne us along, unconsciously, upon its sweeping torrent, and brought us into familiar intercourse with the beauties it has painted, or the terrors it has drawn; and again, in the gloominess of our own thoughts, we may have sunk to the very depths of utter dissipation and despair. To such as have experienced, in themselves, these changes, which have made them appear in almost totally opposite characters; it cannot seem strange when they are told of two principles existing in the Christian, exhibiting him as an entirely different person, as the one or the other gains the ascendancy. Lulled in the arms of a carnal security, and buried deep in the slumbers of spiritual death, the sinner—as we have endeavored to show in our previous remarks—neither knows nor feels his danger. But when the Holy Spirit enters his soul, and in the work of regeneration opens the eyes of his spiritual understanding, he is immediately convicted of sin and aroused to a sense of danger. The conflict then commences, which is terminated only when the strong man armed is bound, and grace has triumphed over the last remains of corruption. Like the apostle he now for the first time sees "another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members."

Before Paul experienced the bright shining of that light which by its intensity blinded his natural sight—but yet burst in upon his soul with such power and efficacy as to remove the darkness which clouded his spiritual sight—corruption was the entire and dominant principle of his constitution. He loved his captivity instead of lamenting it; because he knew not "that he was carnal,

sold under sin." His mind went peaceably along with the wicked inclinations of his corrupt nature: and this is true of every unregenerate soul. In such there are never seen "the company of two armies;" there is but a single host, led on by the prince of darkness, into whose ranks every power of the mind and every affection of the heart enter as his willing followers. Marching through the territory of a friend and ally, he experiences no opposition. But when the new creature has been formed, there are new desires and feelings, entirely at warfare with those of the old man: the strife and turmoil of the battle is begun, and though for a season the contests may be relaxed yet it will only be to commence again with renewed energy; until the final shout of victory shall arise, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." But further,

Although, in the first movements which give rise to this contest in his soul, the believer is entirely passive, it is not so in its progress. He then becomes a "worker together with God." It would not be more absurd to suppose, that a man would turn the weapons that had been placed in his hands for the defense of those he loved, against them for their destruction; than it is to affirm that the sinner, while still in league with the powers of darkness, loving the wages of unrighteousness, and hating the character and service of God, will, even were he able, offer the least resistance to the power and dominion of sin and corruption which reign within him. As the spouse was disturbed in her sinful repose, only when her beloved called to her from without, so it is only when the Holy Spirit has shed abroad his pure and holy light in the soul, and by his regenerating influences, dispelled the darkness in which it was enveloped; that the sinner is both excited to resistance and strengthened for the conflict. It is then that the outward conduct of the man,—his diligent discharge of every duty, and vigilance in guarding against every sin—is the sure index of the work that is being performed, by a secret agency, within him. It is then that the Christian is made up of *two* principles—the one consists of all that he inherits, as the sinful descendant of an apostate ancestor; the other, of all that has been added by divine grace.

Every individual, therefore, who is conscious of this, who has felt a change pass upon the original depravity of his nature, will be found upon the side of the new principle; and in the conflict



with the enemies of his peace, should they for a season gain the ascendancy, he will be enabled in heartfelt sincerity to say, "It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me." And hence there is a difference, wide as that between sin and holiness, that distinguishes even the humblest follower of the Lamb, who is endeavoring to live a life of faith upon the Son of God, from the man who has never experienced the grace of God in his heart. The latter struggles with all the power of which he is possessed, against every tendency to sin. The former solaces himself in its indulgence, and his affections are but clinging to the object of their choice, when iniquity is embraced and cherished even in its most loathsome form. There is corruption in both, but in the one it is the reigning and controlling power; in the other, there is a new principle implanted, by which the evil principle is not immediately nor entirely extinguished, but which keeps up a never ceasing hostility against it. The man who can, therefore, live in the indulgence of known sin, and who is habitually and willingly brought under its power—in whose breast there is not a continued and uncompromising warfare urged against it—has no evidence that he is a subject of that grace which, in its power, never rests until every sin is mortified, and every lust crucified, as the enemies of him "who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

But again; as "by the law is the knowledge of sin;" so it is by this in its spirituality, brought home to the believer's conscience; that he is brought to see the infinite distance he falls short of the standard of holiness, there laid down as the points at which he is always to aim, and forces him, in the agony of an inward conflict, to cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." And it is while without this feeling of the true length and breadth of that law which reaches not only to the external act, but to the thoughts and intents of the heart; that the sinner enjoys all the peace and serenity of one who, freed from its requirements, is no longer under its condemning power. It is not strange, therefore, that a doctrine which represents "a sinless perfection" in this life, as not only attainable, but the privilege of every believer, should always find many to advocate its claims; since nothing can be more agreeable to the pride and self-righteousness of the corrupt heart. There cannot be a stronger evidence of the

spiritual darkness which envelops the minds of such, than this very assertion. Instead of beholding their own exceeding sinfulness by a comparison of their attainments with that law which is holy, and just, and good, they rest in a mere external obedience to its requirements, while there may be an utter opposition to them on the part of the inner man. And yet this is the very thing of which the law takes cognizance, because of its spirituality, and pronounces sinful. To do what is bidden, with the hand, while the heart goes not along, while there is not an inward struggle of the soul to render that obedience which an innate carnality is ever ready to refuse; is not enough to satisfy that law which declares that "if I regard sin in my heart the Lord will not hear me."

Woe to such as are thus at their ease, who are crying, Peace, peace; when that very law upon which they are building their hopes, is saying, "There is no peace." There can be no dying unto sin and living unto righteousness, unless we have the weapons of our warfare continually employed; and are ever found striving with those spiritual wickednesses, in the high places of our souls, which are always ready to lead us into captivity to the law of sin, and of death.

Just in proportion, then, as we are led, by the enlightening influences of the Spirit, to a proper estimate of the divine law, or, as the law is but a transcript of his character "who is holiness itself," as we advance in conformity to his image, in the very same proportion will we sink in our own estimation. If there is a sure evidence on this side of the grave, that the work of sanctification is going forward in the soul, that in the contest which is there going on between grace and corruption the former is gaining the ascendancy over the latter, it is when the humble believer, in the solitude of the closet, and from the fullness of his heart, is heard to exclaim, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner."

There is no truce in this warfare. As long as we aim at a perfect conformity to the law of God—as long as grace finds a place in our hearts—just so long will we have our besetting sins to lay aside, and the enemies of our peace, which are ever found in that heart which is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," to contend with and subdue. And it will not be until this clay tabernacle is laid aside, until this body, in which are always found the seeds of spiritual death transmitted by the first of men, has

moldered in the dust, and is again raised incorruptible and fashioned like to his glorious body, "who is the image of God," that we shall be emancipated from our present burden of corruption; and, victorious over our last enemy, shall lay down forever the weapons of our last warfare, and translated into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, shall behold our great arch-foe himself bound by the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and cast into that place from whence he shall no more go forth to deceive the nations that dwell upon the earth.

But again; As this contest was begun by the Holy Spirit in regeneration, so it is carried forward by him alone in the work of sanctification. "By the grace of God I am what I am," was the confession of one who was abundant in labor above all others; and whose holy vigilance never, for a moment, slumbered, while he kept under his own body lest while he proclaimed the way of salvation to others he himself might be a castaway. And yet what efficiency does he ascribe to all this in the work of his sanctification, in meeting successfully the enemies of his soul, and in quenching the fiery darts of the wicked one. He declares that in himself there dwelt no good thing; and that it was only by Christ strengthening him that he could do all things. Mark his humble confessions of his weakness and unworthiness, and of his entire dependence upon divine grace, and you see a soul continually "traveling between its own emptiness and Christ's fullness."

The experience of every true believer will be, that while he does the evil that he would not, yet he finds not how to perform that which is good. And that when he is led to see that which is good, and enabled to perform it, it is nevertheless not himself, but the grace of God that is in him. And can any combination of language present more fully and clearly to the mind the truth contained in our text, than the words just recited?

There is a soul every faculty of which is perverted, and every affection of which clings to sin. The throne of Satan is set up in the heart, and all is darkness and silence as he sways an uncontrolled and unresisted scepter. But when the Holy Spirit enters, the work of sanctification is commenced, though not immediately completed; the throne of Satan is overturned, though not entirely removed. But still, under the control and presiding authority of the former, grace is carrying forward the contest, and enables the

believer to do whatever of good he performs ; and there is still corruption enticing and leading him to that which is evil, whose dictates he would ever follow were it not for the counteracting force of that grace which is shed abroad by the Holy Spirit. And so amid all the infirmities of a nature still tainted with evil, and under all the consciousness of corruption warring against the influences of holiness implanted and nourished in his soul, by the omnipotence of divine grace, the believer has what never can be the portion of the ungodly—the assurance that though the contest in which he is engaged should be long and difficult, yet, being carried on by God himself, it will finally terminate “in all his enemies being put under his feet.” And of this he has the evidence in an earnest desire after perfect holiness ; his will is on the side of that law which he loves ; and may be so, even when he is hurried forward by the violence of temptation, to the commission of sin.

There is a real and substantial difference—and one which will be finally recognized by the just Judge himself—between the man that serves him with the mind, and the one who renders only the lifeless morality of an external obedience.

Watching unto prayer, the believer is ever upon his guard, that he may not be deceived by those treacherous inclinations, which are ever ready, under the cloak of a hypocritical charity, to lead him over to the enemy. Hence the exhortation of the apostle, “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”—“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” It is thus by faith on him “who hath promised that his grace shall be sufficient for us, and his strength made perfect in our weakness, that we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. And thus urging on our way in the face of all opposition, and contending manfully with every enemy, we shall go “from strength to strength” unwearied, until we shall be brought, in the stature of a perfect man, before the Lord in Zion. And thus, while it can never be too strongly impressed upon our minds, that it is ourselves who are sinners, and to whom alone belongs all that is vile and corrupt in our natures ; and that while this inherent depravity is daily sinking, and approaching still nearer

and nearer the time of its final disappearance; yet it is entirely under the mighty workings of an influence that cometh from above.

Hence instead of making his triumphs over sin and the consequent increase in holiness, and his advancement in every grace that adorns the Christian character, a matter of glorying, it will only furnish the true believer with an additional motive to gratitude, acknowledging himself a debtor to unmerited love for all he is. His song of praise will rise, in the gratitude of an humble heart, to God, in Christ, while upon earth; and when translated to the upper sanctuary, his voice will be united with the happy millions around the throne, in ascribing blessing, honor, and glory to him who washed them from their sins in his own blood, and made them kings and priests to God.

Wherever there is not "the company of two armies," there the enemy, in this life, has possession of the field, there the prince of darkness has the vantage ground, and the banner of King Jesus has never been unfurled. There a false peace has been proclaimed, one which will finally, if not broken in this world, eventuate in an unending enmity between a God of infinite holiness and justice, and the guilty soul.

Conscious that sin with its thousand allies, is ever present with him, and that it is to him only that overcome that it will at last be granted to sit down with Christ, who has overcome, upon his throne; and that he alone who is faithful unto death, will receive the crown of life, the believer will ever watch and pray, that fighting in the strength of that grace, which has been promised and which is ever ready—not to sweep away the evil, as to its existence; but to subdue it, as to its prevalence and power, under the great Captain of Salvation—he may, at last, come forth victorious. Then receiving the welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant," the weapons of his warfare shall be forever laid aside; all his troubles and toils shall then be past; and, clothed in the robes of immortality, he shall be united to that happy throng, where no enemy shall ever be permitted to interrupt his peace. "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his strength." Amen.

## S E R M O N X I V .

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### THE CHRISTIAN, A LIVING SACRIFICE.

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"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." *Romans, 12: 1.*

THE doctrines of the Gospel and the practical duties of Christian life are intimately connected together. A knowledge of the former must precede the discharge of the latter. The one is the foundation of the other. The truth of these things is confirmed, not only by a sense of the moral fitness of things which exists within us; but also from the method which the apostles invariably adopted and pursued in their epistles and public ministrations. For the purpose of illustration we need not go any further than the epistle from which our text is taken. All that precedes is doctrinal—the statement, development and establishment of one of the most important doctrines of our holy religion, by a process of argumentation unequalled for its logical accuracy, precision and perspicuity. The remainder of the epistle is practical, enforcing the duties which arise in and flow from the doctrines previously stated. None of the doctrines of the Gospel are designed to be cold and barren abstractions. They are to be received into the heart and reduced to practice in the life. Where they are not thus received and practiced, the great, ultimate object for which they were given—the salvation of the soul, will not and cannot be secured. We have time and again presented for your consideration the great doctrines of the cross of Christ, and now, in the language of the text, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, which is your

reasonable service." In our further reflections upon these words, we shall consider,

I. The duty enjoined—self-consecration to God and its specified requirements.

II. The reasonableness of that service which God requires.

III. The argument by which the duty of self-consecration is enforced—the *mercies of God*.

We are then to consider, in the first place,—

I. The duty here enjoined.

The apostle Paul was possessed of a great depth of feeling—he was no cold moralizer, but a warm-hearted lover of humanity, his thoughts breathed forth the kind emotions within and his words burned with the fire of his soul. When every argument and every possible inducement had been presented, and all seemed to be in vain, his feelings of pity and compassion were aroused and he besought, prayed, begged and entreated his brethren to give themselves to God. A strong manifestation of and a powerful appeal to the feelings of the soul, a placid smile, the shedding of a tear, have often produced results which the most clear argumentation has failed to effect. The feelings, emotions and passions of the soul, or whatever you may be pleased to term them, are, equally with our mental powers, to be employed in the service of God, and are agents as efficient in doing either good or evil. The two combined are capable of exerting an immense influence, and when accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit are omnipotent.

That which aroused the apostle's feelings, and caused him to beseech his brethren, and to appeal, as in the text, to their feelings, was their duty of self-consecration to God. This, more particularly, is what demands our present attention. The language in which this idea is presented is figurative and has reference to the sacrifices which were offered under the law. It is natural to suppose, that one well acquainted with every ceremonial requirement should make such an allusion. The apostle exhorts his brethren to present their bodies to God. Why did the apostle make use of this term? Did he design to exclude the soul, which is the more important part of our being? By no means. It was the bodies of the animals that were offered in sacrifice. That was the term generally employed in speaking of animal sacrifices—it would have been absurd to say that the soul or spirit had been offered on the altar.

With reference to this fact, the apostle used the word *body*, evidently meaning the same as to say, Present yourselves, your entire person—the body, with all its members, and the soul, with all its powers and affections—to the service of God.

The consecration must be *complete*; we are not to draw nigh to God with our bodies and honor him with our lips, while our hearts are far from him. The command of God is: "My son give me thy heart." Mere formality in religious worship is an abomination in the sight of God, and it is to be feared that this particular characterizes, to a fearful extent, all our services; but most of all our sanctuary devotions. Our bodies as well as our souls are the objects of Christ's purchase, and hence we hear the apostle say: "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits which are God's."

There is a most intimate connection between the actions of the body and the principles of the soul. The body is but the organ through which the soul operates. Point us to a man who indulges his appetites to excess, who indulges in such frequent potations of the intoxicating cup that his face is constantly bloated and his body swollen; and we will point you, in nine cases out of ten, to a man whose soul is impure, and who does not employ its powers in the service of God. Point us to a man who gives unbridled range to all the lusts and evil passions of his depraved nature and who seeks their gratification in every possible way; and we will point you to a man, however fair his exterior, whose heart is full of corruption and all uncleanness. A soul consecrated to God and a body whose members are employed in the service of Satan cannot exist together. Ye cannot serve both God and mammon. You cannot serve God with the mental part of your being, and the world and the flesh with the physical. They must go together, both be given to God, or both remain the captives of Satan. Your bodies as well as your souls must be pure before you can enter heaven. The dwellers there are clad in white, an emblem of their purity—nothing impure or unholy shall ever enter the heavenly Jerusalem. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, that you *consecrate* your bodies, *yourselves*, to the service of God. "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God." The duty, then, to which you are exhorted, is an entire consecration of yourselves to God—presenting yourselves to him as a sacrifice.



We shall now consider the *specified requirements* of that sacrifice.

1. It is to be entirely *voluntary*.

That ye present yourselves. The word here employed generally denotes the action of bringing an animal or other sacrifice and presenting it before an altar. It implies that the action was performed freely and voluntarily. The same is true of your consecration to God; it must not be the result of compulsion, but a voluntary act, a free-will offering. Religion is a voluntary thing. The religion of Jesus Christ does not need the sword of Mohammed or the power of a Pope to secure its advancement and final triumph. It has always courted toleration and free discussion, while those systems which are full of error have studiously avoided them.

Reason teaches us that any other than a voluntary service is of little profit. We know this to be a fact in the ordinary avocations of life; much more is it true of the service of our heavenly Father. The slave who works because he must do so, because the lash is constantly impending over his back, has no love for his master. So it is with the individual who has been compelled to make a profession of religion; he has no love for God and must be an unprofitable servant. We fear that this beautiful feature of the religion of Christ has been at least partially forgotten by some of the religious denominations of our land. Under the influence of enthusiasm and supposing some peculiar charm to be connected with a mere formal declaration, they have literally frightened persons into a profession of religion. But what was the result? In too many instances it has been a lifeless, soulless consecration. While they have named the name of Christ, they have not been careful to depart from iniquity.

In like manner parents have not always been sufficiently mindful of this voluntary principle. They, too, often interfere with the religious convictions of their children and use improper measures to bring them to subscribe to the same creed which they believe. It is right that they should present arguments and motives to induce them to give themselves to God and to embrace a system of doctrines which they believe to be correct; anything more than this is interfering with the freedom of the Gospel and the independence of the human mind.

You are then to give yourselves, a voluntary sacrifice to God—to do so of your own hearty, free accord—remembering, that God makes a willing people in the day of his power.

2. This consecration must be "*a living sacrifice.*"

It must be made during life, for at death our destiny is irreversibly sealed—the body is no longer capable of action and the soul enters upon its eternal destination. This is a sacrifice which must be made in life. If our peace is not made up with God before the summons death places in our hands is obeyed, it will never be made. Should we live and die in the service of Satan, and in our last will and testament give our bodies to be burned as a sacrifice to God, it would profit us nothing.

More particularly:—The phrase "a living sacrifice," teaches us this idea, That we are to devote to God the vigorous and active powers of both mind and body, and to employ them diligently and energetically in the service of God. An indolent, slothful and inactive Christian, we had almost said, is a contradiction in terms. Who that is alive to a sense of his obligation to God and the wants of the Church could be contented to idly look on, when so great a work is to be performed? God demands and the Church requires our most vigorous and active powers; not the worn out energies of the body and the wreck of the mind. There is something peculiarly imposing and especially pleasing, in the sight of God, in a youthful, living sacrifice—a consecration in early years, of the life, with all its energies and intellectual, moral and physical powers, to God. How much good, by the blessing of God, may such a sacrifice accomplish! Such an one will eventually receive a crown decked with brightest gems, and a harp of sweetest sound.

But if we are to judge of men by their actions, how few, O how few give evidence that they have presented themselves "a living sacrifice to God." Besides the fact that they count *one* and give a little to the support of the Gospel, they are in every other respect perfect ciphers in the Church—take apparently no interest in her welfare and make no effort to bring others to a knowledge of Christ. In the judgment of the most extended charity, we could not conclude that they were "living sacrifices."

We do not exhort you to the performance of a mere formal act, but not only to give your bodies to God while animated by the vital principle, but also to dedicate your most vigorous and active powers to Him, and to employ them energetically in his service. This is what we call "*a living sacrifice.*" Be alive in the service of your Master, and not soulless and lifeless.

3. You are to present your bodies a "living sacrifice, *holy*" to God.

This term is not here employed in the sense of moral purity—a meaning which we generally associate with it. The Christian's soul and body are not holy, at least not perfectly so, until the moment of death. Were we required to be perfectly holy, before presenting ourselves to God, the sacrifice would never be made. The reference of the term is to the sacrifices which were offered, under the law, by the appointment of God. They were all to be without blemish or defect. No other sacrifice could be made. The Jews were expressly forbidden to offer that which was lame, blind, or in any way deformed. When a sacrifice was offered in accordance with the appointment of God, without any defect, it was regarded as "holy."

If we now bear in mind that the Jews were required to offer the best of the flock in sacrifice; and at the same time reflect upon the design of the apostle's reference, we will be convinced that his meaning is this:—Present the best of your powers, energies, affections and time to God. Many are expecting to give themselves to God when sickness comes or old age arrives. The conduct of such is comparable to that of the Israelites, who offered the lame, the blind, and the halt in sacrifice. Come to God in the way of his own appointment, worship him according to the prescriptions of his word, give to him the *best* of all you are and have, and you will present yourselves to him "holy" in the sense here intended.

4. In the last place, The apostle exhorted his brethren to offer such a sacrifice as will be *acceptable* unto God. That is, such an one as he had just described, a living and holy sacrifice.

There are thousands in the world who, under the influence of a misguided zeal and a religious enthusiasm, offer sacrifices which God cannot accept. The pilgrimages of the Mohammedans and the self-inflicted penalties of the Roman Catholics, not being required by him, cannot be acceptable to the Almighty—"Who hath required these things at your hand." How many are under the influence of a delusion and think that they are securing the favor of God, in the performance of things which he never required! We have here the glorious assurance, that so long as we worship God with proper feelings and motives, and in accordance with his appointment, our worship will be accepted. We have the delightful assurance that if we present our bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, to God, that they will be accepted, and that when our sojourn on

earth shall end, an abundant entrance will be given us, into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We now pass to the second thing proposed.—

II. The reasonableness of that service which God requires.

By the term *reasonable* we understand, that which is in accordance and consistent with the dictates of reason. Some suppose that the term is here used in a somewhat different sense—that it is designed to teach the spirituality of the worship of God under the present dispensation, in contradistinction to the external service of the former. It is an important truth that the worship of God is now more spiritual, more mental, less burdened with rites and ceremonies, than while the ceremonial law remained in force. But that this is the idea which the apostle here wishes to convey, we are rather disposed to doubt. The more natural interpretation is, that the service to which the apostle exhorted his brethren, was such as their reason told them they owed to God. Who does not know and feel in his inmost soul, however imperfect his practice, that all that constitutes himself should be devoted to God and employed in the service of him who is his creator and preserver, and who is constantly bestowing upon him so many blessings? The heart of that man must be hard, indeed, and his conscience seared as with a hot iron, who does not feel something within him testifying that the law of God is holy, just and good, and that every claim that it makes upon him is right and reasonable. It is true that we are not to take reason as our only guide and to perform only those duties which it approves; for by means of sin, all our powers have been perverted, and what is really reasonable, especially in the worship of God, on account of the depravity of our nature and the darkness of our understandings, does not appear to us to be such. We have, however, an infallible guide, the word of God, and if our reasoning powers have been brought under its saving influence, they will approve and sanction all its requisitions.

Although reason may not be able to comprehend fully the nature of that service which God requires of his creatures, and why he demands it, still there is nothing in it contrary to an enlightened reason. While there are many things in the revelation of God's will, beyond the range of reason, there is nothing in the Bible or the religion of Jesus incompatible with it. There have been philosophers, falsely so-called, who have put forth their mightiest ef-

forts to prove that the religion of the Bible is inconsistent with reason. But instead of establishing their position, they have only proved that they were unacquainted with the very genius of Christianity and strangers to the grace of God.—They have but manifested the perversion of their own mental powers, which, *ignis fatuus* like, have led them into the marshes and bogs of error. The Christian philosopher beholds a perfect and beautiful harmony between the teachings of nature, the deductions of reason and the express declarations of scripture; a harmony as full of music to his soul as that which exists among the worlds that roll around and above us, in such solemn grandeur.

The consecration, then, of all your powers and energies, which God requires, is a reasonable service. He is your Creator, you are the workmanship of his hands, and as such are under obligation to live to his honor and glory. He is also your preserver; has watched over you all your life long with more than parental fondness. In him “you live, and move, and have your being,” and all the possible service which you can render, will not be a recompense for the blessings which you receive. But if in addition to these God is your redeemer, how great! how infinitely great your obligation to him! Here reason unites with revelation in saying, “Glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God’s.” If, then, the service which you are called upon to render be so reasonable, will you not cheerfully perform it?

We come to consider the last thing proposed for consideration,—

III. The argument by which the duty of self-consecration is enforced—by the *mercies* of God.

It is evident from the original preposition, here rendered “by,” that the mercies of God constitute the argument, the reason why the apostle exhorted his brethren to the performance of the duty we have just considered. It is an argument powerful in its nature, nay, almost invincible.

The minister of the Gospel has an almost infinite variety of sources from which to draw his appeals, and by which to urge the claims of the Savior. At one time carrying his hearers back to Sinai, pointing them to the blackness of darkness with which it is enveloped, and to the lightnings which play around its top, he bids them listen to the voice of God as he speaks in thunder tones; then, transfers them to Calvary, points them to Jesus as he suffers and dies on the cross for their sins, and bids them listen to the

sweet accents of redeeming love. At another time he draws his appeal from the relation which exists between God, the creator, preserver and upholder of all things, and man, the creature, the recipient of so many blessings.

In this instance the apostle beseeches his brethren, by the mercies of God. By the term mercy we generally understand, favor shown to the undeserving. The original word means something more than mere mercy. It has connected with it the idea of compassion. The Psalmist frequently refers to this mingling of compassion and mercy in the dealings of God with his people and calls them his tender mercies. The apostle, then, exhorted his brethren, by the compassions and the favors of God, to consecrate themselves to his service.

While the apostle could and did use the argument which he here employs with peculiar force, in beseeching the citizens of the proud capital of the Roman empire—had he been addressing you, had he been addressing American citizens, he could have employed it with greater power, and a peculiar emphasis. The mercies of God have been greater to you, than they were to them; true, some of them are common to you both, but there are others of no small importance which you enjoy, which they did not. As we are not addressing the citizens of Rome as she existed centuries ago, but the citizens of an American city, enjoying all the privileges which our free institutions can secure or protect, we will use the argument in its most extended length.

We shall first state a mercy of God, common to all lands which enjoy the light of the Gospel. We beseech you,

1. *By the mercy of God in the gift of his Son.* When man violated the covenant with his Creator and was cast out into the open field, to the loathing of his person; when no eye pitied, when no one had compassion upon him, we hear the Almighty saying: "I passed by thee and saw thee polluted in thy blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live."—Ezek. 16: 6. Had it not been for this compassion, this tender mercy of God to us the most undeserving, we must have eternally perished—been banished from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. O! how inconceivably great must the love of God have been when he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life? Who can resist love like this?

2. We beseech you to give yourselves to God, by the *religious privileges*, the peculiar religious privileges which you enjoy. No nation under heaven is in this respect so highly favored as you are. You are not the subjects of persecution, you are not forced to leave your homes and at your life's peril, dwell in some lonely mountain cave or amid the damp vapors of some secluded vale. Here there is no Claudius to issue a decree to banish you from the land of your birth or the home of your adoption, on account of your religious sentiments. Here you can worship God under your own vine and fig-tree, no one daring to molest or make you afraid. The means of religious instruction which you enjoy, both from the living ministry and the press, are very accessible and great; and if you do not improve these privileges, if they do not lead you to give yourselves to God, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than it will be for you.

3. We beseech you to consecrate yourselves to God, by his mercy in the bestowment of your *civil privileges*. Civil government is an ordinance of God, and the free institutions which we enjoy, which we have received from our fathers, and which we hope will be handed down unimpaired to generations yet to come, are precious gifts from the Father of mercies, and place us under obligations, peculiarly strong, to live the lives which we live now in the flesh, lives of faith and dependence upon the Son of God.

We might enumerate many other mercies of God, but why need we attempt to develop the extent and the force of the argument, implied in that short phrase: "by the *mercies of God*." I could not do it. It is an impossibility. Even while we speak they are accumulating; every breath you breathe, every pulsation of your heart, every breeze that fans your brow is an additional argument why you should consecrate yourselves unreservedly to God.

Could you but obtain a full view of all the mercies which your heavenly Father bestows upon you; your feelings would prompt the exclamation:

"What shall I render to the Lord  
For all his gifts to me?"

and you would immediately, with a firm resolution, say:

"I'll of salvation take the cup,  
On God's name will I call;  
I'll pay my vows *now* to the Lord,  
Before his people all."

Could you but reflect upon the benefits bestowed upon you by God, as you should, with the Psalmist, you would call upon your souls and all that is within you to be stirred up to magnify and bless his holy name.

I beseech you by the mercies of God; by your health, your intellectual endowments, by all that is comfortable in your lot, by all the privileges of the community in which you reside, by all the civil and religious privileges which you enjoy, and above all, by the love of God, in the gift of his Son; to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

You all know something of the power of kindness. By the frequent repetition of kindly acts, you heap coals of fire upon the head of an enemy: you fuse down his envious and revengeful feelings. It is almost impossible to deny any request or refuse to perform any reasonable service, which a kind friend may ask of us. Who, then, can withhold the service which *God* requires! He is the best of friends—a “friend that sticketh closer than a brother,”—he is continually with you; in all your afflictions he is afflicted, he sees your tears and hears your groans. “Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” The man who does not consecrate himself to God cannot look upon the heavens above or nature’s scenery around him with any self-complacency. While the Christian can look at those shining orbs, and say, “My Father made them all.”

I beseech you by all the kindness, the pity and compassions of the Almighty, that you consecrate yourselves to the service of God. If you have already done so, be constantly making that consecration more unreserved. If you have never done so, “Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” Give yourselves *now* to God; let the language of your hearts be, “Here, Lord, I give myself to thee,” and let your speedy, public profession prove its reality. You will never repent it, never regret it. When on the bed of death all your actions shall pass in review before you, this one will be viewed with pleasure and delight. It will rob death of its sting and the grave of its victory. Nay more, it will transform him into a peaceful messenger, who shall introduce you into the General Assembly and Church of the first-born, where you shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.



# SERMON XV.

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## CONSECRATION TO GOD.

BY REV. A. G. FERGUS,

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“And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?”  
*1 Chronicles, 29: 5.*

From the chapter which we have read, we learn that king David had made, on an extensive scale, preparations of all sorts, for that magnificent monument of architecture, which was the glory of Israel, the wonder of the world, one of the most gorgeous edifices ever erected on earth, the Temple of Solomon. It had been an object fondly cherished by David; he had therefore been sedulously employed for years in laying aside, both from the public revenues and from his private income, the treasures necessary for the erection of the noble superstructure. He was willing to lavish with no sparing hand all the munificence of his abundant wealth upon that edifice that was to be the temple of the living God, the place where the acceptable perfume of the incense was to ascend to heaven mingled with the smoke of the freely offered sacrifice, and accompanied by the still more acceptable offering of praise and prayer—where the God of Israel would be symbolically present in his glory between the cherubim. Upon the occasion on which the words of our text were spoken, after having enumerated to the princes, nobles and people who formed the vast assemblage on that occasion, all the preparations which he had made, he propounds to them the interrogation, “Who then is willing to consecrate his services this day unto the Lord?”

Now, God Almighty is erecting a great spiritual edifice, a holy temple upon earth, into which immortal beings are builded as living

stones, founded upon Jesus Christ the chief corner-stone of the building of grace. The riches of God's free grace have been drawn from the treasury of his infinite love for the erection of this glorious New Testament Temple of which the one erected by Solomon was but a faint type. Although this is a spiritual and figurative temple, yet it is to be erected by human instrumentality. God works by means, and as his heart is set upon the erection of this temple in which the Godhead delights to dwell, he appeals to every one of you this day in the words of our text, "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?"

For the purpose of developing the instruction contained in this portion of Holy Scripture, we propose considering,—

I. The extent of the consecration required.

II. The reasons for which the consecration should be made.

I. The consecration required is *absolute* and *universal*. God requires an unlimited dedication to him of everything within us, and everything without us which the world calls ours. Every amiable affection of the heart, every power of the intellect, every degree of enthusiasm of spirit or energy of enterprise, every particle of influence in the world, each and all should be devoted to his service by a free and sublime consecration. God is not more justly entitled to the homage and the service of the angels around his throne, whom he makes ministering spirits to do whatever is his pleasure, than he is to the undivided and unmingled veneration and service of man. Did God, do you suppose, create man with the purpose of allowing him to form his own designs, labor for the gratification of his own desires, consult his own inclinations, accomplish his own destiny, regardless of the will or authority of him who formed him? Is self to be the supreme object of the exertions of man, and the supreme arbiter of his actions?

But if self is not to be the supreme and only object of our endeavors, will not the Lord accept of such a service at our hands as we can conveniently spare from the service of self? No, God accepts of no such division. He gives not any of his prerogatives to another. He accepts not the love of a heart that is divided between himself, the flesh, the world, and the service of the devil. Let none deceive himself with the vain hope that the Lord will be pleased with divided affections, alienated sympathies, or hesitating obediences. No, he demands the trusting, even child-like confiding,

homage of the heart, the whole heart, and the whole life. The Lord alone must be exalted. He alone must be enshrined in the heart; to him alone must the soul bow; to him alone must the spontaneous effusions of the sanctified affections ascend; to him alone must the obedience of the life be rendered. Our love to our fellow-man must, that it may be worthy in the sight of heaven, flow from our love to God. Our obedience to rulers and parents, because God has laid it upon us as a part of our obedience to him. Our deeds of philanthropy, because he demands it of us as a testimony of our esteem for him and the means of advancing his glory in the world—"For herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Everything that it is our duty, to do either to ourselves or to our neighbors, is but a part of the entire duty that we owe to God. All must be consecrated to his service. When we take this broad, this Christian view of our duty, we will not consider our daily avocations, our agriculture, our merchandise, or our mechanism as one kind of duty in which we are allowed to serve self, and praying, reading the Scriptures, observing the Sabbath, attending on the preached word and kindred exercises as another class of duties in which we serve God. But we will look upon them all as constituent and inseparable parts of our obedience to our heavenly Creator. Did you ever think that you could serve and glorify God in your daily pursuits as in those exercises which belong more directly to the worship of God. Although domestic duties, and those that spring out of the relations which by the appointment of God exist among men in societies, are not religious duties in which we have the nearest approach to God, yet we are bound to discharge them all, not as to man, but as to God. Did you ever think as you prosecuted your labor on the farm or in the shop, that this prosecution of it was a part of your duty to God, and that therefore diligence, frugality, economy and honesty should be as truly exercised in it, that we may thereby honor him who gave us the talents and the strength to pursue our avocations, as should fervency and sincerity mark our prayers? Do you think of this when you are acquiring or disposing of your income, whether it is little or much? Or do you labor just for the sake of growing rich? If so, you are far, very far below the noble object for which worldly wealth should be acquired. It is God that giveth power to get riches, and to his service they should be consecrated. Without dwelling longer

on this branch of the subject, we repeat that the consecration demanded by God is *universal* and *unlimited*.

Never is the labor of the intellect, the affection of the heart, or the production of the hand, so nobly spent as when consecrated to the service of him who so fearfully and wonderfully made us. God formed man a rational being, endowing him with a spiritual and immortal soul that he might be glorified in the happiness, praise and obedience of his creatures. Man is emphatically a dependent being. Left to himself he is nothing—can do nothing. He comes into existence according to those laws of nature which God has established and according to which he exerts his almighty power; and he is, also, entirely dependent upon him for the continuation of that existence—“For in him we live and move and have our being.” Whenever he says, Ye sons of men return, that moment we cease to exist on earth: our body returns to dust out of which it was taken and our spirit to God who gave it. If, then, man’s life is not his own, if he is not his own property, surely nothing that he has can be absolutely his own. So far as his fellow-men are concerned, he has the right to himself and to the productions of his intellect and his hands; but the rights of God come in as over all.

Man has no primary and essential right to anything whatsoever; all his rights are delegated, are all given to him by his Creator. To use the words of a well-known document, because they express a Scriptural truth, “All men are created equally free and independent, and are *endowed by their Creator* with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” You will observe that whilst these are the most sacred rights enjoyed by man, they are bestowed upon him by his Creator. These things are true even if man had never fallen. For whilst he was yet in his primeval holiness in the paradise of Eden, God promised him the continuation of happiness, only upon condition of his entire obedience to his commandments. But with how much more power does the argument apply when we consider man as a sinner, one who has forfeited every right, even delegated, which he had—that is, before God, not before his fellow-mortal. Now God has given man this wondrous physical constitution, these sublime powers of intellect, of judgment, reason and will, and those amiable affections and sympathies of heart, that he may, by a voluntary and unreserved dedication of them to his service, show forth to the intelligent

universe the praises of him to whom he is indebted for them all.— He asks the sincere and confiding love of the heart. His demand is—“ Give me thy heart.” And as the heart is his of right, so he asks for the service of the powers of the body—“ I beseech you by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” To every one who is a believer in Christ Jesus, who has felt his heart renewed, his words are, “ *Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits which are God’s.*” And of every one of you who has not already consecrated himself to his service, he comes this day in all the majesty of his authority, and in all the tenderness of his mercy, and asks the entire surrender and dedication of yourselves, with all that you are and all that you have, to his service.

He who gave you being and endowed you with whatever is noble, generous, amiable or praiseworthy in your character and disposition, who mingles with your life all its pleasures, who hath ordered all your mercies; and who hath, out of his unbounded love for your welfare, provided everlasting salvation for you, if you will accept of the offer at his hands; asks that you make the grateful return of the first-born of your souls, holy affections, and the first fruits of your lives, holy actions.

We come now to consider,—

## II. The reasons for which the consecration should be made.

As all God’s acts and plans are marked with designs worthy of his glorious perfections, what design is to be subserved by this unreserved consecration of man to his service ?

1. We are called upon to consecrate ourselves to the Lord for the purpose of glorifying his name. This is the principal end.

The glory of God is two fold—his essential and his declarative glory. His essential is that glory that belongs necessarily to him, and can never be increased or diminished, His declarative glory is that which he receives in displaying the perfections of his nature to, by, and through his creatures: or it is that meed, or revenue of glory which he receives by manifesting his perfections to his intelligent creatures, and to set forth which, he employs their agency.

The displaying the glory of God is the supreme, paramount idea in the whole stupendous system of creation. The adorable Trinity might forever remain supremely happy in the enjoyment

of that glory which they had with each other before the world was. Or after forming the angelic hosts God might have continued throughout eternity, pleased and glorified in the grateful homage and prompt obedience of cherubim and seraphim, and the myriads of celestial inhabitants of lesser rank; but he was pleased further to show forth his glory, by giving life and happiness to the countless myriads of beings, rational and irrational, that throng our earth and her sister worlds.

All objects in nature, by the display which they give of the power wisdom and goodness of their Creator, praise him according to their capacities. The inanimate and irrational creations rather afford matter of praise than praise of themselves. They have no speech or language. They are mute—their tribute of praise must be offered through man. He is the high-priest of nature. He officiates in interpreting and offering up her sacrifice of praise to her divine author. But of man himself he expects the greatest revenue of glory. He has formed him capable of so doing, and he waits to receive it at his hands.

Whilst in all things the glory of God is manifested, it is in the redemption of sinners that the glory of his grace shines with superior brilliancy. In the arrangement of everything connected with our earth, so that the comfort and happiness of man may be promoted, we see displayed the kindness of a benevolent being; but in the scheme of redemption we behold the manifestations of a God infinitely abounding in the riches of his love.

When the angels beheld the superstructure of this earth arise out of chaos they might well sing together and shout for joy; and as they afterwards observed the arrangement of all things that the perfection of all might be secured, and yet all move in subserviency to one main object, the happiness of man, they might well stand mute, filled with delight and astonishment. But when they beheld, after the fall, that salvation for sinners had been provided, they might with truth take up the language of the prophet and exclaim, "Hear, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth!" I will not say whether God is more glorified by the salvation of one sinner than by the obedience of all the holy angels who never fell, for there is no arithmetic by which we can calculate the value of an immortal spirit. Although we would not feel prepared to solve this problem, yet, that the salvation of one sinner is of more importance than

all this material world, our Savior has taught us: "What shall a man be profited if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

By the dedication demanded, then, in the first place, the glory of God is to be advanced. It is but just that he should receive of his own. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor and power; for thou hast made all things. For thy pleasure they are and were created."—Rev. 4: 11. "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

2. The second reason for this consecration is that our own good may be promoted.

As the supreme duty or business of man's life is to glorify God, so his fulfilment of this great leading obligation is intimately connected with enjoying him. We can never enjoy him except we glorify him; and we need never glorify him willingly and with the consent of our hearts, without at the same time enjoying him. It is true that those who are finally cast off into everlasting punishment will display by their torments the glory of his justice; but it is no voluntary tribute.

Man's own true happiness is to be found only in obedience to the commands of his Creator. All God's promises of present good and future happiness are made only to the obedient. So long as any of you delay this consecration of your mind, your heart and your life to the service of God, you are sporting with your own happiness. Surely no one desires to be miserable. And true and lasting happiness is only to be found when the most entire dedication of self, with all connected with it, is made unto God the disposer of all happiness here and hereafter. God alone is the supreme good. He alone can satisfy the desires of an immortal spirit, awakened to a sense of its wants and true interests. There is no real happiness apart from the favor of God.

It is a truth that there has so much of man's perfect moral constitution survived the fall, that by cultivation it yields much that adorns the character, much that ministers pleasure to itself and to all around; but the person who possesses these amiabilities of refined natural virtue, needs to ascend one step higher to enjoy a soul filling happiness, founded, not upon the excellent, yet changeable, dispositions of men, but upon the everlasting love of God. Although this dedication is required to be unreserved, not withholding

a single affection, a single beloved sin, nor a single possession, it is in this way that man is to derive the greatest benefit.

So long as there is, on the part of any individual, no plain, definite and solemn consecration of himself to the Lord, the mind is unsettled, and, of course, his actions are unsteady. To-day he thinks of God, of heaven, and appears to long after them as the hart for the water brooks: to-morrow his good feelings are dissipated, his good resolutions forgotten. To-day he appears to bewail himself on account of his sinfulness: to-morrow he embraces sin as a beloved object. Now, he determines to declare himself before the Church and the world on the Lord's side; and again he is hurrying along with the giddy multitude after some one of earth's forbidden follies. Thus it is with him. To-day he prays to God; to-morrow his prayer is forgotten. This morning he finds delight in reading the Scriptures; and ere night hath violated what in the morning he had read. At one time he feels that indeed he is but the steward of God—that all that he has belongs to him who entrusted it to his care, and he accordingly disposes of it for the glory of God; but, alas for human resolution, soon he acts under the sway of unmingled selfishness. Do not many of you know that this description suits your own case before you did at last make the solemn consecration spoken of. And does it not suit the case of many, now hearing me, who have never made this consecration?

Now that the heart may be confirmed and established, it is necessary that you try it under the instructions of the word, and the influences of the Spirit, for which you are to pray, until you find it willing to say unto the Lord "thou art my God,"—"thou art my portion." Then, when you find it willing to renounce the dominion of every sinful affection, make a solemn consecration of all that you are, and all that you have, and all that you expect to be, to the service of your God. It should be done earnestly, solemnly, prayerfully, sincerely. Man is such an unstable being, so easily diverted from the practice of virtue, that he requires to be pledged to the Lord in that manner which will exert the most constraining influence over his mind and life.

If, then, there is anything excellent in a life spent in the practice of virtue—if anything desirable in the approval of God and the enjoyment of his blessing; man's highest good is to be subserved by this self-consecration which we are urging.



3. A third reason is, that the good of others is to be subserved.

God not only asks you to glorify him by a voluntary devotion to him of all the affections of your heart and all the actions of your life; but he asks you to be co-workers with him in the salvation of your fellow-men. He has made abundant provision out of the riches of his grace for the redemption of fallen man from the bondage of sin, and from the torments of misery; but in this world he carries on this glorious work by human instrumentalities.

Did it seem good to the Almighty, he could send forth that same omnipotent energy by which the world was called into existence, order arising out of confusion and light out of darkness, and convert every soul of man. But he has otherwise determined. He has appointed the Gospel as the instrument in the hands of man, as that which, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, he makes effectual in the conversion of sinners and in the edification of saints. And although he has power to renew a soul dead in trespasses and sins without any means; yet as he has appointed these instrumentalities, he honors them with his blessing in the work assigned to them.

It is by the inspired truth of the Gospel, read and preached, that for ages he has carried on the glorious work of man's restoration; and by the same means is it to be carried on in the generations yet to come, until our world shall be redeemed from the dominion of sin, and purified from its pollution. To this work he requires you to consecrate yourselves. What work more honorable? If the character of the government always gives dignity to the ambassador, what honor is reflected upon the Christian who is constituted the agent of the Court of Heaven to treat with his fellow mortals, who are sinning against a God of love and against their own souls? You are to be the light of the world, to dispel its moral gloom—the salt of the earth to preserve it from destruction. Bad as our world is, there are still many thousands of God's people in it. Were it otherwise we have reason to believe God would destroy it, as the prophet said when speaking of the corruption of Judah, "Unless the Lord had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and made like unto Gomorrah."

We are so constituted that every man has an influence upon his fellow-man. We mingle with them daily; we daily impart and receive impressions. Now God asks that the influence which we

exert shall be in behalf of his religion; that it shall be such as will elevate, bless and save the souls of our fellow-men. We meet with them in private, we mingle with them in the walks of business, in the house of affliction, the gatherings of festivity, the seats of justice, the halls of legislation and the house of God; and it is required of us that we consecrate all the influence we possess in these different spheres to his service, thus promoting the highest good of our species.

We have said that God is erecting a great spiritual edifice—the Church—in our world, and he not only asks of each one of you to be built up in it as a living stone, but, also, to become the instrument in his hand, for the building up of others. Out of this house of God, under ordinary circumstances, there is no probability of salvation: and you are not only to enter in yourself, but to strive with a noble devotedness to bring in others also. Be not deceived; this is no vain speech, no empty declaration, but a plain scriptural truth. God will not be despised. He does not lay this upon one and upon another, but upon *all*. He demands of each and every one of you that, having professed to be his servant, you everywhere, at all times and under all circumstances, act the Christian, that your example may tell upon mankind; and that you also use your knowledge, your tact, your influence, your sympathies, your affections and your prayers in inducing men to give heed to the great salvation offered to them in the Gospel. To nothing more noble in the sight of God can any one consecrate the resources of his mind and the resources of his wealth. When the angels rejoice in heaven over the conversion of a sinner, as they make the golden palaces of the New Jerusalem reverberate with their lofty strains of rejoicing, is there, suppose you, no pleasing remembrance made of him or her by whose instrumentality the great change was effected? Or has God no special regard for them?—"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

The doctrine enforced in our discourse, then, is briefly this. God, whose we are in the most absolute sense, because to him we owe our existence, and who has provided eternal salvation for us by the death of his Son, demands a universal and unreserved consecration of every faculty of our mind, every affection of our heart, and every power of our body, to his service, for the promotion of his declarative glory, the good of our own souls, and the salvation of others.

“Who, then, is willing this day to consecrate his service to the Lord?” Who in this assembly that has never yet done it, is willing to do it to-day? Who, that has never thought that it was his duty so to do, will be implored to-day to give heed to the voice of warning which we utter, and enter into strict examination of the subject. Do not act so unreasonable as to let it pass without examination. Summon your soul to the investigation. Be in earnest. Be not lukewarm—be no Laodicean. God asks you this day, Will you consecrate yourself to my service? What answer do you make? Oh! be in earnest. And if, after calm and earnest examination, you conclude that it is not your duty so to do, you will then be acting consistently with the decision of your own conscience. But oh! may God in his infinite mercy have compassion upon such. And if, on the other hand, you conclude, as I am sure you will, if you be sincere and faithful in the investigation of the question, that it is your duty, your solemn duty, as well as your highest interest, so to surrender yourself to him, do so at once, ere your good resolution fail. Be warned by the case of Felix not to delay when you feel your heart inclined to good.

And again, who among you that for years has been in some measure agitating this question in his mind and has not yet come to a conclusion, will hesitate no longer? Who that has seen communion season after communion season, (when it is more common to make this dedication) pass by without making a public profession of his faith in him who has said, “He that confesseth me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven; and he that denieth me before men, him will I also deny before the angels of God,” will decide before God, the judge of all hearts, that he will no longer refuse this reasonable assent?

Are there those hearing me to-day, who for years have been hearers of a preached Gospel and have not yet decided the question to whose service they will devote the affections of their heart and the homage of their lives? How long, “*how long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, serve him; and if Baal, then serve him.*” I use no swelling words to create any unnecessary panic; but yet all language fails to express the intensity of feeling experienced by the faithful minister as he appeals to men,—“Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.”

God appeals to *all* with the question, “Who then will consecrate

NOTICE.

☞ The person who gave us, at the last meeting of General Synod, Pittsburgh, Pa., a *five dollar bill* on the Bank of Xenia, Ohio, dated Jan. 8, 1841, letter A., No. 312, is informed that the same is *counterfeit*. We will be pleased to receive a genuine note in its place. P.

RECEIPTS FOR THE PULPIT.

OHIO—*Chillicothe*, Peter Platter, vol 2.

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MASSACHUSETTS—*Boston*, Rev. A. Blaikie, vol 3, and United Presbyterian, vol 6; J. J. M'Kay, vol 3.

SOUTH CAROLINA—*Hazlewood*, Rev. R. W. Brice, vol 3.



*Rev. Wm. Davidson*

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## ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN

## CHURCH.

CONSISTING OF

SERMONS BY THE MINISTERS

OF THE

FOUR SYNODS OF THAT DENOMINATION.

EDITED BY

REV. JAMES PRESTLEY.

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CINCINNATI:

PRINTED BY J. A. & U. P. JAMES,

WALNUT STREET, ABOVE FOURTH.

1852.

## TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS IN ARREARS.

With this number you will receive a bill of your indebtedness for the United Presbyterian and Evangelical Guardian. It is our rule to send bills, after the meeting of the particular Synod, to all in arrears. It refreshes the memory and informs persons of the state of their accounts.

There is a *very large sum* now due on the United Presbyterian and Pulpit, and some of it has been standing for over five years. This is all wrong. *We are really in want of what is due us and we expect it.* We give our time and attention to the magazine and present it to our readers when due, and if we are behind but a short period we account for it; but many of our subscribers defer payment from month to month and from year to year; and from some we have never heard at all.

These bills are drawn, for the current year, at the rates for advance payment. Where two or more years are due, the rate for deferred payment is charged on the second and third year. If the money be sent on by mail immediately, *post paid*, we will receive for all due on the Pulpit at the advance rates. When persons take the United Presbyterian with the Pulpit we will still receive \$2,00 for both for the current volume, if forwarded, as above, immediately. Where persons owe for a number of years for either periodical, and have been prevented from payment by untoward circumstances *we will settle* the account on the most liberal terms, on the persons communicating with us by letter: and in any proper case we will *freely forgive the debt.*

We are determined to settle our books, if we can. We therefore request persons to communicate to us freely. Any communication that the writer desires to be private shall be strictly confidential.

Forward to us by mail, post paid, at our risk, taking Post Master's receipt for fear of accidents.

Attention to the above is earnestly requested.

JAMES PRESTLEY.

himself this day to the service of the Lord?" Consequently all who do so will receive a welcome and a heavenly reward. Yet, perhaps, from none is this consecration received with more joy in heaven than from the young. The morning of life as a contemplation is full of beautiful thought, but the dedication of the heart to God in the morning of life, is fraught with noble actions.

Time would fail to answer all the objections that youth are accustomed to bring as excuses for their not making a profession of religion. But allow me to say, as one who yet feels the warm blood of youth course through his veins, whose heart yet leaps at its pleasures, who knows its enjoyments, its delights, and also something of its vexations, its trials and disappointments, that there is nothing in any of these that should make you hesitate a moment from making a consecration of yourselves to God. Allow me to say that there is not enough reason in any one of your excuses to satisfy your own selves when you examine the case in earnest. You are even now often conscious that you stand in an uncertain position. Remain no longer in this position of doubt and hesitation. By a sublime resolution of soul come out upon the Lord's side. And, as God is true, and as the experience of the multitudes of Christians who have tried it testifies, if you do it sincerely you will never repent it. Although, as the surrender must be universal—without the reservation of one cherished sin or one possession—you may think it very irksome, yet you are mistaken. Religion is joyous. Although you must submit to the yoke of Christ, yet he assures you it is easy. And although you must prepare your shoulder for the burden, yet those who have borne it the longest can tell you that it is light.

In conclusion, we remark that this subject affords matter of self-examination to those who have made a surrender heretofore. Does our experience attest that the consecration which we have made of ourselves to the Lord is genuine? Have we increasing desires for the promotion of the glory of God? Are we willing—do we sacrifice for it? Have we earnest longings, increasing desires after holiness, and communion with him to whom we have dedicated ourselves? Have we earnest longings for the conversion of sinners—for the conversion of our relations, neighbors, our children, of the unconverted portion of our congregation, as well the heathen? Do we pray for it, labor for it? These are momentous questions. May God grant us grace for the performance of our duty. Amen.



## S E R M O N X V I .

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### THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.\*

BY REV. DAVID MACDILL, D. D.,

*Pastor of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Sparta, Illinois.*

“And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.” *Colossians, 4: 17.*

NEITHER from tradition, nor from history, sacred or profane, have we any further information concerning Archippus than what is contained in the text; and the amount of this is, that he was a minister of the Gospel at Colosse. At what time he entered the ministry, what was the amount of his labor and patience in the service of his Master, by the laying on of the hands of what Presbytery or apostle he was ordained to the work of the ministry; are questions which a curious desire to know more than God has provided that we should know, may have led many to ask and attempt to answer, but the result has been mere conjecture.

Some have inferred from the admonition contained in the text, that he was in danger of becoming, if he had not already become, negligent in the performance of his ministerial duties; but of this there is no sufficient ground of presumption. Frequently and earnestly does the Apostle address similar exhortations to Timothy, of whose zeal and fidelity he had no reason to doubt. “Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine; for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.” To exhort and admonish, and thus provoke each other to love and to good works is, at all times, the duty of Christians, though no peculiar reasons may exist for it; and indeed, it is by this means that the existence of peculiar reasons is prevented.

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\* A Discourse delivered at the opening of the Third Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod of the West, at Oquawka, on the 13th day of October, 1852.

In all that he wrote, the Apostle, or the Divine Spirit who directed his pen, had a regard to the future. Till the end of time, this exhortation will meet the eye and sound in the ears of all ministers of the Gospel, "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it." Brethren, let us see that we refuse not him that speaketh to us from heaven. Let us suffer the word of exhortation.

The ministry of which the Apostle speaks, the source from which it flows, and what belongs to the full and faithful discharge of its duties;—are the topics on which we are to dwell for a few moments.

I. The ministry—"Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received."

The word is borrowed from the Old Testament, and is the same with that which is used, when the service of the sanctuary or the service of the priests is brought into view. It includes all that service on behalf of God's people, in things pertaining to God, which is necessary to be performed, that He may receive from them that revenue of praise and glory, which his word requires they should render to him.

It occurs in the New Testament accompanied with certain qualifying words and phrases. It is called "the ministry of reconciliation," from which we learn, that a great and leading object of this ministry is, to effect a reconciliation between God and sinners who are "enemies to him by wicked works." The matter, so to speak, of this reconciliation, or the ground on which it is effected, is the atonement of Christ. The minister of reconciliation is to preach this atonement in its fullness, its sufficiency, and its efficacy, that sinners who are alienated from God in their hearts, and have good reason to fear his righteous judgment, may see that a way is prepared for them to return to him, with the sure hope that they will meet the smiles of his love, and not the frowns of his anger. He is to preach it, that all may learn and know, that they may come to God, pleading that, as Christ, *his* Son, but *their* surety, *their* Redeemer, *their* Kinsman, has rendered a full satisfaction for their offenses, he would pardon all their transgressions, and receive them graciously, and be a Father to them. In thus addressing their hearers, they act as ambassadors sent from God, to deal with, plead with, their fellow-sinners, and pray and beseech them to dash on the ground, those weapons by which they have been carrying on

a warfare against heaven, which most assuredly will end in their defeat and eternal ruin; submit themselves to his mild and gracious government; and return with weeping and supplication to him from whom they have revolted, that their latter end may be peace. "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

It is called "the ministry of the word;" which implies, that an important part of the work, or, indeed, that to which all may be reduced, is to open the Scriptures and bring forth the precious truths which they contain, for the conversion, the sanctification, and the eternal salvation of their hearers. Hence, the commission given to the Apostles runs thus: "Go preach the Gospel to every creature—Go teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Paul's charge to Timothy is: "Preach the word." He was himself sent to the Gentiles "to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might obtain forgiveness of sins." And how he and his fellow-laborers in the Gospel acted under the instructions which they had received, he informs us in those ever memorable words: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

But not to dwell longer on this topic, suffice it to say, that the great end of this ministry is, in the first place, the conversion of sinners from sin to God, and then, their growth in grace, their advancement in knowledge and holiness, till they arrive at the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus. And the minister of the Gospel should at all times, and not less in our own age than in any former age, take heed, lest Satan by his policy, or ill meaning men by their clamor, or well meaning but mistaken men by their importunity, divert his mind from this great end of his ministry, to objects of minor and but momentary importance—objects, which possibly may be gained, and yet the great design of this ministry, the glory of God in the conversion, sanctification, and eternal salvation of sinners, be entirely defeated.

II. The source from which this ministry flows—the *Lord Jesus*. "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord."

In the New Testament we have some equivalent expressions which may help us to fix the meaning of these words. "I thank Christ Jesus my Lord, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. From whom (Christ) we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith, among all nations. Christ sent me \* \* to preach the Gospel."

When the risen Redeemer gave his apostles their great commission, he said, "As my Father sent me, even so send I you." Paul asks and answers the question; "How can they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how can they hear without a preacher? and how can they preach except they be sent?" These words are used in an absolute and unqualified sense. They declare a truth, which no length of time, no change of circumstances, can make otherwise than true. A standing ministry, a succession of ministers sent by Christ, and separated unto the Gospel, is necessary, and will be necessary, that sinners may believe on Christ and be saved, till the end of time—under all circumstances, in all places, and among all nations. The promise, moreover, which Christ gave to his disciples: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," implies that, after the extraordinary ministry of the apostles should be closed, there should be, till the end of the world, a succession of ministers of the Gospel, commissioned and sent forth, by the "Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."

To constitute an apostle, it was necessary that a man should have "seen the Lord," and received his commission orally and immediately from him. But the commission of the successors of the apostles—I mean their successors so far as they were simply ministers of the word,—is mediately given. Nor does it follow from this, that they are any the less called, and commissioned and sent forth by the Head of the Church, than his immediate apostles were. In the dispensation of his grace, as well as in his ordinary providence, God works by means or second causes. What men do in his name and by his authority, he recognizes as his own act and deed for all the specified purposes, as really as if he himself had performed it, without the intervention of any of those means or instrumentalities which he ordinarily sees fit to employ.

What constitutes a call to preach the Gospel?

Piety, a godly and blameless life being supposed; for without this it is needless to inquire any further, it being certain, that a man whose

life is a reproach to the Gospel cannot be called to minister in holy things. This being supposed, there must be—

1. An earnest desire for the work of the ministry—a preference for the service of God in the Gospel of his Son, before any other calling, however lawful and honorable in itself, and though a man may engage in it with an eye single to the glory of God: “He that desireth the office of a Bishop, desireth a good work.” The apostle does not mean, a man who desires the grade of a Lord Bishop, for the honors and emoluments of the office; but him who loves the business, the service, the employment, of one who labors to win souls for Christ.

In some cases this desire, though as true and genuine, may not be as strong as in others. But, whether more or less ardent, like all other desires and inclinations of men, it should be submitted to the will and good pleasure of God. As Moses entreated the Lord, “If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence,” so should every one who desires the office of a Bishop, the work of the ministry, say, If thy Spirit go not with me, to aid me, and bless my labors, carry me not forward till I realize the object of my desire. The event should be submitted to the judgment of God. No one should inordinately press toward the object of his wishes, by his own importunity, or by the importunity of his friends, if, in the opinion of those whom the Head of the Church has appointed to judge in the case, he ought to give up his intention; or if, in the providence of God, his way seems to be so barred against him that he cannot advance. The desire may be a gracious one. God may accept it; though he do not see fit to employ him in this particular kind of service. It was not God’s will that David should build him a temple, though he declares that it was good that it was in his heart to do so. In the world of nature there are a thousand embryos of existence which never pass beyond that stage. Millions of seeds of vegetables and trees fall to the earth, which are never quickened into life. How abundant are his resources. Notwithstanding all this—waste, as it might seem to us—“the earth is full of his riches.” Enough and to spare, is written on all his works. Nor less in the world of grace. Think of a Pollok, whose uncommon powers of thought, of fancy, of feeling and sympathy were blighted by an early decay; of a M’Cheyne, who was cut down almost as soon as he had entered on a career of extended usefulness

—and of glory, too, as that word is understood in heaven; of a Larned, who fell a prey to the destroyer, when the tones of his almost celestial eloquence were just beginning to move an opulent and luxurious, but ungodly, city. Think of the numerous cases in which the youth of ten or twelve years, who has already arrived at such a precocity of knowledge and grace, that it might almost seem that his moral nature had received no damage from the original transgression, is snatched away from the fond embrace of parents whose hearts often leaped for very joy over the precious treasure which they possessed. How great the loss, we say; but God can spare them. Not one the less ray of glory is reflected back from earth, on the throne of heaven. He will be at no loss for other babes and sucklings, from whose mouths he can perfect praise.

2. There must be some suitable qualifications for the work of the ministry.

Our Lord, the Master whom we profess to serve, has said: "Every scribe well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth out of his treasure things new and old." He must have a good store of spiritual food to deal out to hungry souls. To keep his stock up he must be continually laying in new supplies. He has no new doctrines to advance: nothing, indeed, has he, but the same Gospel which we have heard from the beginning; but he must be capable of making new observations and reflections on old and well known facts; new applications of principles long since well known and established; and of illustrating the doctrine which is according to godliness by new analogies and comparisons.

Paul charges Timothy: "Study to show thyself approved; a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." And he lays it down as an indispensable qualification of a Gospel minister that he must be "apt to teach." He must be able to state, and explain, and illustrate, the doctrines of the Gospel, so as to advance his hearers in the knowledge of God their Savior. And he would have his pupil Timothy make a constant and diligent use of the means whereby he might not only possess, but increase the necessary qualifications of a Gospel minister; "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."

In addition to that higher kind of instruction which is to be ob-

tained only in the school of Christ, every minister of the Gospel should have a competent degree of human learning. The day is past, or is fast passing away, when ignorance, impudence, and vulgarity, were reckoned among the best qualifications of a Gospel minister; and when ignorant and vulgar men harangued other ignorant and vulgar men against "college learning," to keep themselves and their hearers satisfied with their ignorance and vulgarity.

But I do not say that great learning or splendid talents are essential. Talent, indeed, if genuine, may enable a man to be more highly useful in the Church; and if blessed and truly consecrated to the service of Christ, will make him so; but "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." In all ages, and over all the world, the greatest amount of real good has been done by ministers who possessed no such talents as rendered them the idols of the multitude; but who, by fidelity in their sacred calling, and a constant occupancy of the post of duty, were the honored instruments of turning many to righteousness.

3. There must be an opportunity of usefulness in the ministry.

If Christ sends a laborer into his vineyard, there is some place in it, where he intends to employ his labors. A door is opened before him, by which he may enter upon his work; not always, by any means, such "a great and effectual door," as Paul at one time saw opened before him; but nevertheless a door. If in one place the door is closed against him, though it may be only the foolish and sinful prejudices of men which oppose, as such things closed the door against Paul when he would have gone to his brethren of the seed of Abraham; the Head of the Church suffers it to be so, because this is not the place where he would have his servant to labor. But his way will be directed to a people whose hearts the Lord hath prepared to desire, and esteem, and cherish his ministry.

If after sufficient trial, it appears, that nowhere do the people desire a man's ministry, then the Lord hath not sent him. It is on this ground that we vindicate the practice of the Church in first licensing, and afterward, on further trial, ordaining candidates for the ministry.

The Presbytery, with us, judges of the fitness of a candidate to preach the Gospel. If satisfied of his fitness, they license him. This their deed declares, that, in their judgment, from all that yet

appears, it is the will of Christ that he should preach the Gospel; in other words, that he has a divine call to engage in the work of the ministry. But there are many nameless things on which a man's usefulness in the ministry depends, of which they have not yet all the necessary means of judging; and of which, indeed, they are only in common with the mass of Christ's disciples, capable of judging. They then put him, for a season, on trial before the people. Do the people concur in the judgment of the Presbytery? This is now the question to be decided. He is to be *their* minister—*their* servant for Christ's sake—will he be acceptable to them? Thus the Presbytery obeys the commandment of the Lord; "Lay hands suddenly on no man." This is the democratic element in the Presbyterian system. Let no man think of disturbing it. Were Presbyteries to ordain candidates for the ministry without placing them for a sufficient length of time in a state of trial before the people, the government of the Church, as to one of its most important functions, would be a hierarchy; or, as it might not improperly be called, a spiritual aristocracy.

The choice of the people, and an appointment or commission from a competent court or tribunal to preach the Gospel constitute what is sometimes denominated an *ecclesiastical call*. It is nothing more than a formal recognition of the divine call. It is necessary for the sake of order, and to save the Church from the evils which she would otherwise suffer from men who "run though God hath not sent them." As a divine arrangement it is perfect. The errors which may be committed in carrying it out, arise from human imperfection. This is the door by which a true minister of Christ enters the sheepfold, and he will not seek to climb up some other way. Thus, our ministry flows from Christ as its source. We magnify not ourselves, but we magnify our office, as our Master has taught us to do. All the gifts which are necessary for the "work of the ministry, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ," are from him. To him we are accountable for the faithful discharge of its duties. It is a small matter to be judged of man's judgment; he that judgeth us is the Lord. We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. What our Lord said to his immediate disciples holds true, and to the end of time will hold true in reference to all his ministers: "He that receiveth you, re-



ceiveth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." As every one who would take part in this ministry, should see to it that he do not run unsent; so the people should take care not to despise him whom God hath sent. There are curses found written in the book of the Lord, for both these classes of offenders.

III. What is necessary to the full and faithful discharge of the duties of this ministry. On a topic which would require a volume to do it full justice, I cannot be expected to notice more than a few leading ideas.

1. Attention to the means of mental improvement.

The world is in motion. Knowledge is increasing. Every new invention in the arts; every new discovery in science, in geography, in the records of antiquity, affords new helps for explaining and illustrating the doctrines of the Bible. Hence, the minister who needeth not to be ashamed, must be all his life a student.

The heavier particles which are held in solution while water is in motion, precipitate or fall to the bottom when it enters the quiescent pool. By an analogous law of mind, the ideas which are acquired by careful investigation and close study—those heavier particles of knowledge, so to speak—are gradually lost if the mind is not kept in a constant state of activity. They are no longer grasped in their full magnitude, nor perceived in their full dimensions and in their proper relations; but they continue to float on the surface of the stream of thought, and are, from time to time, thrown off with an endless repetition. The discourses of such a minister will become dull, dry and uninteresting, and often painfully tedious; for he is under a continual temptation to endeavor to make the length of his sermon compensate its lack of weight and solidity.

Ordinarily, indeed, after a man has spent many years in the ministry, the decay of his bodily strength, and the pressure of his more active duties, will not permit him to think of adding much more to his stock of general knowledge; but then, meditation comes in and supplies the place of what is usually called study. He meditates on the truths and facts with which his mind and memory are stored, and applies them to practical uses hitherto unthought of. And hence, if he is taking heed to his ministry, the practical appositeness of his thoughts, and in some sense, their originality, will compensate the lack of those ornaments of language and delivery, and

even of that brilliancy of fancy, which he may have possessed in former years.

An extensive and minute acquaintance with the history of all those nations, ancient and modern, which have had any connection with the Church of God, and also, an accurate knowledge of what God is now doing in our world, is absolutely necessary, if a minister would explain those prophecies of Scripture which have been fulfilled, and are now fulfilling in the age in which we live. And for this work every minister of the Gospel should labor to qualify himself, that the Church may enjoy the full benefit of this standing and continually augmenting proof, that the Bible contains a revelation from heaven; and also, that she may understand her present position, her present duty, and her future prospects.

To keep himself constantly "posted up," to use a mercantile phrase, in all that knowledge and information which he must possess in order that he may be "a good minister of Jesus Christ," will subject him to continual expense. And when a congregation is consulting about what is a competent provision for the support of a minister, this important item of expenditure should not be overlooked. They expect him to make full proof of his ministry. They would not, like Pharaoh, be a cruel taskmaster, requiring the "full tale of brick," without furnishing the "straw."

## 2. Attention to the means of spiritual improvement.

Amongst these means, the diligent reading of the word of God, and prayer, hold a prominent place. The word of God is the food of the soul: prayer is the breath of the soul. Both are essentially necessary to spiritual life. How can our souls live, if we neglect either?

We should read a portion of the word of God every day; not as critics, nor as scholars, nor yet as theologians, nor yet as stewards of the mysteries of God; that we may lay in a supply of spiritual food, to deal out to his hungry children; but as sinners who hope to be saved through Christ; and who, equally with our hearers, should grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Savior. And a remark made by some man of God in a past age is well worthy of our attention, that we should first preach our sermons to ourselves before preaching them to others.

If we do not know the terror of the Lord, how can we persuade others to be reconciled to him, and flee the wrath to come? If we

do not know the worth of our own souls, how can we duly estimate the souls of our fellow-men? If we are taking little or no care for our own souls, how can we stand up before God and men and reason with others on the subject? Must not our tongue be ready to cleave to the roof of our mouth, and the silent monitor within be ready to disconcert and abash us with the whisper, *thou hypocrite!*

### 3. Diligence in the performance of the duties of our ministry.

It is the command of Paul to Timothy: "Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." And he enforces this exhortation by what a man whose calculations are based on worldly principles would consider rather a singular reason: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts will they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." They will soon grow weary of the pure and healing doctrines of Christ; they will desire to be entertained with the "enticing words of man's wisdom;" they will thirst after novelties; they will become weary and restive, under your reproofs and admonitions; they will say you are not the preacher they need, and so lust after others, and still after others. But let not this abate your zeal or your earnestness. He that judgeth you is the Lord. If you are despised and rejected of men, your beloved Master was so before you. So much the more necessary is it that you should earnestly labor and strive for their salvation. Why Paul! Am I, a young man, just setting out in the ministry, to pursue a course which will the sooner estrange from me the minds of some of my hearers, perhaps a considerable number, how many I cannot tell? Yes, just so. You and all other Christians were once foolish and disobedient, as they are. Therefore, by all means labor that you may save them.

There are always two classes among the hearers of a minister of the Gospel. First, the pious. These love to hear and are never tired hearing, the true and faithful words of God; for though they wound they know it is in order to their healing. They say: "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head; for yet my prayer shall be in their calamities." These desire the minister to be faithful and industrious; and while they see him aiming to be faithful and industrious in his sacred calling, they will make allowance for many infirmities and imperfections, and still cheer

him on in his work. Blessed is that minister who has many such in his flock. There will be conversions from sin to God. He will have seals to his ministry; and a crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord. Happy is that congregation which contains many such. God will dwell in the midst of them, and will surely bless them. He will satiate their souls with his goodness. He will satisfy their poor with bread, and their saints shall shout aloud for joy. A minister's usefulness and comfort in a congregation will rarely be over till he has lost the affection and confidence of such.

The other class give little evidence of piety, though there may be among them many professors of religion. These are they who are never satisfied, but always complaining that the minister does not preach right, and that things are not managed as they should be in the congregation; while none more frequently grieve the hearts of the godly by their untender and unchristian conduct and temper than they themselves do. These are they who are constantly demanding that the minister should preach more about the faults of the government, the sins of our rulers, the wickedness of every political party but their own, and the unrighteousness of others, that he may seldom have an arrow left in his quiver to shoot at their own sins and pierce their own consciences; and who, if he ever touch some beloved sin or darling lust of theirs, complain that he is personal.

The minister will often be mortified to see how little respect and attention they show to the word of God as ministered by him. Their levity, their want of that sobriety which becomes Christians, their neglect of duty, their destitution of love to Christ's disciples, after he has for so many years labored for their spiritual improvement, will often discourage him and almost sink his spirits. He will be tempted to say, "I have labored in vain, and have spent my strength in vain." And the faintheartedness thus produced will unfit him for making such earnest and fervid appeals to their hearts and consciences as he did make while he had more hopes of success. Against this despondent feeling and the debilitating effects which it produces, every minister should be on his guard. If he cannot be the means of saving all who hear him, let him take heed that their blood be not found in his skirts. Then though Israel be not gathered, yet shall he be glorious in his Master's eyes.

4. Earnestness and fidelity in pressing upon men the duty of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

The soul is precious. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" It is in a perishing condition. By the judgment of the righteous Lawgiver of men, it is sentenced to eternal death on account of sin. From the execution of this fearful sentence, no man is able to save himself. Nor could the powers of all men combined with the powers of all the angels of God save him. But "it is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." By his atonement he purchased for us redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, which, being received by faith, we obtain deliverance from condemnation and from the wrath to come; and by his obedience to the law, he brought in a righteousness which, being received by faith, becomes our righteousness for justification of life, on account of which we are held to be entitled to the reward of the inheritance. To bring sinners to believe on Christ and rely on him alone for these blessings, is the great object of the Gospel ministry. This is the all-important cause which they have to plead.

Now, we know that in the order of nature, evangelical repentance is preceded by faith, and flows from faith in Christ; but there is a general repentance which must precede faith. "Repent and believe the Gospel." No proud self-righteous Pharisee; no corrupt skeptical Sadducee, ever comes to Christ till his views and feelings have undergone a change. He must be convinced that sin is the object of the divine abhorrence; that, on account of sin the wrath of God is coming and will surely come upon him; and that in vain does he hope for safety on any of those fallacious grounds which once satisfied him; before he will listen to the Gospel as a gracious message sent to him from heaven, and receive it with joy and gladness of heart. It is therefore by laying before the mind of the sinner his obligations to God which he has violated, his duty to God and his fellow-men which he has not fulfilled, and placing before his eyes the sin of his nature, the plagues of his heart, and all the evil which he has done and imagined to do, together with the judgment of God which is according to truth against those who do such things; that the minister may hope to bring his hearers to such a state of mind that they will regard the Gospel as worthy of all acceptance. The law then must be preached—that it is the law of God, which he will have all men to obey—that it is holy, just, and good—and that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. But in con-

nection with this, the remedy—the grace of God which bringeth salvation—must be held up to view. We must here do our utmost to enable the sinner to see, and if possible, to bring him to feel, that his sin and condemnation are not set before him to distress and torment him, as if God had pleasure in filling his soul with fear and trouble; but that, knowing the truth as to his awful condition, he may feel a salutary alarm, and adopt the wise and prudent resolution to embrace the remedy, which God, though greatly offended by his sins, has, in his unbounded mercy and goodness, provided, that he may escape with his life, and obtain the salvation which is in Christ with eternal glory. This should be the great aim of the minister of the Gospel; this, *this* the end to which all his labors should be directed. Whatever range we may allow ourselves in the pulpit—and a wide range we may take, for the Bible opens before us a wide field—all should be made to bear on this one point, namely, bringing sinners to God through Christ, that they may obtain forgiveness of sins and inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

Time was when much of the attention of the Gospel minister was engrossed with polemics. Points of faith were to be defined; assailed truths were to be vindicated, and erroneous principles in religion were to be refuted. The controversial air of the pulpit too often made the impression on the mind of the hearer, that, to vindicate and maintain speculative truth, was the great end for which God ordained the Gospel ministry. There seemed to be a call for this; and I do not say but that something in this way may still be necessary. But the labors of polemical divines have already, in a great measure, wrought their effects, whatever those effects may have been; and if such preaching ever was bearing testimony for God, to the extent some have imagined, we are now near the “end of the wonders,” and the witnesses are about to finish their testimony. Every careful observer of things must have remarked, that a great change has taken place within the last twenty or thirty years. Though the Church is split up into an almost endless number of sects, and some of these are so divided amongst themselves, that one may almost be said to contain two or three sects; yet there are two great leading parties forming, which are destined soon to divide mankind throughout all Christendom. First, men of evangelical sentiments. These read the Bible, and pray, are meek and humble; and desire to serve God with all good conscience, though

in some things many of them may be in error; and kept so, yet for a season, by the imperfect theological systems to which they have committed themselves, and by the prejudices of education. The other party is made up of the enemies of God and of his Christ. By whatever names they may be called—Unitarians, Universalists, Deists, Papists, and what not, they have all the same interests, instincts, and sympathies; and notwithstanding an occasional skirmish among themselves, they are fast coalescing, that they may come up and compass the camp of the saints. By a gradual, but sure process, these two parties are consolidating their strength, and marshaling their forces, for the great coming conflict, in which the controversy is to be decided in favor of truth, and righteousness, and God, for one thousand years. And as the more Christians drink into the one Spirit of Christ, and the more fully they are brought under the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of Truth, the more they certainly will, and do, become assimilated to each other in their religious views and habits, and the more scriptural these will be; so, the great means of preserving and defending and propagating the truth hereafter will be, the preaching of Christ whom God hath appointed to be his salvation to the ends of the earth. Hushed forever will be the harsh notes of the fierce war trumpet, summoning the tribes of God to go up to war against their brethren—their brethren of kindred spirits, though perhaps not exactly of kindred views with themselves, in all things. Charge home on the common enemy; a brisk and incessant fire along the whole line: let no recreant soldier turn his arms against his fellows, but see that you give sin and Satan no quarters;—will be the word of the Commander-in-chief; and it will be obeyed. Then the most pure Church will be that one in which there is the most godly living; the most active zeal to advance the kingdom of Light, and from which the most vigorous sallies are made on the kingdom of darkness. All that to which men give the name of the true doctrine and worship and order of the Church must fall to the ground, if not well sustained by a living, active, devoted piety. The age of speculation is past; we have entered upon the age of action. Henceforth, men and Churches, and doctrines will be held in estimation according to what they are seen doing for Christ and for the honor of his kingdom; not according to the strictness of their rules which they do not observe, nor the strictness of their testimony, which they can not administer. Churches which know not nor will understand

this, will henceforth present a shriveled, and a still more shriveled appearance. Good warm-hearted Christians will come out of them; other good warm-hearted Christians will pass them by; their youth will learn to mock and scoff. For, the illusion will be dispelled; it has existed too long—that gross deception has cursed some Churches too long, which leads men to attach a high value and importance to ecclesiastical purity, and to glorify *their Church* because she has such a pure profession, while her members are no more holy, or sober, or godly, than the members of other Churches whom she regards as apostates, and too impure for her touch. Then will be the days of *Christian* union. For this, let us labor and pray. “And as many as walk by this rule, peace be on them, and mercy; and upon the Israel of God.”

Brethren, our lot is cast in a most important, and at the same time, a most critical age of the world. All things portend that great changes are at hand. Old organizations, ecclesiastical as well as civil, will be broken up. Opinions to which men have long clung, and for which they have zealously contended, will sink into the grave. Already gray hairs begin to appear here and there upon many of them. Religious customs and habits which men have fondly believed had existed from the beginning, and were to continue till the end, will give place to others. What thousands have rejected as error will be found to be truth; and what other thousands have held for truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, will be found not entirely so. But “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.” “The word of the Lord liveth and abideth forever,” though the opinions which men derive from it often change. It will still be a great and momentous truth, that “He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not on the Son of God shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” Our duty lies before us, and it is always the same. Amidst all changes of opinion, and all mutations of things, the good Master, whom we serve, will keep our feet from sliding, and “lead us forth by the right way,” if we take heed to ourselves and to the ministry which we have received from him. He will surely guide, and guard, and finally reward, all his faithful servants. And to him who has been faithful even in a little, he will say, when his warfare is accomplished and his course finished, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Wherefore, let us comfort ourselves with these words.



## S E R M O N X V I I .

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### THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL PIETY IN THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

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"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." *Acts, 11: 24.*

THE primitive disciples of our blessed Redeemer were in many respects a type of his ministering servants in all subsequent ages. Some of them were young, and some of them were old. Some were educated, and some illiterate. Some rich and some poor. Some were from the higher walks of society, and some from the lower. Each, however, had his own constitutional peculiarity distinct from every other, and each acted out in the service of his Master, his own distinguishing temperament and disposition. Peter, we find, was rash. John was amiable. James was aspiring. Simon was zealous. Judas was avaricious. Thomas was sceptical. And Paul was bold and indefatigable in the cause of his crucified Redeemer. Religion does not change the natural temperament of the man—it merely sanctifies and renovates it. Every man is in religion what he is by nature, and his piety will borrow its peculiar complexion from the disposition with which he was born.

The first disciples of our blessed Redeemer, however, were not only characterized by peculiar dispositions and temperaments, which qualified them for the different spheres in which they were called to move, but they were also remarkable for the positions of prominence and obscurity which they occupy on the page of revelation. Of this we have a striking illustration in the history of Barnabas and Saul. These two individuals were called to the service of Christ at the same time—were sent forth on the same mission to a

Gentile world—and were companions together for many years; and yet how different is the position which they occupy on the sacred page. Paul is the author of fourteen inspired epistles, and not less than two-thirds of the writings of the New Testament are from his pen. While Barnabas, on the other hand, is barely mentioned a few times in the sacred history as a companion and fellow-laborer with this distinguished Apostle. Paul appears in the astronomy of Revelation as a star of the first magnitude, while Barnabas appears by his side merely as a satellite. Why these distinctions were made among the first ambassadors of the cross is best known to Him who made them, and who will always assign to his servants the position which they are best qualified to fill.

But while it is true that Barnabas occupies but a humble position on the page of Revelation, he has not been left without some high testimonials to his intrinsic worth. He was, it appears from the sacred narrative, a Levite by birth, a native of the island of Cyprus. He is first introduced to our notice among those who sold their possessions and distributed them for the common good after the conversions of Pentecost, and from this it has been supposed that he was at that time converted to the Christian faith. He is one of the few illustrious examples upon record who gave up all for Christ. He was called to be one of the first heralds of the cross to a heathen world. He was sent forth to encourage the hearts of the new converts to Christianity at Antioch after the persecution that arose about Stephen. He was a delegate with the illustrious Paul to the Council at Jerusalem to settle the question of circumcision. He afterward, returned to Antioch and separating from his companion, Paul, sailed for Cyprus, his native place. Here his sacred history closes. How long he labored—with what success—how he died—and where he was buried, are questions which the world is unable to answer. No towering pyramid marks the spot where his sacred dust slumbers in peace! No monumental pile is reared over the grave of this humble soldier of the cross! No hand of mortal has graven his virtues with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever! Earth knows him not. But God has not left him without a memorial. The finger of the Almighty has written his epitaph and left it on a monument more imperishable than the great globe itself—even on the page of revelation. There God has said of this unnoticed and unhonored ambassador of Jesus, what

has not been said of any of the other apostles, and what every minister of Christ should most desire to have said, that "*He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.*"

The two distinguishing traits in the character of this devoted servant of Christ appear to have been *eminent piety* and *unwavering faith*. In the few remarks, then, which we propose to make upon this passage, we would direct your attention to the following particulars:—

I. The importance of experimental piety in the christian minister.

II. The necessity of faith to the proper and successful discharge of his duties.

I. The importance of experimental piety in the christian minister.

That it is important that every minister of Jesus Christ should be a man of practical and experimental piety is a truth which needs only to be named to be admitted by all. It is indeed an axiom in theology. It is self-evident to every individual who has proper conceptions of the duties and responsibilities of the ministerial office. All persons, however, have not proper conceptions of these things, and sometimes it is the case that truths which are most self-evident are most neglected, because they are not called in question. It may not be amiss, therefore, to present a few considerations illustrative of the importance of personal piety in the christian minister.

1. In the first place, then, we observe that it is important that the christian minister should be a man of personal piety, from the very nature of his office and the sanctity of the work in which he is engaged.

Personal piety and purity ever have been regarded as indispensable qualifications in those who have ministered in sacred things. If we direct our attention to those venerable seers of Israel who held converse with God in visions of the night and communicated his will to the people, we will find that they were holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Israel's prophets were good men—men of eminent piety—men who walked with God—men of strong faith—men who, while on earth, seemed to soar upon the wings of the Spirit far above the vain and transitory things of time. Hence we find that when John the Baptist

appeared in the wilderness of Judea, an humble, godly man, calling upon them to repent, the people supposed from the holiness of his life that he was either the Christ or one of their holy prophets, and therefore they sent messengers to ascertain his true character. And again, when the Savior himself appeared in the land of Judea, so immaculate in character and so far removed from the degeneracy of that corrupt age, the general opinion which prevailed among the Jews, who believed in the transmigration of souls, was, that Elias, or Jeremiah, or one of the old prophets, had come back again to earth.

If we turn our attention to the priesthood of the ancient dispensation, we find the same personal purity and piety required as essential to their ministering in holy things. Aaron and his sons, who were set apart to the office of the priesthood by divine appointment, were dedicated to the service of God in the most solemn manner. Everything connected with the awful and imposing ceremony of consecration, by which they were inducted to office, bespoke the sacredness of their vocation and re-echoed the sentiment which the High Priest was to bear upon his forehead—**HOLINESS TO THE LORD.** And when we pass on from the prophets and priests of the ancient dispensation to the apostles and disciples of our Savior, we still find that the great majority of those who were employed by him in the work of the ministry were men of devoted piety. Even Judas *professed* to be a good man. The great majority of them were good men—men indeed compassed about with many sins and infirmities, but still regenerated in heart: and with all their infirmities they loved the Savior ardently and affectionately—as they loved no other being on earth. Their hearts were consecrated to him. They were filled with the Holy Ghost. And as the result of that principle of piety which lived and burned perpetually upon the altar of their hearts, they followed in the footsteps of their persecuted Master, even unto death; not counting their lives dear unto themselves, that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the grace of God. Nor does it at all militate against the truth of these observations, or the principle inculcated, that there have been, under every dispensation of religion, persons invested with the sacred office whose deportment has demonstrated the falsity of their profession. Such persons have been and may still be found clothed in the livery of

heaven, while they are really the servants of the devil. But such persons were never called of God to minister in holy things, and shall certainly receive the reward of their unholy imposition when the character and destinies of all are determined.

We find, then, that under every dispensation of religion, personal piety has always been regarded as an indispensable qualification in those who minister in sacred things. Nor is it less indispensable at the present day than in past ages. Every minister of Jesus Christ, therefore, should be pre-eminently a man of genuine and experimental piety. If he is not, he may rest assured that he comes *uncalled* and goes *unsent* in the work in which he is engaged. He may be what the world denominates a fine scholar—an eloquent speaker—a profound reasoner—an amiable man and a pleasant companion, but if these splendid accomplishments are not graced and sanctified with a spirit of living piety which will consecrate all to the glory of God—which will lay every faculty at the foot of the cross—which will rejoice most in doing good to the souls of perishing sinners, he is not qualified to be an ambassador of Christ. No man should ever consider himself called to the service of Christ, I care not what his other qualifications may be, if he has not clear and satisfactory evidence of his own goodness of heart.

2. In the second place we observe, that it is important that the minister of Christ should be a man of experimental piety, that he may be able to direct sinners in the way to everlasting life.

It is not going too far to say that no man can be a good minister of Jesus Christ, or can hope to be successful in directing sinners to the kingdom of heaven, who has not an experimental acquaintance with the way of salvation himself. He may have the theory of religion. He may be familiar with the science of Theology. He may be well versed in all the technicalities of his profession. He may be able to preach learned and eloquent discourses upon many of the doctrines of Christianity. He may be able to fathom the deep things of God's word, or to soar aloft as upon an angel's wing and open to you the paradise of God with all its ineffable splendors. He may be able to do all this. But still there is one thing which is wanting, and for the lack of which no theological erudition and no power of eloquence will ever compensate. *He cannot give his own experience.* He cannot speak that which he has *known*, nor testify that which he has *seen*. And consequently he must be una-

ble with any degree of certainty to direct the faith, and the hopes, and the hearts of perishing sinners.

One great duty devolving upon the minister of Jesus Christ is to teach sinners how to believe on Christ. But how is it possible that *he* can teach sinners to believe in Christ who has never believed himself? How can he explain to others the nature of regeneration, who has never experienced a change of heart himself? And how can he direct the poor lost sinner to the cross, who has never been to that cross himself? Again, another department of ministerial duty is to confirm the people of God, and to build them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation. But how can he impart to others the joys of God's salvation, who has never experienced these joys himself? How can he comfort those who mourn in Zion, who has never been comforted himself? How can he enter the chamber of sickness and dispel the fatal delusions which oft times gather around the bed of death, or administer to the dying believer those precious truths which will strengthen his faith and animate and cheer his heart as he goes down into the valley of the shadow of death, if he has never tasted that the Lord is good and gracious? Ah! my friends, it is under circumstances like these—in the chamber of sickness—by the bed of death—in full view of the grave, and the bar of God, and the retributions of eternity—when the trembling spirit, as it journeys to the vast unknown, asks a parting word of comfort—when the spirit tearfully and prayerfully looks to heaven's ambassador for a last blessing—and he has none to give. Oh! then it is that the *inexperienced* minister realizes his own miserable, wretched poverty of soul, and the poor, lone spirit, feels that it has no spiritual guide and comforter. We may set it down as an established fact, that no man can direct sinners with certainty in the way to everlasting life, who has not traveled that way himself. We cannot direct an individual from one part of the country to another with certainty unless we have made the journey ourselves. True, indeed, from charts and representations of others we may be able to give some general directions with regard to it, but the particulars we cannot give. And just so it is with the sinner who is inquiring the way to everlasting life. From the writings and experience of others we may be able to give some general directions. But unless we have traveled that way ourselves, we will not be able to point out its windings and its

crossings—its dangers and its difficulties—its beautiful plains and its dark valleys—its rugged steeps and its safe and final termination in the city of the living God.

We say, then, that the christian minister should be a man of experimental piety, in order that he may be able to direct sinners with certainty in the way to everlasting life. Happy that minister who as he points sinners to the cross, can say, "Behold *my* Savior!" Happy that minister who can say to his people, Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for *my* soul! Happy—ay, thrice happy—that people whose spiritual guide is familiar with all the windings and journeyings of the "pilgrim's progress" to the kingdom of heaven!

3. In the third place, we observe, that it is important that the christian minister should be a man of eminent and experimental piety because he is made the standard of religion by others.

When we say that the christian minister is *made* the standard of piety, we wish it to be distinctly understood that he is not thus constituted by the word of God. It is nowhere said in the sacred Scriptures that the Minister of Christ is to be 'the *measure* of our religion. There is a model presented in the word of God which is infinitely more perfect than the most devoted servant of God—even the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He is the christian standard of piety. He is the Bible model of christian character. He is to be our divine exemplar in all things. "The disciple is not above his Master; but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master."

But while it is true that the christian minister is not made the standard of piety for professing Christians, yet from the position which he occupies in the Church, and from the fact that he is the spiritual instructor of the people, many are disposed to make him the standard of their religious feeling and action. They seem to think that if they can be just as good and zealous and spiritual as *their minister*, that this is all that is necessary. Multitudes, we fear, never aim at anything higher or better. Hence we find that the proverb is just as true at the present day as ever it was in the days of Hosea, when Israel had universally departed from the Lord—"Like priest, like people." Where, indeed, does the maxim not hold true? If we look to the priesthood of heathenism, we find that it is a fair representation of the degraded character of the people. If we look to the priesthood of the Church of Rome, we find

that just in proportion as they are debased, just in the same proportion are the people degraded. And if we direct our attention to the christian ministry of Protestant countries, we still find that they are a fair index to the spiritual character of the people. The christian ministry in their collective capacity give tone and character to the Church in the aggregate, and each minister gives tone and character to his own congregation in particular. The people are seldom found in advance of their spiritual guides, and they will always hold themselves excused for being a little inferior.

And not only so—but the world also fixes the same standard and forms its opinion of Christianity by the same rule. The world knows enough about Christianity to understand that its ministers *should* be men of eminent piety. It expects them to be the living embodiments of Christianity. It makes them the standard of religion, and from their deportment judges of the truth or falsehood of its claims. Would that every minister of Christ could fully realize his true position and responsibility,—that he could bear in mind that he is ever a spectacle to the Church and the world—and that, whether he knows it or not, whether he intends it or not, they are making him the standard of their piety and religion. Now we say that such a standard is unscriptural and improper. The minister of Christ is to be an *example* to believers, but not the *measure* of their religion. Christ is their model.

But since it is a fact that the Church and the world have made the christian minister the standard of their piety, there is in this very fact increased obligation laid upon them to strive for personal piety; nor should they rest satisfied with low degrees of piety, but seek for the highest possible attainment, that those who look up to them as examples may be led to make similar attainments.

4. In the fourth place, we observe, that it is important that the christian minister should be a man of experimental piety, in order that he may consecrate himself entirely to his Master's service.

That it is the duty of those who engage in the great work of the gospel ministry to consecrate themselves to this work is a truth which will be admitted by all; but the nature and extent of that consecration are not, perhaps, so well understood. Is it a consecration merely so far as it shall subserve our own pleasure or convenience, or profit? or is it a consecration of ourselves to serve Christ, like good soldiers of the cross, to the utmost of our abilities,



at all times—under all circumstances—even unto death itself? This is a question of importance to us all. When the soldier enlists in the service of his country, he devotes himself exclusively to that country; he forsakes his family and the endearments of home—he goes where duty requires him to go—he suffers when duty requires him to suffer—and he is ready to bleed and die whenever his country may demand the sacrifice. He feels that he is not his own, but that he belongs to his country, and therefore his duty is entire consecration. And thus it should be, we conceive, with the soldier of the cross. Having accepted a commission from his Savior to go and preach the Gospel to every creature—having enlisted under the great Captain of salvation—he should put on the whole armor of God, and serve Christ first, Christ last, Christ always. He should make every power of body and of mind tributary to the cross of Christ—he should forego with readiness every earthly emolument which he might have obtained, and he should endure cheerfully all the trials and privations incident to his life of suffering and self-denial. Such we understand to be the entireness of that consecration which is required of every individual who enters upon the work of the christian ministry: a striking illustration of which we have in the primitive disciples of our Savior, and particularly in the history of the Apostle Paul. After he had been arrested in his mad career of wickedness and crime, with what entireness did he devote himself to his Master's service! His whole after life was a perpetual, living incense to God; and while he grasped the cross as his standard, and went forth burning with enthusiasm in the salvation of immortal souls, he could say in the language of a good and honest heart, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

But a still more beautiful and striking illustration of entire consecration we have presented in the history of our blessed Redeemer himself. Who ever consecrated himself so completely to any work as did our Savior to the great work which his Father sent him to perform? Who ever sacrificed so much happiness—endured so much pain—practiced so much self-denial—and persevered so unceasingly as did our Savior in repairing the ruins of a lost world? Well and truly did he exemplify the truth of his own testimony, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him

that sent me." His whole life, from the manger to the cross, was a life of consecration. And in this respect, as well as in all others, he has left us an example for our imitation.

Such, then, we understand to be the nature and extent of that consecration which is required of us as the servants of Jesus Christ. What then will incline us to make this consecration, and enable us to carry it out in our practice? What will enable us to bring all that we are and all that we have to the altar of God:—our physical powers—our mental faculties—our earthly possessions—our time, pleasure, talent, reputation, and even life itself, if need be, and offer them as a sacrifice to him? What will enable us to do this? Nothing but that holy and heavenly principle which burned within the heart of a consecrated Savior. Nothing but true and genuine piety. All else must fail. It is this, and this alone, that will enable us to feel that we are not our own—that we have been bought with a price, and therefore that we should glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits which are his.

5. In the fifth place, we observe, that it is important that the christian minister should be a man of experimental piety, in order that it may impart earnestness and feeling to his instructions.

It has been said by a distinguished Roman orator, that to be eloquent we must *feel* the importance of the subject upon which we speak. This is a truth which commends itself to every reflecting mind; and it is just as true in theology, and in matters which belong to men's souls, as in matters of mere temporary importance. No man can be in earnest in the great work of preaching the Gospel, unless he *feels* the importance of the subject upon which he is speaking—unless he has such a realizing sense of its bearing upon the souls of others, and of his own responsibility in declaring it, as to make him speak like the Apostle, in weakness and fear and much trembling. Our own hearts must be moved if we expect to move the hearts of others. We must feel ourselves, if we expect others to feel. And it is, we firmly believe, because there is so little emotion felt and manifested by those who are engaged in the christian ministry, that so little effect, in many instances, is produced by their labors. "Theology," says Dr. Griffin, "affords the best possible field for tender, solemn and impressive eloquence. The most august subjects are presented to view; the most important interests are discussed; the most tender motives are urged. God and angels;

the treason of Satan; the creation, ruin, and recovery of a world; the incarnation, death, resurrection, and reign of the Son of God; the day of judgment; a burning universe; an eternity; a heaven and a hell—all pass before the eye. What are the petty dissensions of the States of Greece, or the ambition of Philip; what are the plots and victories of Rome, or the conspiracy of Catiline, compared with this? If ministers felt their subject as much as Demosthenes and Cicero did, they would be the most eloquent men on earth, and would be so esteemed, wherever congenial minds were found." Ah! yes, my friends, if ministers only *felt* their subject! That is the great difficulty—they do not feel—nay more, they do not even *seem* to feel, the importance and solemnity of the truths which they present to the minds of others, and the consequence is that nothing but congenial feelings of indifference are awakened in the hearts of others. "How is it?" said a minister to an actor, "that your performances, which are but pictures of the imagination, produce so much more effect than our sermons, which are all realities?" "Because," said the actor, "we represent our fictions as though they were realities, and you preach your realities as though they were fictions." Oh! how much truth there was in that simple reply. How many there are who discuss the most solemn realities of an eternal world with as much indifference as though they were lecturing upon natural philosophy, and speak of Christ, and salvation, and heaven, and hell, with as little concern as though they were discoursing about things in which no mortal man, on this side the grave, had any interest!

It will be admitted, then, that if the minister of Christ desires to do good in his public ministrations and in the private duties of the pastorate, he must not only be in earnest, but he must *show* that he is in earnest. How, then, is this earnestness to be produced, and how is this feeling to be kept alive within his heart, so that it will develop itself in his public ministrations? He can not always be under the influence of an external excitement created by circumstances, like men in other professions. His place, his pulpit, his theme, and his audience, are usually the same. Consequently there is danger of coldness and indifference from the very monotony of the circumstances in which he is placed. What then will counterbalance and overcome this sameness of circumstances, and impart earnestness and fervor, and energy, and life to his instructions?

Nothing but a holy unction of the Spirit within his own soul. Nothing but an abiding conviction of the importance of the truths which he proclaims. Nothing but an intense realization of the power of genuine piety in his own heart.

6. In the sixth place, we observe, that it is important that the christian minister should be a man of experimental and elevated piety, to meet the wants of the age in which we live.

We are not among the number of those who are disposed to berate the present age as characterized by everything that is bad and despicable; nor are we disposed to inquire foolishly, with others, why the former days were better than these? From such a misanthropic and complaining spirit we shall ever pray for deliverance. In many respects the age in which we live is in advance of any that has preceded it. In improvement in the arts and sciences—in the cultivation and diffusion of a sound education—and in the great work of evangelizing a lost world, the age in which we live is truly aggressive. Particularly in the work of missions, the Church of the present day is far in advance of all past ages. While the venerated Reformers of past centuries labored so untiringly for the purity of the doctrines of the Church, they seem to have overlooked to a wonderful extent their diffusive nature—they seem to have forgotten that while the former was a correct creed, the latter was the practical application and extension of that creed; and as evidence of this, in glancing at the writings of these venerable men, from the period of the Reformation down to the last century, we find little in all their productions inculcating the necessity of extending the blessings of salvation to all nations, and exhorting to the performance of this grand départment of christian duty. Nearly all that has been done in the work of missions has been done within the last half century. In this particular, the Church of the present age seems waking from the slumber of ages—shaking herself from the dust of antiquated institutions—girding herself for the combat and going forth conquering and to conquer. And I doubt not but when ages shall roll before the Ancient of Days, with all their deeds, that it will be found an honor in this respect to have lived in the nineteenth century of the Christian Era.

Still, however, the age in which we live is somewhat peculiar, and calls for distinguished and pre-eminent piety in those who are its spiritual teachers. It is an earnest—impetuous—utilitarian—

money-making—money-loving age. We say this not out of disrespect, but because we believe it to be literally true. Look where you will and to what department of business you please, and everywhere men are breaking loose from old and antiquated customs and are rushing on with electric speed to the consummation of their desires. Fortunes must now be realized in a day. Honors must be grasped with the desire. Places of distinction must be reached at a step. Money must be made at a venture. The world is moving on with accelerated speed, and its inhabitants are living faster than they did a century ago.

And what is the influence of all these things upon the religious character of the age? If men's hearts were right with God it would have a most happy influence; for just in proportion as they were diligent in business, in the same proportion would they be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. But their hearts are corrupt, and the consequence, therefore, of this increased worldly excitement is to produce coldness and indifference in the service of God. Religion is made to partake too much of the spirit of the age. The Church is made to follow too closely in the wake of the world. And religious duties, instead of being performed with calmness and solemnity, are in danger of being rushed through with electric speed.

What, then, we ask, is likely to counteract or to control this onward and impetuous spirit of the age, and to make men, amid all the hurry of business, and politics, and science, and refinement, and fashion, faithful and devoted to God? We answer, the power of religion. And how is this religion to be brought to bear upon their minds, and who shall call their attention from things that are seen and temporal and earthly, to those things which are unseen and spiritual and eternal? We answer, the christian ministry. Men whose business it is to stand upon the heights of Zion and mark the signs and watches of the night. Men whose business it is to hold intimate communion with God, and then to go forth with hearts deeply imbued with the spirit of living piety, and direct the minds of their fellow-men from earth to heaven—to teach them to look far beyond these busy scenes of earth to a land of everlasting rest—to weigh before them in the balances of eternity the things of this world and the things of another world, and to pray them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God and to lay up for themselves treasure in heaven. This is the duty of the christian ministry; and

just in proportion as they are men of living, experimental piety, just in the same proportion will they be qualified for the performance of their duty, and just in the same proportion will the influence of their labors be felt in time and in eternity.

II. In the second part of our discourse we are to direct your attention to the necessity of *faith* in the christian minister, to the proper and successful discharge of his duties.

Of Barnabas, you will observe, that it is not only said that he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost—a man of pre-eminent piety—but also that he was a man full of FAITH. And it may also be reasonably inferred that his piety and faith were intimately connected with his success as a minister of the Gospel; for immediately after the record of his piety and faith, it is said, that “*much people was added unto the Lord.*”

It has been well and beautifully said, that it is always by having faith in ourselves, in others and in God, that men have accomplished great things. The truth of this observation is confirmed by examples almost innumerable, both in sacred and profane history. What a striking illustration of the truth of this sentiment and of the power of faith have we presented before us in the history of that intrepid mortal who had the honor of discovering this western world. To his mind enlightened by true genius, it was self-evident, that to harmonize with the known world in which he dwelt there must be a land beyond the wide western sea. He felt confident of its existence—as confident as though he had already trod its shores and wandered through its wilds. And from the moment that this conviction took full possession of his soul, with what untiring assiduity did he pursue his bold and hazardous adventure? What was it that sustained him amid the ridicule of his countrymen—the repeated rejection of princes—the mutinous threats of an unbelieving crew—and the winds and waves of a pathless ocean? It was faith. Oh! it was faith that animated his heart and guided his bark, until the dream of years had been realized, and freedom found a new home for millions yet unborn!

How is the power of faith also most clearly illustrated in the history of that most wonderful man—the most extraordinary, perhaps, to which the world has ever given birth—and of whom the world was always afraid—Napoleon Bonaparte! What was it that led this fearless man on from victory to victory, until the world, aston-

ished at his success, trembled at his command as though he were superhuman? It was simply faith in himself. And what was it that induced his soldiery to follow him so unhesitatingly into the midst of the most frightful perils, and that rendered them in his presence almost invincible? It was simply faith in their commander. This was the secret of the almost miraculous success of this poor exile of St. Helena. And thus we might go on and give you examples, almost innumerable, illustrative of the power of faith. Indeed, we find everywhere on the wide page of profane history, inscribed on all the glorious achievements of earth, this truthful testimony, "THIS IS THE VICTORY WHICH OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, EVEN OUR FAITH!"

And when we open the page of sacred history, how many grand and beautiful illustrations of the power of faith come crowding up to our view? What was it that sustained the great Father of the faithful when he forsook his home and kindred in the land of Ur and journeyed into a strange land?

What was it that sustained the leader of Israel's host, amid all the dangers and vexations of the wilderness? What was it that animated the dauntless heart of the apostle Paul, who was in the Church what Napoleon was in the world, and that made him the great champion of Christianity? What was it that sustained that long list of martyrs who have followed in the footsteps of the immortal Stephen, by the stake and the gibbet and the cross, to the kingdom of heaven? And what was it, in more modern days, that sustained a Wickliff, a Zuingle, a Luther, a Melancthon, a Huss, and a Knox, in the great work of reforming a corrupt and degenerate Church? We answer, that in all these examples the sustaining and life-giving principle was simply the power and principle of faith.

And if you ask what it is that will ever sustain the christian minister, and enable him to discharge with fidelity and success the arduous and responsible duties which devolve upon him? We answer further—nothing but faith. It is this, and this alone, that will support him amidst the discouragements and difficulties of his calling. It will brighten his hopes—it will warm his zeal—it will dispel his fears, and it will encourage his fainting heart in all his works of faith and labors of love.

Every minister of Jesus Christ, therefore, who would be a good servant of his Master, should be a man of strong faith.

1. He should have faith in his own goodness of heart and integrity of motive.

2. He should have faith in his being called of God to engage in the great work of the Gospel ministry.

3. He should have faith in the commission which the Savior has placed in his hands—that it is God's power and instrument for the conversion of sinners.

4. He should have faith in the purpose of God that it is his unchangeable decree that the world shall be saved.

5. He should have faith in the promise of the Savior, that he will be present with him—that he will reward him at last with a crown of glory—and that ere long that glorious day shall dawn when the name of Jesus shall be known in every land and the praises of redeeming love shall sound from shore to shore.

These are some of the things with regard to which the minister of Christ is to exercise his faith; and he who has faith in himself, in his work, in his duty, and in his God, must triumph, whatever may be the difficulties with which he is called to contend. He has taken hold upon God's strength and therefore in weakness he shall be made strong.

Such a faith will enable him to consecrate himself to his Master's service—it will make him earnest in his work—it will make him fearless in the path of duty—it will yield him support under every discouragement—it will throw a pleasing charm around the duties of his sacred office—and it will give him even on earth a foretaste of the happiness of heaven. Without such a faith the minister of Christ must ever fail. His heart will become discouraged—his path will be clouded—and his work will be a bondage more irksome and terrible than the slavery of Egypt. Oh! how important, then, for ourselves—for the people of God—for sinners—for time and eternity, that every minister of Christ should be like Barnabas—a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith—that much people might be added unto the Lord.

And now in the conclusion of our remarks, methinks I hear some one muttering secretly in his heart the question, Why should such a subject as this be presented on such an occasion? Does the speaker think that his brethren are not good men and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith? Does he doubt the piety of his brethren? Or does he wish to arrogate to himself an affected sanctity



that might excuse him in addressing exhortations to others? No! my brethren, nothing of the kind. God forbid that we should ever entertain or have occasion to entertain such feelings. It is neither a meager conception of the piety of his brethren nor an exalted opinion of his own which has induced him to present this subject, on the present occasion, but an humble and sincere desire to do good.

1. We have presented this subject, in the first place, that it may lead us all to self-examination and to the attainment of higher degrees of personal and experimental piety.

While we have no occasion to doubt the goodness of any one with whom we are associated in the work of the ministry, yet we all know that it is possible for an individual to deceive others, and to be self-deceived with regard to the real condition of his own soul. It is possible for him to preach the Gospel to others and direct them to the kingdom of heaven, and after all, never reach that kingdom himself. It is possible for him to be an eminent minister of Christ—to be esteemed a great and good man—and even more than all this, actually to be the means of doing much good, and yet live and die an ungodly man. His Church may mourn over him when he sleeps in the dust; his fellow-laborers in the work of God may stand around his grave and say, "Alas! my brother!" and many a well-meant eulogium may be uttered in commemoration of his fidelity, while he himself is "lifting up his eyes in hell, being in torment." He has appeared in the presence of his Judge and uttered that last plea of a forlorn hope, "Have I not prophesied in thy name," and has received the final answer, "I never knew you; depart from me, thou worker of iniquity."

That all this is possible is evident from the language of the apostle: "I keep my body under and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast-away."

And can we conceive of anything more truly awful and appalling? I know not how it may appear to others, but to my mind such a case appears to be the most hopeless and pitiless that shall ever be arraigned at the tribunal of God or tried in the great chancery of heaven. In view then of the possibility of such a destiny, surely it is but right that we should examine ourselves honestly in the sight of God, and that we should be excited to greater diligence in the

cultivation of personal piety in our own hearts. Even the minister of the Gospel, unless he is guarded, will grow cold in the midst of the most holy duties of his office and fall asleep while he is bearing before others the ark of God. He may sink into such a state that his studies, his preaching, his conversation, and his prayers will degenerate into a cold formality, and be the result of a mere habit instead of a regard for the glory of God and the welfare of immortal souls. There is no height short of heaven itself where the minister of Christ will be free from the contaminating influences of a sinful heart and a sinful world. Even when he stands upon the heights of Zion there is great need of the exhortation, "*Watch and pray.*" And surely the importance and necessity of this exhortation is pressed upon us by the mournful dispensations of God's providence toward us during the past year. Many of our brethren and fellow-laborers—and even some who assembled with us under similar circumstances one year since—have been called to their long home. From the vacant pulpits and the lonely graves and the widowed congregations of these departed brethren there comes a voice to the living, telling us that the time is short—that we should do whatsoever our hands find to do with all our might, and that we should give all diligence to make our calling and election sure.

2. In the second place we have presented this subject with reference to the increase and education of young men for the work of the ministry.

The attention of that portion of the Church with which we stand more immediately connected has been directed, for the last few years, particularly to the increase of her ministry. This has arisen from the increased demand for preaching in all parts of our country, but particularly in the West. The Church has never yet been able to supply one-half the calls which have been made upon her. It is necessary therefore that the Church should employ active and efficient means for the increase of her ministry and for the supply of the destitute. But we should beware of seeking to swell the numbers of our ministry at the expense of thorough intellectual and theological acquirements—and specially at the expense of genuine and experimental piety. In this respect the Church should be faithful to herself and to immortal souls. *A numerous ministry may not be an efficient one.*

While, therefore, the Church is seeking to meet the wants of the age in a numerous ministry—in an intellectual ministry—and in a theological ministry, she should never lose sight of another want equally important, and without which numbers, and intellect, and theology will ever be in vain—a *pious and godly ministry*. The Church needs men like Barnabas—good men, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. “I trust that our Church will ever consider piety as the first and most essential qualification in their pastors, for which talents, genius, learning, and eloquence, would and could be no equivalents. It will be a dark and evil day when personal godliness shall be placed second to anything else in those who serve at the altar of God; for of all the curses which God ever pours from the vials of his wrath upon a nation or Church which he intends to scourge, there is not one so fearful as giving them up to an *unholy ministry*.”

3. In the third place, we have presented this subject with reference to our missionary operations and particularly our foreign mission to the Jews.

We have entered upon this work by *faith*. The Church has sent of her missionaries to that Holy Land in humble reliance upon God's promise and prediction that his ancient people shall yet be brought back from their infidelity and shall embrace Jesus of Nazareth as their promised Messiah. It has entered upon this work believing that through it the fulness of the Gentiles is to be brought in—that nations are to be born in a day—and that it is intimately connected with the millennial glory of the Church of God on earth. But we should bear in mind that faith is not only needed in the commencement of this mission, but also in its support and prosecution. We must not expect to reap and gather as soon as a few scattered seeds have been sown. We do not expect thus unwisely in the natural world, nor should we in the spiritual. We must wait patiently and *prayerfully*. God's promise will be made good. God's people will be converted. But how soon cannot be certainly determined.

Here, then, is room for the exercise of faith—strong and living faith, which will fasten itself down on the purpose and promise of Israel's God. And this faith must pervade the whole Church if we expect the work to prosper. But particularly is it important that the ministry in this matter should be men of faith; for just so soon

as they begin to doubt the people will begin to disbelieve. Having then commenced this work in faith let us prosecute it in faith—believing that according to God's promise "enlargement and deliverance will arise to the Jews; and who knoweth whether *we* are come to the kingdom for such a time as this."

Finally—we have presented this subject because we believe that a dispensation intimately connected with the regeneration of the world and the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom has come upon us.

It will require no prophet's vision to discover that a great and important crisis in the history of the Church and the world, is not far distant. In the political horizon the storm has evidently been gathering and darkening for many years. And just as certainly as the darkening clouds and the muttering thunder, in the natural world, betoken the coming storm—so certainly do the deep, portentous mutterings of the political strife, tell us, as they come "across old ocean's flood," of a storm that shall agitate and renovate the earth. Even now we find scattered everywhere over the face of sea and land, of earth and ocean, the silent and unappreciated means which are rousing the nations from the spell of years and hastening on the eventful furtherance of the kingdom of God. The improvement in arts—the discoveries of science—the increase of commercial enterprise—the improvements in navigation—the application of electricity to purposes of practical utility—the opening up of new countries, bringing together people from every clime—the rapid and unprecedented spread of the English language—and last, but not least, the cry for *freedom* from every oppressed and down-trodden nation under the whole heaven, which is causing thrones to shake, and kings to tremble,—these, these are the great subordinate agencies which are concentrating their forces into one mighty effort and tending toward one central point. Can we look upon all these things and foolishly imagine that they are all the chance on-drivings of a mad and restless world, all aimless and uncontrolled! Oh! no, my friends. They are something higher and better. They are the great machinery of a world designed for the extension of knowledge—the diffusion of light—and the salvation of man. Who so blind as not to see through these feverish stirrings and agitations of men, a *hand* that is weaving out the web of a world's destiny, and inscribing thereon God's eternal decree, "The

kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. As watchmen, then, upon the walls of Zion, it is ours not only to inquire, What of the night? but to mark the hours—to observe the times—and to watch the breaking light of the morning's dawn. Let us, then, mark well the lines of God's providence which always run concurrently with those of his grace. Let us consider carefully the signs of the times that we may know what Israel ought to do. Let us strive to be men of *strong faith* and *eminent piety*, that we may act well our part in this eventful age in which we live. Let us be faithful to God, to ourselves, to others, and to the Church of God. And may God ever say of our beloved Zion, "*This is my rest forever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it; I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread: I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.*"

## S E R M O N X V I I I .

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THE LORD THE ROCK, AND PERFECT.

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“He is the Rock, his work is perfect.” *Deuteronomy, 32: 4.*

MOSES, the inspired penman of these words, was raised up as an instrument in the hand of divine Providence, to deliver the unjustly enslaved Israelites from the iron yoke of oppression under which they had long groaned. After he had, by the use of appointed means, effected their deliverance, and had faithfully discharged the duties of a leader, a mediator, and a lawgiver to the Israelites, during the space of forty years' toilsome march through the waste, howling wilderness, he at length arrives at the banks of Jordan, in view of the long looked-for, delightful Canaan. But Moses having on a former occasion spoken unadvisedly with his lips, is not permitted by God, whom he had offended, to enter the promised land. Instead of being allowed the honor of marching at the head of a numerous host, through Jordan on dry ground, as he had done on a former occasion at the Red Sea, he must now shortly bid an affectionate farewell to all his beloved friends and relatives, and enter alone the Jordan of death, which separates between the wilderness of time and the heavenly Canaan. There he beholds his last and most formidable enemy, with whom he must unavoidably contend, even Death, the king of terrors, and the terror of kings. But, behold, at the time this eminent saint and faithful servant of God is engaged in the most solemn meditation; while he anticipates the approaching moment when he must bid an eternal farewell to all terrestrial things, and appear in his spirit at the bar of God, to be judged according to the deeds done in the body; even

then, he is called upon by his Divine Master to perform his last office to the children of Israel, which was, to deliver the song recorded in this chapter, that it might be for a testimony against them at a future period, when they would depart from the living God to serve the dumb and dead idols of the nations.

The short commanding preface with which Moses introduces this song plainly indicates its importance. In the first verse he gives the most convincing proof of his sincerity, by calling upon heaven and earth to bear witness to the truth of what he is about to publish. In the second verse he informs them that the matter of his song is to be doctrine, which would descend as small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass. Such are the doctrines of the Bible, That while they give life and energy to the people of God by their fructifying influence, they prove a sweeping deluge to all the workers of iniquity. In the third verse he informs them that "The name of the Lord" is to be the grand and delightful theme of his song. And then, in the words of our text, as if lost in admiration, finding the powers of language insufficient to give an adequate description of so glorious an object, he exclaims, in the triumphant language of our text, He is the Rock, his work is perfect."

The method we propose for the discussion of this passage is,

I. To show that Christ is the Rock mentioned in our text.

II. We shall consider some of those points of resemblance discoverable between a rock and Christ, of whom it is emblematical; and,

III. Speak of the perfection of his works in creation, and providence, including redemption.

I. We are to show that Christ is the Rock mentioned in our text.

"He is the Rock, his work is perfect." The language of our text is figurative, but its meaning is obvious to every intelligent reader, who is anxiously inquiring after truth. Obvious, we say, beyond the possibility of doubt, that by the rock mentioned in our text is to be understood that God to whom the Israelites, in the preceding verse are called upon to ascribe greatness: "Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness to our God." Now who is the God of Israel? To whom are they called upon to ascribe greatness, but the one only living and eternal God, who hath declared himself to be a great God and a great king above all gods. He it is who hath chosen and redeemed Israel for his peculiar inheritance. For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

Though by the God of Israel we are not to understand any one person of the Trinity to the exclusion of the rest, but a triune Jehovah, as subsisting in three divine persons, yet we presume by the rock mentioned in our text, we are more particularly to understand Christ, the second person of the Trinity, who hath redeemed Israel with his own blood. Hence it is said, in the 6th verse, "Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee and established thee?" Nor let it be objected here, that Father is a title peculiar to the first person in the Godhead, for it is a title, in a certain sense, also proper to the Son. Hence it is said, in Isaiah 9: 6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." He is the father of the elect whom he hath redeemed, as he confers upon them their new state and nature, gives them his kingdom and every needed blessing; he is the father of the new creation, who are begotten again unto a lively hope by his resurrection.

Again; we would observe that the Rock mentioned in our text, and the Rock that followed the Israelites in the wilderness, are one and the same, for the same providential care is ascribed to both under the same character. The Rock mentioned in our text is said, in the 10th verse, to have found Israel in a desert land, and in the waste, howling wilderness, and to have led him about and instructed him, and kept him as the apple of his eye. He made them to suck honey from the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock. So the Lord alone did lead him and there was no strange God with him. So this same Lord who found Israel in the waste, howling wilderness, and led him about and instructed him, was to the Israelites a pillar of fire by night to direct, and a pillar of cloud by day to protect them; he is the same Rock which afforded them a miraculous supply of food to satisfy their hunger, and water to quench their thirst; for says the apostle, "They drank of that Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." These observations we think sufficient to satisfy the mind of any one, who requires no more than sufficient proof to establish a fact, that Christ is the Rock spoken of in the text. But the definite language of our text also demands our particular attention; for Moses does not only declare him to be a Rock, but points him out by the definite article, to be the Rock,



the only, the none such rock, in contradistinction to all the false gods of polytheistical and idolatrous infidels. The polytheist will have the effrontery to assert, in contradiction to both reason and revelation, that there are a plurality of Gods; but the bare assertion of this false tenet presents to every intelligent, unprejudiced mind such a palpable absurdity that it needs no argument to render it more so. For the same arguments that would prove the existence of two infinite beings occupying the same space at the same instant of time, would be equally strong to prove an infinite number of infinite beings, each one continually filling the same unlimited space from eternity to eternity, than which nothing could be more absurd. Besides, if there be more Gods than one, the God whom the Bible acknowledges, and whom the Christian worships is no God; for he has emphatically declared that he is God and beside him there is none else. If, therefore, there are a plurality of Gods, the God revealed in the Bible is not a God of truth, and therefore no God: for a false God is no God. Consequently the Christian must be the infidel—a charge which neither the true believer's conscience, nor his God, ever can nor ever will bring against him. The believer's God is a God of truth, therefore God alone.

But the definite language in our text is perhaps intended more particularly by the Holy Ghost to reprove the rebellious for their idolatrous worship, giving to idols that which was due to God only. For though the Israelites no doubt believed in the existence of but one infinite, Supreme Being, yet that they might be in conformity with the nations around them, and perform as they vainly imagined a more splendid and acceptable worship to God, they carved out to themselves graven images, as subordinate deities, or mediators through whom they ignorantly supposed they could make a more acceptable approach unto the presence of the living God. That this was their object appears evident from the fact of their making an image to supply the place of Moses, when he delayed to come down from the mount; but we cannot suppose that the Israelites viewed Moses in any other character than that of a mediator, consequently they would consider the idol substituted in his place in the same point of view. But let the idea attached to an idol, when looked upon as an object of worship, be what it will, whether it be viewed as a supreme or subordinate deity, the sin is still the same, and is one of all others the most provoking to a holy and righteous

God—one dishonoring to the Majesty of heaven: For it is a direct attempt to dethrone the infinite Jehovah, and make him not only such an one as ourselves, but even inferior to animate creation, allowing him to possess a character nothing superior to that of a stock or a stone. The God of Israel, who is the Rock, is an infinite, eternal, and unchangeable spirit. Strip Deity of these and other attributes of his nature, and you take away the very existence of a God.

Now, we ask, what created substance, however ingeniously formed, or nicely carved, is sufficient to represent to our visual organ the invisible, incommunicable attributes of Deity? Nay, my brethren, as well might we expatiate on the joys of heaven, in order to describe the torments of hell, as to attempt to represent the infinite God, either partially or perfectly, by an image of silver, or gold, or any other created substance. Such were the gods of the heathen and the idolatrous Israelites. But says Moses, in a subsequent verse, "Their rock is not as our Rock." Their rock was an idol, and what is an idol? It is nothing, and their makers are like unto them. They are but a smoke in the nostrils of Jehovah, and will ere long, if mercy prevent not, sink down to the pit of everlasting destruction with a lie in their right hand.

Christ, who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, is the rock of the true Israel of God; in him they trust, and on him they rest, knowing that he is the only mediator between God and man: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." He is the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace—before him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess—him the angels that surround the throne of God are commanded to worship. Hence it is said, "Let all the angels of God worship him."

Seeing, then, that Christ, who is truly and properly God, is the Rock and the only Rock, we pass to

II. The second thing in our method, which was to consider briefly some of the most prominent points of resemblance discoverable between a rock and Christ, of whom it is emblematical.

We would observe that a rock is the most durable of all created substances, and in this respect it is a fit emblem to represent the eternity of Christ, who is from everlasting to everlasting the same, the Alpha and Omega. He is the Word whom John declares

in the most cogent and perspicuous language to be truly and properly God, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God," and if essentially God he must be eternal, for eternity is an essential attribute of Deity. But that Christ is the true and eternal God is declared by John in the most unequivocal language, "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God and eternal life."

A rock is less subject to change than any other material substance. Christ, the rock of ages, is free from all mutation—he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever—with him there is no variability, neither is there any shadow of turning. And says the sweet singer of Israel, "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." Here we have both the eternity and immutability of the Rock of Israel clearly held forth. And to the same amount we have it recorded in Malachi, "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

A rock is the most sure and permanent foundation on which a stupendous, magnificent building can be erected. Christ is the rock on which his Church, that glorious magnificent building of divine grace, is erected. Hence says Christ, the chief corner-stone in this building, to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church." Happy for every stone in this building, yea, happy for Peter himself, in the hour of temptation and trial, that he was not the chief corner-stone in the building. For if Peter could not support himself, how could he have sustained the ponderous weight of the whole Church. Yea, had Peter, or the most eminent saint ever fitted by divine grace for a place in the house of God, been made the only support of the Church, the whole superstructure must long ere now have fallen into eternal, irreparable ruin.

Christ is the sure foundation-stone laid in Zion—he is a tried stone. Well indeed was he tried in the fire of Jehovah's wrath, when he bore our sins in his own body on the tree. Then it was that he gave the most indubitable evidence both of his power and

willingness to save sinners, and the most sure ground of hope to his people of their most perfect security; seeing they have that rock for their foundation which the combined powers of earth and hell will never be able to move. Nor is his power and willingness to save limited. He is still proclaiming himself to be both able and willing to save to the very uttermost all who come unto God by him. Hear his entreating voice, uttered in sweet accents of mercy in the Gospel, Christ is the rock laid as the foundation in Zion, and other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid. The privilege of building on this foundation is free to all, but can be purchased by none.

A rock is a source from whence proceed the most durable and salubrious streams of water. The rock Christ is a never failing fountain, from whence the streams of salvation will flow to all eternity to make glad the citizens of Zion. And what is a peculiar property of this water which distinguishes it from all others, is, that those who drink thereof shall never thirst, "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." How then can we give credence to those who pretend to speak from experience, and say that they have drunk of this water at one time and at another were entirely destitute of it; or who make it an article of their creed that a person may be in covenant union with God and drink deep into the well of salvation, and yet after all be left to sink down into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, where he shall not to all eternity be allowed so much as a drop of this water to cool his parched tongue. Would it exceed due bounds to reply to such in the language of holy writ: "Let God be true but every man a liar." We should believe and obey God rather than man. Hear then his gracious and soul-cheering promise on this subject, and let his word decide the controversy, "The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy loins, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not." This is the word of God, they who deny it by declaring that a child of God in this world may become the companion of devils and damned spirits in the next, give melancholy proof that they have never yet experienced the sweets of that soul-refreshing and satisfying water that proceeds from the rock Christ.

A rock affords the most perfect security from the storm and the heat to all who take refuge under it. So is Christ to all who take refuge under the shadow of his wings, a covert from the storm and the heat of the wrath of Almighty God. A rock is the most sure defense against the darts of an enemy. Christ is a strong tower and most sure place of defense to all who put their trust in him, from the fiery darts of the wicked one, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous run into it and are safe." Finally, a rock, owing to its gravity, is less liable to be moved and tossed about than other bodies. Christ is the rock which no power can shake nor art undermine; those who build upon this rock may bid defiance to the rage of the devil and his subjects, for the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

But having attempted thus briefly to show that Christ is the rock mentioned in our text, and also considered some of the prominent points of resemblance between a rock and Christ, of whom it is emblematical, we hasten to the third thing in our method, which was,

III. To consider the perfection of his works in creation, providence, and redemption.

1. Of creation. The Lord Jesus Christ, essentially considered, is the author of creation—he is the eternal Word, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not anything made that was made. Behold where all is void, where dark and solemn silence reigns, even there the Lord God utters his voice, he sends forth the Divine fiat with creative power, and at his command heaven and earth immediately spring into existence from their original nothing. He spake the word and it was done without delay. The plastic hand of the same divine architect who spake the world into existence, formed also all the other parts of creation. Within the short space of six days were heaven and earth with all their hosts made, and in such order that perfection shines forth with meridian splendor in all the parts thereof. For what does God declare with respect to the work of his hands when creation is completed? He pronounces all very good, "And God saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good." He saw everything he had made exactly to suit its place, and to answer the end for which it was made, and to possess such properties of excellence as to proclaim the author's hand, divine. And herein is the perfection of creation manifest, that all the parts thereof tend directly to promote

the great end designed by their divine Author, which was his own glory. This was the grand end God had in view in all his works, and this end, we are informed, was gained; for says the Psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth forth his handy work."

Again; the perfection of a work must always depend upon the author's having sufficient wisdom to devise a perfect plan and power to execute the same; for a defect in either of these respects must necessarily render the work imperfect. But where is the sinner, so hell-hardened, that he will boldly stand up and blasphemously assert that God is defective either in wisdom or power? The God of Israel is infinite in wisdom, his power is unbounded. Hence he declares himself to be God Almighty. And says the prophet, in proof of the perfection of the attributes of Deity, "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his word, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion." Seeing, then, that scripture expressly declares, and neither sound reason nor anything in the universe of God can be found to contradict the declaration that the works of God are perfect, but on the contrary all things go directly to prove invincibly that the works and word of God are in perfect harmony; we have all the proof necessary to satisfy every unprejudiced mind of the truth of the proposition we are now vindicating. Nor is it necessary that we should take the wings of the philosopher, and make our flight to all those heavenly bodies that have come within the reach of human observation, and ascertain their number, distance, magnitude and motion, in order to find more convincing proof. No, my friends, the far-traveled philosopher, returning from a long and delightful voyage of this kind, notwithstanding all his delightful and useful discoveries, would be no more firmly convinced of the truth that the works of God in creation are perfect, than the humble Christian in his lonely cottage, whose knowledge and belief extends no further than such truths as are clearly revealed in the Bible. The Christian's faith depends not on ocular or mathematical demonstration, but upon the authority of God himself speaking in his word, whose omniscient eye takes in at one intuitive glance all the works of his hands, wherever they be scattered through the regions of unlimited space. And because God, who is truth itself, has declared that his work is perfect, the Christian has all the proof he could desire for

the truth of what his divine Master asserts. Besides, the illiterate are no more deprived of cogent arguments deducible from the works of nature, than the philosopher. For what stronger arguments can be drawn from the works of nature in proof of its perfection, than the regular succession of day and night, summer and winter, seed time and harvest, the adaptation of the earth to the multifarious animals that inhabit it, and the inclination of those animals to inhabit such parts as are best adapted to their different species, while this instinctive diversion not only tends to the good and preservation of the several species, but contributes in a particular manner to the peace, happiness and security of the human family. These are arguments equally free to the peasant and the prince, and however trifling they may appear, because common, they are quite sufficient to banish to eternal silence the puny quibbles of any who may ever dare to rise up in opposition to the truth declared in our text, that God's works are perfect. But having made these few cursory observations on the perfection of creation, we pass, in the second place, to consider,

2. God's works of providence, where the same perfection is to be found as in creation. For it is manifest that if God intended to be glorified by all the works of his hands, he must control and overrule all things so as to render them subservient to the great end for which they were made. And, more especially, seeing the same infinite wisdom and power are requisite to support and govern creation that were exerted in producing it; and as no being possesses these attributes but God; He whose kingdom rules over all, must be the moral governor of the universe. But before we proceed further, we would just observe, that in order to trace out more accurately, and see more clearly the perfections of a divine providence, we must view every event which hath or is taking place in our world, in relation to some end, and as making its part in the execution of some plan. Leave these out of view, and the world is a mass of disorder and confusion; but with these constantly in view, all is perfect order and harmony.

Now the end, in relation to which we are to view every dispensation of providence, is the glory of God and the good of his people, for he hath promised that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose, and his own glory he will not give to another, nor his

praise to graven images. The plan according to which every event takes place is the decree of God, whereby he hath foreordained all things whatsoever comes to pass. In this plan God sees the end from the beginning—known unto God were all his works from the beginning; every event that ever has or ever can possibly take place, as to time, place, and means by which it is accomplished, was immutably fixed in the counsels of God from all eternity, and his counsel shall stand and he will do all his pleasure. The objects of God's providence are all the works of his hand, from the smallest grain of sand to the ponderous globe, from the grass of the field to the cedars of Lebanon, from the animalcule to the king on his throne; these, all these, together with all their intermediate objects, are constantly under the immediate inspection, protection, and direction of a superintending providence.

Nor let any one charge us falsely with aspersing the divine character, by making things so apparently trifling, objects of the divine care. Nay, my friends, on the other hand, what would be more derogatory to the glory of God than to suppose that he would ever put forth infinite power in producing a creature which he afterward found to be unworthy of his regard. How can you vindicate a sentiment of this kind, and at the same time entertain honorable views of the wisdom of God, or give credence to the truth asserted in our text, that his work is perfect? A stronger argument you could not want to prove his work imperfect than a certain knowledge that he has ever cast aside any of his works as unworthy of his notice. Besides you make that very being which you consider worthy of Deity, a being not only superior to yourself but equal with God: for if it is not dependent upon God for its existence, it must be an independent, self-existent being; and as these are attributes proper to God only, whoever possesses them must be God.

The Lord Christ who produced creation by his almighty power, also supports it on his omnipotent arm, and as the God of nature his kingdom rules over all, from the least to the greatest. Not even the smallest particle of dust that flies through the air but is constantly viewed by his omniscient eye, and known distinctly from all others, supported by his omnipotent power, directed by his infinite wisdom, from whence it rises to where it falls. Deny this and where is the hope of a resurrection: for many of those atoms tossed



through the air are particles of human bodies that have returned to their original dust. Now we know that the dust of God's saints is dear in his sight, nor is it possible that one of these redeemed particles, purchased by the blood of Christ, can ever be despised or neglected by him. Besides, if it is the fact, (and such both Scripture and reason declare it to be,) that the bodies of the righteous and the wicked at the day of judgment will incorporate and become the habitation of their departed spirits, and with them experience the eternal joys of heaven, or torments of hell; it must necessarily follow that God must have a particular knowledge of all the bodies of the righteous and the wicked, and must consequently have a perfect knowledge of the innumerable number of particles that once composed these bodies. And though the dust of human bodies and that of the irrational and inanimate creation be promiscuously mixed together, yet it is the part of Omniscience, a part that will in his own appointed time be performed by him, to separate between these confused atoms. Hence we see that the knowledge of God must extend to every atom of the globe, and every particle of matter must be known by him to be a part of a human body or not, and if it be, of the particular body to which it belongs. And as self-existence and independency are attributes of no created being, therefore all things that do exist must be constantly kept and preserved in existence by the almighty power of God. And herein we have an illustrious display of the perfections of Providence, that not even the most inconsiderable part of inanimate creation can at any instant of time be unknown to God or neglected by him.

But let us hear the voice of Scripture itself respecting the things that proud men, puffed up with fleshly wisdom, look upon with contempt, and consider unworthy of the notice of such an exalted being as Jehovah. Now what would appear less worthy of notice than the hairs of our head? yet these are all numbered by God. What would appear more trifling than the fall of a sparrow? yet one of these cannot fall to the ground without your heavenly Father, whose providence provides for the fowls of the air and supplies the young ravens with food. What is of less moment than the grass and flowers of the field? nevertheless God clothes them and makes them to grow. Yea, my friends, what is more abject and vile in our sight than lice, frogs, locusts, caterpillars, &c.? yet God is said to send forth these to execute his judgments; yea, they are called his strong army, executing his word.

Seeing, then, that the providence of God is and must be exercised about these things which in human estimation are the most trifling, we need not multiply arguments to prove that it is employed about beings that occupy a more eminent place in the scale of existence. The words of the Psalmist are conclusive on this point: "Lord, thou preservest man and beast; how precious is thy grace."

But as rational beings are more particularly the objects of God's providential care, we will advert to a few instances wherein we have the most illustrious display of the perfection of his providential work, in his dealings with the children of men, and with his covenant people in particular. And the first to which we would invite your attention, is the emancipation of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, and their miraculous preservation in the midst of surrounding dangers and difficulties, until God had effected his gracious purpose in placing them in the promised land. Now if we view in connection the purpose of God and the means he employed for effecting his gracious purpose toward the Israelites, his chosen people, from the birth of Moses till the Israelites are in full and safe possession of the promised land, we have nothing presented to view but one continued chain of providence, in all which, viewed in their connection, perfection shines with infinite luster. God designs the rescue of the Hebrews from bondage, and Moses is the instrument by whom he purposes to liberate them; but what likelihood is there that the counsel of God shall stand here, seeing that Moses is born at the very time the bloody edict of the haughty, suspicious king is in full force, requiring the inhuman massacre of all the male children of the Hebrews. But the counsel of God shall stand—Moses then must be preserved—therefore he is sent into the world with such natural charms, that his comely appearance not only engages the tender affections of a fond mother to an extraordinary degree, but even commands the wrath of his most cruel enemy into love, and engages his power for his protection. When the time had come that a fond mother supposes she has it no longer in her power to save her lovely child from the barbarous cruelty of the tyrant to which he was liable, she is made strong in the faith, and can see the dear object of her affections more secure in the arms of covenant mercy on the raging billows of the deep, than in her own tender embraces: she therefore took for him an ark of bulrushes and daubed it with slime and with pitch, put the child therein and

laid it in the flags by the river's brink, at the very place to which Pharaoh's daughter is to be providentially directed. No sooner does she arrive than her curiosity is excited, the ark is opened. The young and no doubt haughty princess is astonished to behold a forlorn babe; and no sooner beheld, than his weeping charms obtain a final conquest, and secure to him the love of a princess and protection of a king. But how is the infant to be nursed? Shall a king's daughter disgrace the royal name by acting as nurse? No, this must not be; a nurse must be sought. A nurse is sought—a mother is found. O happy mother! to be liberated from painful drudgery, to receive wages from the king's daughter for nursing her own son, the privilege of which was to her more than ample reward. Afterward we see him becoming the acknowledged son of the king's daughter, and was no doubt favored with more than ordinary education, and therefore the better qualified for the important work that lay before him. But is Moses, when he comes to years, so captured with royal splendor as to forget the oppressed, despised Hebrews. No, my friends, the eternal decree was not thus to be frustrated. By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. But we will here make a transit from the time that Moses evidenced his friendship to the Hebrews by slaying the Egyptian, till he commences his entreaties with king Pharaoh on their behalf. Here we see Moses at the command and in the name of the Lord performing miracles before Pharaoh in proof of his divine mission; but what effect have these upon the callous heart of a haughty king, who would not acknowledge any sovereign superior to himself? They are despised by him. But the purpose of God must not be disappointed. Therefore judgments must succeed miracles, and these as they increase in number, so also must they in severity, till the haughty heart of the atheistical king is subdued, and his arrogant interrogation, "Who is the Lord that I should obey him," is so manifestly answered by the awful judgments of God, that he is forced to acknowledge his own inferiority and the supremacy of Jehovah, who is King of kings and Lord of lords. And finding, by woful experience, the God of the Hebrews mighty to save them and destroy their enemies, Pharaoh, at length, not only permits but imperiously commands them to depart. They depart,

and march forth by the direction and under the protection of Israel's God, and in process of time arrive at the Red Sea. And there they find themselves in the most perilous situation—the Red Sea in front, insuperable mountains on either hand, and Pharaoh with a numerous army in the rear. What can the defenseless Israelites now do? They can do nothing but what they are commanded to do—stand still and see the salvation of God. This they soon behold: for at the command of Him who is the rock, and whom the elements obey, the sea parts asunder, which at the same time proposes a safe passage for the Israelites and a watery grave for their enemies.

Follow them on: you see but one interposition of a kind providence after another, till God has performed his purpose by placing them in possession of the promised land. Behold the heavens raining down bread to satisfy their hunger, quails directed to their camp to gratify their appetite, streams of water bursting forth from the dry and flinty rock to quench their thirst. Jordan is driven back till they pass over. Armies prepared for battle tremble, flee, and fall before them; a ram's horn in their hands answers instead of a battering ram for demolishing the walls of Jericho. In whose strength were all these miracles wrought? It was in the strength of the Rock of Israel, whose work is perfect.

Again, consider for a moment the history of Joseph, in which we have still further proof of the perfection of Providence; and here, as before, let us keep in mind the purpose of God, and view the means he employs in relation to their end. God designs that Joseph shall be Lord over Egypt, and signifies to Joseph in a dream his future promotion. Joseph in the innocence of his heart reveals the dream to his brethren, which only tends to excite their wrath against him. They scorn subjection to a younger brother, and in order effectually to prevent it, concert measures to take his life, and a suitable opportunity being offered, they determine to execute their wicked design. But no: for how then shall the purpose of God be accomplished; but his purpose must be executed, therefore the counsel of these cruel fratricides must be brought to naught. But malice still working in their breasts against Joseph, they determine to cast him into a pit, and this they are permitted to do; but ere a wild beast finds Joseph, a company of Ishmaelites, by the providence of God, is directed that way, and Joseph is sold to these by one of his brethren more humane than the rest, and by them he is

brought into Egypt and sold to the captain of Pharaoh's guard. Here the Lord owns him, and introduces him into favor by making all that he did to prosper, which his master observing, puts all his estate into Joseph's hands. Now is a time of prosperity with Joseph, and he has fair prospects of promotion; but how soon are they blasted! Joseph being a goodly person, his lascivious mistress tempts him to folly, but being a virtuous youth his disappointed mistress is enraged, and charges her own wickedness upon him. Hereby Potiphar's favor is lost, and Joseph is cast into prison. Now all hopes of preferment are gone, and what will become of his dreams. Yet the counsel of the Lord—that shall stand. Therefore this downfall of Joseph is but another step toward his advancement. And to make way for it two of Pharaoh's servants fall under their Lord's displeasure, are cast into prison and committed to Joseph's keeping: here they dream—Joseph interprets—the event turns out accordingly. Now the day begins to dawn upon Joseph, and by the chief butler's restorement there are some hopes of Joseph's enlargement: but these hopes are soon blasted, for the butler is no sooner restored to his office than Joseph is forgotten. Yet notwithstanding all this, the providence of God still pursues his decree, and ceaseth not till Joseph is lord over Egypt and his brethren bow down before him. What a display of perfection is here in the providence of God, which overruled the voluntary wicked actions of men so as to render them subservient to the promotion of his own glory, by executing his immutable decree! but he who is the Rock can, and does, make even the wrath of man to praise him.

Again, look at the case of David. God makes an absolute promise of the kingdom to him, and anoints him to it. The word of the Lord is now gone forth and shall not return void. Hath the Lord said it, and shall he not do it? Saul became David's enemy, and determines that the death of David shall defeat the decree of heaven. Saul, therefore, in his wrath casts a javelin at David to nail him to the wall, hoping to execute his wicked purposes; but God in his good providence grants to David sharpness of sight to discern, and agility of body to avoid the instrument of death. If afterward Saul determines evil against him, the providence of God shall provide a Jonathan to advise him of it. If he send messengers to Naioth to apprehend him, they shall forget their errand and turn prophets,

and if he shall send others, and others in succession, they shall do likewise. Does Saul become enraged at his disappointment and go personally himself to execute his bloody design, he also shall turn prophet a day and a night, till David shall have time to make his escape. If he be in a city where he hath no friend to show him favor, the Lord his rock shall prove himself a friend that sticketh closer than father or brother; become his intelligencer and send him out. Does Saul with an army pursue David, encompass him about so that no possible way of escape is left; at this awful crisis, when a bloody soul is exulting in the prospect of shortly wreaking his vengeance in the death of an innocent son, a post arrives with the painful, unexpected tidings, that the Philistines have invaded the land. This unexpected intelligence requires Saul immediately to desist from pursuing the innocent blood of a real friend in order to chastise a real enemy. Hence we see that though an host encamps against David he need not be afraid, for the Lord of hosts upon his side doth constantly remain. The Lord's promise is absolute, therefore though all help on earth fail, the Lord shall send down from heaven and save him. Yea, David's wavering and weakness of faith shall not hinder it. The reason is obvious: The Lord had appointed him to be ruler over his people, therefore he was with him wheresoever he went, until he had performed his purpose in placing David on the throne. But as two or three credible witnesses are sufficient to establish a fact, we shall not exceed that number here, but pass on to the third article under this head.

3. Consider for a moment the perfection of that redemption which was purchased by the rock of Israel.

And that the perfection of God's work in redemption may appear perspicuous, we will endeavor to show that all for whom Christ died shall be saved by his death. We will therefore, in further discussing this article, 1, Consider the object,—2, The end,—and 3, The effects of Christ's death.

The objects for whom Christ died are those, and those only whom God gave him. Hence it is written, Heb. 2: 13, "Behold I and the children that God hath given me." Those make but a small part of the human family who are the election according to grace, for many are called but few are chosen. But still there is an election according to grace, and this election was made in the councils of eternity, according as they were chosen in him before the founda-

tion of the world, that they might be holy and without blame before him in love. These objects of God's eternal choice, are they only for whom Christ died, as is abundantly evident from Christ's intercessory prayer; for says Christ, "I pray not for the world, but for these which thou hast given me: for they are thine." Now let it be remembered that Christ's intercession and satisfaction are of equal extent. Now to suppose that Christ should shed his blood for any to whom he would afterward deny an interest in his intercession, would go directly to asperse the divine character by impeaching his wisdom.

If, then, Christ intercedes not for the world, but for a chosen few, he shed his blood only for this few, seeing his satisfaction and intercession must be of equal extent. These chosen ones are the members of Christ's mystical body, who constitute his true Church for which he died. Hence says the apostle, Eph. 5: 25, 26, "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also 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 spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. We see then that Christ died only for his Church, which is composed of those only who were chosen in him, before the foundation of the world, who are the election according to grace.

We are next to consider the end for which he died.

And first we remark, That he might purchase eternal salvation for all for whom he died. And this salvation includes in it perfect deliverance from the guilt and pollution of all sin, and the full possession of perfect and eternal happiness in heaven. He died for the sins of his people, he died that he might save his people from their sins, he died and in his death was made perfect through sufferings, that he as the Captain of salvation might bring the many sons for whom he died unto glory. Christ died as a surety in the law, room of his people, to satisfy the claims that the law and justice of God had against them. And God whose knowledge is infinite, foreseeing from eternity all the sins with which any of his elect would be charged, charged the guilt of all upon Christ as their surety, for all which he made complete atonement. His work is perfect, therefore the atonement must be perfect.

But the perfection of redemption will still appear more fully, by

considering the effects of Christ's death. We have already seen that the objects of Christ's death were those who are chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and that end for which he died was that he might bring those who are elsewhere called his sons unto glory. Now if all whom the father hath chosen in Christ unto eternal life, and for whom Christ died that he might bring them to glory, shall actually be saved, then must the work of redemption be perfect.

And first we observe, that if any for whom Christ died are lost it must be owing to some defect either in the satisfaction or intercession of Christ: for on these two depend the whole of the believer's salvation. But a defect in one must also render the other defective, for they are of equal extent; for as no forfeited blessing can be expected through the intercession of Christ that he has not purchased by his death, neither can any of the blessings he hath purchased be asked or expected in any other way than through his merits and intercession. That there is no imperfection in the purchase is abundantly evident from Christ's own words on the cross, and the fact of the Father's raising him from the dead, and exalting him to heaven. Christ says on the cross, it is finished, that is, the work of man's redemption is finished. Now what was the work of redemption given him of the Father to do? It was to obey and suffer as a surety all that the law and justice of God would have exacted from the sinner had Christ not died for him. And as Christ stands as a surety between offending man and an offended God, the justice of God will never look to those whom he hath ordained unto eternal life for the requisitions of his violated law, but to Christ their surety; through whom he beholds no iniquity in them if He has paid their debt.

But the word of Christ not only assures us of the fact that the satisfaction of Christ is perfect, but his resurrection from the grave bears testimony to the same fact. For if the Father hath raised up Christ from the dead, then hath he given sufficient evidence that they for whom he died are free and have nothing more to pay. Christ by his death purchased deliverance from the guilt and pollution of sin and full right and title to heaven, together with all the means of obtaining it. And if salvation and the means of obtaining it are all purchased by the blood of Christ, for his people, and the intercession of Christ also be perfect, and they for whom



these blessings were purchased be actually put in possession of them, it cannot otherwise be than that all for whom Christ died shall be saved.

The nature of Christ's all prevalent intercession we have described in John 17: 24, "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am." Christ is in heaven, and his intercessory prayer before the Father is still the same, that where he is there his children, whom he hath redeemed, may be also. Now what is the will of Christ but the will of his Father; for says he, "I come not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me." If then it was the will of the Father that the children whom he had given to his Son should be brought to glory by the blood of his Son—if it is the will of the Son that those who were the Father's by election, and his by redemption, and the Spirit's by sanctification, should be with him in heaven, whose will or what power will prevent their entrance into heaven, who are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, and are begotten to a lively hope by his resurrection to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them? Will Satan, the most potent enemy with whom the people of God have to contend, prevent them? As well might we ask, could a prisoner fast chained in his prison, prevent the officer of the prison from granting protection and provision to his children, or prevent the children from entering into their father's house. As readily might this be the case, as that Satan, who is bound in everlasting chains, under darkness unto the judgment of the great day, shall prevent the heirs of eternal life from entering into the kingdom of heaven. Nor will an evil heart of unbelief prevent them, for Christ has purchased for, and promised to, them an heart of flesh, and a right spirit,—“I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh;” and again, “I will create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you.”

Nor shall the evils of the world prevent their entrance—they are redeemed from these by the blood of Christ; and Christ whom the Father hears, always prays that they may be kept from the evils of the world during their continuance in it. If, then, Christ has redeemed by his blood from all iniquity, those whom the Father hath

given him—If the holy Father of Christ and his ransomed ones preserve his elect ones from the evils of this world to which they are exposed, and will according to his gracious promise preserve them by his almighty power, through faith unto salvation—If Christ is always heard by the Father, and he ever liveth to make intercession for his people, and his intercession be continual, skilful, and successful that his purchased blessings be given them, then it must necessarily follow as a fair and legitimate conclusion from these premises, that all for whom Christ died, and in behalf of whom his intercession is constant and ever prevalent with the Father, shall eventually enter into the joys of their Lord; which also goes to confirm the doctrine of our text,—“his work is perfect.”

Here is the joy of the righteous, that their whole salvation lies in the hands of the Rock of Israel, whose work is perfect, and will perfect what concerneth them, bestowing upon them all the graces of his Spirit, and the blessings they need, till they finish their course on earth, (which they will finish when the Lord has served his wise purposes with them here below,) and then shall he, when he has by his grace made them meet to be partakers of the saints in light, receive them into his rest above to behold his glory and rejoice in his presence, to all eternity.

But let not those who roll sin as a sweet morsel under their tongue, expect to realize these joys. It is by faith in Christ and obedience to his commands that salvation is to be obtained. They who love sin must hate holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. If we wish to enjoy the rest of the people of God above, we must live the life of the righteous upon earth, building all our hopes of eternal life on him who is the Rock of ages, whose work is perfect, and who was made perfect through suffering, that he might bring many sons to glory.

## S E R M O N X I X .

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### ASSURANCE OF GOSPEL SUCCESS.

BY REV. ROBERT E. STEWART,

*Pastor of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Churches of Shiloh and Vienna, Ind.*

“And let the whole earth be filled with his glory: amen and amen.” *Ps. 72: 19.*

OBJECTS of interest and of value are ever worthy subjects of thought. Of such the world is full. Examine it in all its different departments, and subjects full of interest, beauty and sublimity, present themselves to the mind. Its magnitude, its motions, its continents, its islands, its oceans, its history, duration and destiny—all are replete with interest, all are worthy of contemplation. But, connected with earth, that subject of thought which rises sublimely superior to all others, is its intelligent ruler—*man*, the lord of a world, the heir of an eternity. Man, with all his mighty powers and capacities—his feelings and susceptibilities—his ends and aims—his duration and improvement. And where shall we see him in his noblest attitude?—*as the Christian*—the man renewed, purified, elevated, ennobled, godlike. And at no time does the Christian man appear so interesting and so worthy of the most sublime contemplation as when near the close of his earthly pilgrimage. The aged Christian—the dying believer! View him! He is a monument of mercy—having experienced much of the goodness of God—much of his tender care—much of his consolation—many long years a Father omnipotent, and a Friend omniscient has watched over him, “preserving his feet from falling, his eyes from tears, and his soul from death.” He is a tenant of earth, yet an heir of glory. He is in the land of his pilgrimage, yet he is cheered and invigorated by the balmy breezes wafted o’er the Jordan of death from the Canaan of heavenly felicity. He is on the abode of sin, yet almost fitted for heaven—almost on the boundless shores of eternity—

almost in the realms of glory—almost invested with the crown of life, the palm of victory, and the song of triumph. Heaven's gates are folding back for his triumphal entrance. He is only awaiting the joyful summons to depart, with his eye of faith on the Savior, and the language on his tongue—"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. Even so, come Lord Jesus—yea, come quickly." Such were the feelings and prospects of David when he penned the language of the text. This was the last Psalm which he ever composed. He wrote it with his dying hand. Earth was now fading from his view, and heaven bursting upon his enraptured vision. The companionship of the ransomed—the society of the angels—the perfection of bliss—and the presence of his God and Savior, were all present to his mind. How calm, peaceful, and joyful! What accents of love and devotion are on his lips! He seems pervaded by the spirit of the heavenly world. Man's good and God's glory now engage all his thoughts and affections, while, with a benevolence almost, at least in kind, like that of his heavenly Master, he prays, "*Let the whole earth be filled with his glory; amen and amen.*"

Was this fervor too great? Here are concentrated all the beauties and excellencies of prayer. Devotion is here wrought up to its highest, its noblest perfection. And to excite your admiration, and to lead you to adopt this prayer as your own, with the glowing emotions of the departing Psalmist, contemplate its great thought—ASSURANCE OF GOSPEL SUCCESS.

What, then, is the nature of this assurance of success?—what are some of its *elements*? They are,

I. *The Dissemination of the Divine glory.* "Let the whole earth be filled with *his glory.*" Glory, when applied to the Deity, denotes that manifestation of himself, by which the intelligent creation is capable of knowing him—for in himself he is incomprehensible and past finding out, "Whom no man hath seen nor can see." This manifestation shines with greater or less effulgence in proportion to the magnitude of its subject.

NATURE is his great museum of beauty and variety. His glory is reflected by a universe starting into existence to proclaim, "His eternal power and godhead." "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." Creation, as it lies spread out before us, reveals a golden chain of bounty

which leaves no world beyond its embrace, and no creature beyond its control. Would we trace wisdom in the minute, and power in the magnificent? Would we gaze on the solid earth and the rolling seas? Would we scan Jehovah's ways in the sublime movements of the material universe? Would we grasp our whole system?—would we extend our vision to other systems and countless worlds, in rapid and incessant motion around the throne of the eternal God, *everywhere* will we behold manifestations of glory, everywhere will we see wisdom and power, goodness and love, portrayed in characters too bright to be mistaken. Yes, all creation, animate and inanimate, demonstrates the being and perfections of the great architect; and the foundation of the temple of knowledge and glory is laid deep and wide, and lasting on the face of the universe.

His glory also shines *in his Providence*. We see it in his upholding all worlds—in his regulating all the mighty movements of creation—in supplying the wants of all his creatures, from the loftiest seraph that dwells before his throne, to the smallest animalcule that floats in the summer breeze. We see it in his causing the never-failing return of day and night, summer and winter, seed time and harvest—in his restraining vice and encouraging virtue—in his causing even the wrath of man to praise him, and restraining the remainder. We see it in his presiding, amidst the rise and fall of empires, the dethronement of kings, and the commotions of the people, as the mighty Governor among the nations—and in all his dealings with his creatures we behold manifestations of his glory, and traces of his righteous character, as the "*Judge of the whole earth.*"

But nature and providence, with all their lessons of wisdom and displays of glory, must yield to the brighter displays of *grace*; and the era, when this fair system arose at the Divine command, must not vie with that, when, from awful condemnation and misery, it emerged into the joyous prospect of peace and happiness. Every other manifestation must retire and acknowledge the supremacy and grandeur of an enterprise the very object of which is, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, goodwill to men." This constitutes the bright center to which all the Divine attributes converge and from which they are again reflected over the intelligent universe. The Lord "has magnified his *word* above all his name"—and in the Gospel alone his glory shines forth conspicuously beau-

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## ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

CONSISTING OF

SERMONS BY THE MINISTERS

OF THE

FOUR SYNODS OF THAT DENOMINATION.

EDITED BY

REV. JAMES PRESTLEY.

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tiful and lovely. All other displays are imperfect and unsatisfactory. Creation is but the work of wisdom and power—while redemption is that of the “ manifold wisdom of God,” and the “ exceeding greatness of his power.” Nature is the alphabet, but the Gospel must arrange the letters, and teach us to read its great and glowing truths. It exhibits the Divine perfections separately—and tells us not where the exercise of one would cease, and that of another begin. It teaches us but little of the harmony, extent, and glory of the perfection of the Godhead; and can never lead us to the exercise of repentance and the practice of holiness, as is evident from a contemplation of the heathen world, overwhelmed in misery, degradation and despair.

But the Gospel exhibits Jehovah in all his perfections; and the entrance of sin into our world has spread out a theater on which is made a display of these perfections in a way that will eternally astonish the universe. *Jesus Christ is the soul of the Gospel, and He is God incarnate.* He is the “ brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of his person.” He assumed humanity, and softened down the effulgence of Divinity by the vail of flesh, that he might appear in our rebel world. Behold Him!—a *mind* dwelling in a fleshly tabernacle—an inhabitant of earth, yet unpolluted, unseduced, unmoved by the malice of men and the powers of hell—adorned with all grace, glory and perfection—all sympathy—all love—all kindness—all calmness—unprovoked by contempt and injury—unsubdued by suffering and death—comprising in Himself all the graces of time and all the perfections of eternity—all the attributes of humanity, and all the inexpressible glories and beauties of Deity. “ God was in very deed come down to dwell with men upon the earth.” *Here* shines forth the glory of God with a luster not only grand and ineffable, but soothing, inviting, and encouraging. It removes the doubts, it dispels the fears, it brightens the hopes, and it draws us with the cords of love to the throne of grace and mercy. “ God in nature,” says the pious Jay, “ is God above me—God in providence is God beyond me—God in law, is God against me—but *God in Christ*, is God in me, and with me, and for me, my all in all.”

And while there is little in the manger of Bethlehem, little in the appearance of the disciples—little in the agony of the garden—little in the hall of Pilate—little in the thrilling scenes of Calvary—little

in the commencement, progress, or completion of the plan of redemption, that is calculated to attract the carnal eye, and to arrest the carnal attention—still this grand scheme of mercy, in which the glory of God is manifested through the medium of all that is awful and striking, is replete with much on which the soul of the believer dwells with unspeakable delight; because, in that Man of sorrows and in that dying victim, he beholds the perfections of Deity shine forth in their most stupendous exhibition. The vail of flesh hides not the majesty of the God—the indignities of Calvary conceal not a finished work, a perfect redemption. On every feature of this grand enterprise glory is inscribed, and from every point the majesty of power and the perfection of justice—the immutability of truth and the beauty of holiness beam forth in rays of undying splendor. *There* is preserved untarnished the dignity of the violated law, and the majesty of offended Godhead—*there* is unfolded the deep, dark abyss of human misery, and the light and purity of heaven is poured in upon the darkness and pollution of earth—*there* is presented to us more that is truly valuable, than all the wealth of a world, or the services and energies of more than twelve legions of angels could procure. What theme but *salvation* should command our attention now, and occupy our minds to eternity? The angels mingle with us around the foot of the cross, “desiring to look into these things.” Every Divine attribute has here its claims vindicated, its demands satisfied, and its essential glory more clearly and fully displayed. All harmoniously unite; and each lends its aid in beautifying the other—power regulated by wisdom, and wisdom dignified by power—mercy sustained and directed by justice, and justice tempered by the kind influence of love—grace erecting its throne on the basis of eternal truth, and the warm beams of love and compassion illuminating and pervading all. What beams of glory here encircle every Divine perfection! Who can contemplate this bright manifestation of boundless goodness and love, and not call upon his soul and all his powers, to bless and magnify the Lord. Human and angelic beings may bend all their mighty powers to the investigation of the greatness of this redemption—its length—its breadth—its height—its depth; but ages of toil and study and perseverance, will only lead them to breathe more fervently the prayer, “*Lord, show us thy glory*”—and eternity, as it rolls on and rolls on, will still witness them gazing on an ocean

whose bounds no eye can trace, and whose depths no line can fathom. The verdict of the intelligent universe—nay, the verdict of eternity will be, *Man's redemption is God's brightest, loveliest display of glory.* Hence regenerated millions, themselves mediums through which this glory beams forth in rays of untarnished beauty, will join in the grateful anthem—"Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains; O forest and every tree; *for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.*"

II. Consider, as another element of this assurance, *its extensive benevolence*—"Let the whole earth be filled with his glory."

*It is benevolent.* Coming from a soul filled with love to God, and alive to the best interests of men. This effect divine grace always produces. The true Christian loves God with all his heart, because he is the source of all excellency, and the sum of all perfection; because, as "the Father of mercies," he bestows all blessings—blessings of infancy, of youth, of mature age—blessings temporal and spiritual—blessings of pardon, peace, joy, triumph, glory. All these cry with one voice, "O love the Lord, all ye his saints." He, at an expense beyond the computation of the seraphim, has served you: be all devotion to him—"Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God." Admit his claims—feel your obligations—serve him truly, faithfully and forever. The grace of Christ cannot dwell richly in the soul—the love of God cannot burn in an undying flame on the altar of the heart—the Gospel cannot be felt and realized, with all its momentous interests and realities, without making us zealous for the Lord of hosts. The infidel may call it madness, the moralist may denominate it folly, and the hypocrite may brand it enthusiasm—but it is inscribed on the banner of Truth in letters of gold, that *zeal for God is charity to men.*

Benevolence is an expansive and ever active principle, diffusing happiness in its train wherever it extends. It is noble and lovely in all its elements. To be solicitous for our own interests and welfare requires no great degree of virtue, but to desire and promote the good of others argues a pure, ennobling affection. Such was the spirit which pervaded the mind of David when he breathed the glowing petition, "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory." But how signal our failure here! If our interest in the well being

of others be measured by the number and fervency of our prayers in their behalf, how limited the extent—how small the degree! How often is the cause of the missionary and the heathen presented before the Lord of hosts, with a coldness and indifference which is but mockery at the trials of the one, and the miseries of the other! Do we realize the solemn thought that multitudes are “perishing for lack of knowledge,” and that momentarily souls immortal are wandering down to the abode of anguish and despair? Do we feel that the individual who confines all his thoughts and all his attention to *self*, deserves not the name of a *man*, much less that of a *Christian*? Have we learned that the Gospel overflows with benevolence; and that it must, and where it exerts its appropriate influence it will destroy the cold, calculating selfishness of our depraved nature? It produces a unity of interest, and leads us to rejoice in the prosperity and happiness of all. And when imbued with its noble spirit, we will catch the devotional fervor of the Psalmist and entreat, “Let the *whole earth* be filled with his glory.”

How *universal* this benevolence—“*the whole earth*”—not a city, not a province, not a kingdom, not a continent, nor even a hemisphere, but a *world*. The dying Psalmist, in his contemplation and benevolent devotion, would, like the goodness of God, grasp all, none excluded, none overlooked, but all remembered. Here is religion purified from all that is earthly and selfish. Here is a spirit of love and devotion worthy of all commendation and imitation. How different from the little, selfish minds which confine all their zeal to a contracted circle, and which exclude all but the favored class! All their interest and all their labors are limited to a sect—in *its* prosperity they rejoice—*its* success they proclaim. If they pray for a blessing, it is only that it may warm their own heart, and pervade and strengthen their own party. Bound by the chains of prejudice and bigotry, they are strangers to the sublime, expansive spirit of the Gospel. Cruel bigotry—carnal selfishness! What would be the prayer of such devotees? “Let the Associate Reformed Church *alone* be prospered—let the Associate be *supremely* blessed—let the Reformed *triumphantly* prevail—let the Presbyterians multiply—let the Methodists extend their limits—let the Baptists be enlarged—let the Episcopal stand unrivaled.” But oh, give me the spirit and benevolence of the text, give me the prayer, which, breaking free from all the shackles of party, and catching the inspi-

ration of heaven, like the kindness of Deity grasps a world, and entreats, with the ardor of hope and the assurance of success, "*Let the whole earth be filled with his glory; amen, and amen.*"

But passing from denominations to countries, it is not sufficient to say, Let Ohio—let the United States—let America "be filled with his glory." This would be only more enlarged selfishness. Far, very far from the noble, diffusive benevolence of the Bible. It is the glory of the Gospel to elevate us above the prejudices of nationality—and to teach us that God "has made of one blood all the nations of the earth;" that men are not our foes because they live on the opposite side of a river, an ocean, or a world; that every man is our neighbor, and has claims on our prayers and sympathies, and that as we have opportunity, we are bound by the noblest ties and influences "to do good to all men." And has not humanity claims on our prayers and our labors of love? Can we, who have learned in the school of Christ, rest supinely, stoically indifferent, while the cries of anguish and despair in trumpet tones burst on our ear, from more than six hundred millions of our apostate race? View the whole extent of Africa, from the shores of Barbary to the Cape of Good Hope; view the vast regions of Asia, and its numerous isles, with their teeming millions; view four-fifths of our own continent, and extend your vision over the islands that dot the Pacific, and you will behold little else than one wide, dark scene of moral desolation, where idolatry and superstition, cruelty and despair, reign triumphant, and where scarcely a single ray of Divine light and love, gilds the extended horizon. Even in Europe, what an immense cloud of moral darkness still envelops its anxious and troubled population! The vales of Germany and Hungary, the plains of France and Italy, the anarchy of Spain and Portugal, and the ignorance and superstition of Turkey and Russia, call loudly on the whole Christian world, for their prayers, their sympathy, and their labor of love. Shall these calls pass unheeded? Or shall they not meet with a cordial response in our hearts, and animated by the genius and power of the Gospel, will we not consecrate our wealth, our talent, our energies, our influence, our all to the cause which has for its sublime object, "*Glory to God, and good to men.*" Nor should our energies relax, nor our exertions diminish, till, under God, the inhabitants of the whole earth should appear like one vast celestial army, marching forward in beauteous

harmony to the realms of bliss, each one, in his appropriate order, passing tranquilly and triumphantly through the gates of death, to join the ransomed throng, and to augment and enliven the citizens and the songs of the heavenly Jerusalem.

III. Consider as a *third* element of this assurance of success, *its certainty of realization*.—"Let the whole earth be filled with his glory; *amen and amen*."

1. *It is certain*, Because of *the Divine appointment*. Says the Father to the Son, "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." "All nations shall call him blessed." "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts."

"Yea, all the mighty kings on earth  
Before Him down shall fall;  
And all the nations of the world  
Do service to Him shall.  
His large and great dominion shall  
From sea to sea extend;  
It from the river shall reach forth  
Unto earth's utmost end."

Christ is the end of creation as well as its author. "All things were made by him and *for him*," and the extension of his kingdom is the uniform design of all the workings of providence and grace. To this grand end all the commotions and changes among the nations of the earth are tending, and to this will they all be rendered subservient. "I will overturn," says the Almighty, "and overturn, and overturn, till He shall come whose right it is to reign."

2. *It is certain*, Because of *the claims of Christ's great sacrifice*." Christ's sufferings led to his exaltation, and his exaltation was not only a personal reward, but a relative glory, because "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name." "For the suffering of death, He was crowned with glory and honor." For this great act of love and grace the highest honors awaited Him at God's right hand. There seated on the throne of majesty ten thousand times ten thousand holy intelligences gather around Him, and admiring and ador-

ing cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." The seat of honor, the diadem of glory, the scepter of Omnipotence, the "kingdom which has no end," the dispensation of grace, the government of the world, the unmingled happiness of the ransomed throng, their song of praise and the angelic chorus, all are the reward of his sufferings and death, all lend power to his claims, all are pledges of his final and triumphant success.

But has Christ's great sacrifice no claims *on us*? *It is the grand secret of Gospel success.* Tell me not of my crimes, tell me not of the archangel's trumpet, of the resurrection morn, of the judgment day, of immortality, of eternity, all these are sources of dismay and horror unutterable. But tell me how my sins can be blotted out, tell me of pardoning mercy, tell me how my heart can be renewed and purified, tell me how God can be just, and yet the sinner be happy; and then the sound of the trumpet will impart a thrill of joy, and bear the grateful tidings of purity and heaven. Contemplate the character of Deity, his truth, his holiness, his eternity; or the condition of man, his sinfulness and helplessness; or the character of Christ, his incarnation, his cross, his glory; they all refer to this sublime doctrine, and receive from it their highest interest and beauty. The whole range of thought furnishes no such scenes of humiliation and grandeur, as are associated with the garden of Gethsemane, the audience of the Sanhedrim, and the indignities of Calvary. This is the glory of the Gospel. Its very conception is as singular as it is sublime. All other systems agitate, alarm, repel; this soothes, invites, attracts, and excites the obedience of love and the ardor of hope. It is this winning doctrine which "will draw all men to the Savior," and it is this which will ensure the *universality* of the Gospel, wherever sin is to be pardoned, and wherever despair and death are to be exchanged for hope and for heaven.

3. *It is certain,* Because of *the past triumphs of the Gospel.* What it has yet to perform is not more difficult than what it has already accomplished. At first it baffled the burning malice of the Jews, and rose triumphant over the confederated power of the Roman world. It successfully resisted the commanding eloquence of the schools, and overthrew the boasted philosophy of the proud Greeks. It left their temples without worshipers, and their altars without victims. And while all things else have changed—while



the city has become a heap, and the defended city a ruin—while thrones have crumbled, and whole kingdoms and dynasties have passed away—while the grandest monuments of human taste and genius have perished, the *Gospel of Christ* has stood unsullied, uninjured; a monument of goodness, a banner of triumph. And shall it not prevail? Array against it all the combined powers of earth and hell, present the vast masses of ignorance, the extensive desolations, the myriads maddened by superstition and despair, the Mohammedan delusion, the Papal tyranny, the awful depravity of the heart, the cunning and malice of Satan—all these in their overwhelming magnitude—and well may the arm of flesh become weakness; but before Him who triumphed over death and the grave, before Him who turned all the artillery of hell back on itself, before Him who was mighty to conquer and to save, who had on "his vesture and on his thigh a name written, *King of kings, and Lord of lords,*" who successfully buffeted the waves of his Father's wrath and fiery indignation against the sins of his people, and from the fearful conflict ascended triumphantly, bearing the trophies of victory up to the very throne of God, and there reigns Lord of the universe, God of eternity; before Him all opposition must fade away, all enemies must lick the dust. Even now the banners of the cross are waving proudly on the citadels of Zion, even now thousands are flocking to her gates, and soon will she be inhabited by all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. No persecution can be employed against her more fierce than that of Nero and Caligula, no sophistry more plausible than that of Porphyry and Hume, no sarcasm more eloquent than that of Rousseau and Julian, no barbarism more rude than that of the Indian and Greenlander, no darkness more gloomy and impenetrable than that of the Laplander and the Hottentot. Her past victories are the harbingers of her future triumph. "*The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.*"

4. *It is certain, Because founded on "exceeding great and precious promises."*

*Promises of Victory.*—"The nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. All that afflict thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet." The "Man of Sin and Son of Perdition," shall be utterly

destroyed, and that "old serpent the Devil shall be bound a thousand years, that he deceive the nations no more."

*Promises of Righteousness.*—"Thy people shall be all righteous." "The mountains shall bring peace to the people and the little hills, by righteousness." And "I will make thy officers peace and thy exactors righteousness."

*Promises of Peace.*—"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." "Nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain."

*Promises of Prosperity and Triumph.*—"And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and *all nations* shall flow unto it. The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Zion shall be an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." And "thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the *Lord* shall be thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

The more minutely we examine prophecy the stronger becomes the conviction that the day is fast approaching when "wars shall cease to the ends of the earth," when animosities shall subside, when idolatry and superstition shall vanish away, and when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise on our guilty world, and disperse the darkness of every clime. The storm of sorrow and violence which has laid waste all lands, has almost spent its fury and soon must rock itself to repose. Already the light bursts on the mountain top, already rays of beauty and glory are illuminating all around, already the great Captain stands forth marshaling the army which is destined to conquer the world; while all its operations are maturing, all its stations determined, obstacles are yielding to its energy, and success beckons it onward in its glorious march. Many have embraced the Gospel, and their influence, like so many radii, is extending to every part of the circle. A wave-offering is presented to the Lord, and soon the rich and abundant harvest will be gathered into the garners of the Church. The handful of corn planted on the top of the mountains shall spring up and become like the cedars of Lebanon, "the little one shall become a thousand."

Every sinner is a little pagan world in himself, and every such one added to the Church, becomes the pledge of millions; the grace which renews the one can cause a "nation to be born in a day." How bright, how joyous then, the prospect! Light springs up and the gloom and darkness of ages vanish away, the voice of tumult and violence is hushed, peace and love are triumphant, the Sabbath of the world is come, and on every side arise notes of joy and thanksgiving to the court of heaven. Satan is ruined, his empire overthrown, the world redeemed, the throne of the Savior Prince established, his empire the boundaries of earth, and his ransomed subjects from every city, and country, and clime, uniting in the harmonious, triumphant concert, ALLELUIA! THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH.

And now, brethren, what a variety of motives and influences is here presented to excite us to activity and faithfulness in the discharge of duty. Motives grand as the dissemination of the glory of God, motives valuable as the interests of the immortal soul, motives pure as the joys of heaven, lovely as truth, and lasting as eternity. Here are motives founded on the truth of God, on the greatness of the Savior, and on the certainty of success; motives based on your love, your confidence, and your gratitude; motives sublime as the happiness of countless millions, and stronger than the power of death. Need I urge them upon *you*, ambassadors of Christ? Must I plead with *you* the great cause of God and humanity? Do *you* need arguments to convince, and strong appeals to excite you to the faithful discharge of duty? Are you not alive to the interests of perishing millions, millions sunken in the depths of sin, degradation and despair? Are *you* pervaded by the same spirit of faith, and love, and confidence which shed a heavenly radiance over the mind of the departing Psalmist? Is it your earnest desire and prayer to God, "that Israel might be saved," and that "the whole earth may be filled with his glory." What evidence, then, do we give, not of the fervency, but of the *sincerity* of our prayers? Unless they be seconded by exertions undying and devoted, to the utmost of our ability and opportunity, it is but glaring hypocrisy. And while, around the family altar, in the closet and pulpit, you supplicate that "the whole earth may be filled with his glory," O see to it, as you are responsible to God, that every power of mind, and body, and soul, be consecrated to the promotion of this glori-

ous end. Every influence and motive urge this upon you—your vows, your work, your accountability, your peace, your reward, your happiness forever. In this grand enterprise, you are co-workers with God. You have the pledge of his aid and protection. This is enough. You may be called to meet the sneer of contempt, the serpent of malignity, and the loud laughter of derision, but the promise “*Lo, I am with you always,*” should banish every fear and arm you for the mighty conflict. Robed in the livery of heaven, and armed with the “sword of the Spirit,” what labor can be too great, what zeal too ardent, what purpose too unflinching, and what sacrifice too costly, if by any means you may be able to invade the kingdom of darkness, and point those who are “sitting in the region and shadow of death” to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world? Every sinner converted is a little world conquered, and is the presage of the universal, triumphant success of the Gospel. Then, brethren and fathers, look forward with hope and confidence to the time when the mighty fabric of superstition, when the power of prejudice, when the dominion of Satan, when the fascinations of caste, when the authority of the Shasters, the Koran, and the Pope shall be dashed to fragments, and when “*all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.*” Shall we be instrumental in accomplishing this grand result? Then, let us pray let us labor, let us believe, let us respond in accents of love to the deep, piercing call of perishing millions, remembering that it is the call of humanity, it is the call of Providence, it is the call of God, it is the call of eternity. And for our encouragement, let us unite with one voice and one heart, and one noble aim and purpose, in the glowing doxology with which the Psalmist closed his earthly pilgrimage, and entered into the mansions of glory. “*Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name forever;* AND LET THE WHOLE EARTH BE FILLED WITH HIS GLORY; AMEN AND AMEN.”

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## S E R M O N   X X .

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### THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN.

BY REV. J. BOYCE,

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“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.”  
*Revelation 5: 12.*

THIS John, the beloved disciple, the author of the Apocalypse, was honored with many visions and revelations of the Lord. His banishment to the isle of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, was met with the rich reward of the heavenly visions to which he was there admitted. During his residence in that desolate island, he was invited by a voice in heaven to “come up hither, and I will show you things that must be hereafter.” Take your seat upon this mount of God, upon these celestial heights, that you may have made to you a series of the most astounding disclosures ever vouchsafed to mortal ears, that you may gaze down upon the future and take an inspection of events occurring in the most distant generations. With this invitation he at once complied, and “immediately he was in the spirit”—immediately he was transported into the upper world, and there wrought into a condition fitted to receive heavenly visions. Immediately he was in a trance, in an ecstasy, in a condition so unusual and strange that his outward senses were for the time being suspended, and in which, so far as his feelings and consciousness were concerned, he was as much entitled to be regarded as being among the angels and the redeemed above, as Paul was when he spoke of being exalted to the third heaven, or as he himself now is, or ever will be.

Seated there on these celestial heights, on that loftiest of all prospect-towers, on that elevated observatory shooting far up

into the heavens, associated with angels, and with the redeemed, and there admitted to revelations of the Lord, he had greatly the advantage over prophets, over his companions in tribulation, and indeed over all men, in looking out upon a prospect that stretched away beyond centuries, beyond the millennium, beyond the completion of the thousand two hundred and threescore days, down to the end of time: A prospect which presented to his astonished vision, angels pouring out the vials of wrath upon the earth, the sea, the fountains and rivers of water, on the sun, on the seat of the beast, and the great river Euphrates—The dragon, the mother of harlots, kings, princes, captains, and prophets—Nations acting their parts in the grand drama, and realizing their respective destinies. He had as much the advantage over others in realizing the prospect, as has the man who stands upon the summit of the Andes or Alps with the telescope in hand, taking a view of a vast and magnificent panorama of mountains, valleys, farm-houses, cities, and an ocean studded with steamers and canvass for many leagues distant—over the man who placed in the midst of the plain, finds that his naked eye ranges over only a circumscribed boundary of vision. Among some of the first things that attracted his attention in his new position, was a book in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne, written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals. Of all books, that most excited his curiosity. Not like those books which are thrust away into the dusty cobwebbed shelves of unused antiquated libraries; condemned by critics, and rejected by the wise, it was held in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne—a book into whose mystic pages neither human nor angelic eyes had been permitted to look.

When a strong angel proclaimed with a loud voice audible through all heaven, asking who was worthy to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof—or who had the authority and the ability to understand and publish the purposes and plans of God for the future regulation and government of the Church and the world—such a sense of inadequacy to that task pervaded all ranks of creatures, that no reply was given. None could open that book or so much as look upon it. Among all those mighty angels that dwell round about the throne, who are ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto them who are the heirs of salvation, endowed with an intelligence corresponding with their exalted stations, not one could be

heard to say, I am worthy to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. Among the prophets endowed with a keen prophetic vision, with Isaiah and Daniel towering ingifts above them all, none were found to presume to open the mystic volume, to interpret and publish the contents. The Jewish high-priests, who were familiar with holy things, who had often stood in the presence of God, ministering at the altar, and once a year appearing in the Holy of Holies with blood making intercession for the sins of the congregation, knew too well their incompetency and unworthiness to undertake the task. The apostles who were taught in the school of the Savior, who drank much at the fountain of heavenly wisdom, and abounded in the gifts the Holy Ghost, dared not to advance to take the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. Neither the forward Peter, nor the intrepid Paul, nor the beloved disciple himself, with all his familiarity with heavenly things, presumed where angels and prophets declined. There was no response to the call or challenge of the angel. Out of that multitudinous throng of angels, archangels, cherubim, seraphim, thrones, dominions, powers, redeemed saints, beasts, elders, kings, prophets, priests, and apostles, no voice affirmed, I am worthy to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof. Angels were silent, Jewish prophets were silent, the apostles were silent. John was affected even to tears. "He wept much." But immediately he was informed, that one had been found who had prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof, and that illustrious person was "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." This rejoicing was not confined to John, for when the Lion of the tribe of Judah advanced to the throne, and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat thereon, the four beasts, and the four and twenty elders, fell down and worshiped the Lamb, and 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. The anthem was caught up by many angels round about the throne, the beasts and the elders, who were heard 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." To add to the power and music of that sublime and enrapturing song, we are informed that every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, joined in singing. "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever."

We propose to consider,

I. Who were the persons who took a part in that song.

II. In what respects was the Lamb that was slain worthy of the ascriptions made in that song.

I. Who were the persons that took a part in that song—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

The ANGELS participated. They are holy, and were always so; they are not among the redeemed, they never stood in need of pardon, or of converting and sanctifying grace. They are not then personally interested, as we are, in the redemption of Christ. Nevertheless, they are neither indifferent spectators to the developments of the scheme of grace, nor are they inactive or inefficient instruments in promoting its objects. Like that God around whose throne they minister, they take no pleasure in the death of the wicked; they would say in the tones of the most earnest entreaty, if it were their place to do it, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" It affords them the sincerest pleasure to contemplate the outgoings of the Father's love to sinners, and to witness the Savior's love as manifested in his incarnation, sufferings and death. They delight to muse upon the scheme of redemption, to look out over all its arrangements, to ponder upon the design and the results. They are described as rejoicing over one sinner that repenteth. When the intelligence passes the portals of the celestial world, and circulates among its inhabitants that one of earth's apostate children has repented, that one prodigal son has gone back to his Father's house, there is joy in heaven, and hallelujahs are sung. Their ears are ever ready to catch the tidings from the rebellious province of their Master's empire; they are ever anxious to learn that Satan was seen to fall from heaven like lightning, that grace triumphs, that righteousness and peace have sprung up in the world. Sympathizing with our unfortunate and miserable species, and interested in the progress and accomplishment of the Almighty's plans, the angels took a leading part in the grand anthem that John heard ringing on the vaults of heaven—singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." In these their lively sympathies and their active benevolence, these holy angels are a standing rebuke on us, unsympathizing as we are



with our fellow-men, and indifferent as we are to the success of Christ's kingdom. Do we, upon whom it most particularly devolves, rejoice when we hear that one sinner has repented, that this man and that man were born in Zion—that judgment runs down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream—that God, the Holy One of Israel, has become great in Zion?

The BEASTS AND THE ELDERS took a part in that song. Critics remark that beasts should be rendered "living creatures." It is supposed that they are designed to represent ministers—but be these beasts who they may, they are distinguished for their intelligence, their devotion, and their active services. Who more intelligent, more far-seeing and penetrating than those who are "full of eyes within?" Who more devout than those who rest not day and night, saying Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come—whose ceaseless occupation, and whose highest enjoyment, are found in rendering ascriptions of praise to Him that sits upon the throne. Who better adapted to the business of dispatching orders and communications from the throne of the great King to the different parts of his widely extended realm, than those who are supplied with six wings?

The Elders are by some regarded as patriarchs, prophets, apostles, the leading, the chief men among the brethren—by others, as the representatives of the Church. Well may the Church with her members great and small, unite in ascription of glory and dominion to Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and who hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, for unto her doth that office more immediately and appropriately appertain. In addition to the angels and the Church, EVERY CREATURE IN HEAVEN, ON EARTH, AND UNDER THE EARTH, were seen by John, to unite in swelling the devout acclamations, in giving increased tone and pathos to an anthem that already pealed along the aisles, and rolled up the lofty dome of the celestial temple. John saw the scripture fulfilled which affirms that to him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, of things in heaven, of things on earth, and things under the earth, when heaven and earth, and seas him praise, and all that move in them—when dragons and deeps, fire, hail, snow, vapor, stormy winds, mountains and all hills, fruitful trees, and all cedars, beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl, kings of the earth and all people, princes and all

judges of the earth, young men and maidens, old men and children—shall either passively or actively praise the Lord.

But that song was sung “*with a loud voice,*” and had almost no resemblance to the psalms in many of our earthly congregations, where only a few timid and perhaps restrained voices are heard. That song was sung by a great multitude, the number of whom was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. Well might John be enraptured and transported as his ears were saluted with the strains of that celestial hymn as they went up from the gladdened hearts and rejoicing lips of that multitudinous assembly. What was the subject matter of that song? We may suppose that an anthem which angels and the Church were employed in singing was worthy of their name, their exalted natures, and their position round the throne. Among the diversified objects in heaven and on earth, the Lamb that was slain was deemed the most fit object of praise. This leads us to consider,

II. In what respects is the Lamb that was slain worthy of these ascriptions.

Why should they sing “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing?”

In the Revelation of John the divine, Jesus Christ is known by this metaphorical but significant name—“the Lamb that was slain.” Under the Mosaic dispensation, lambs were special and favorite offerings, and hence Christ is called the Lamb of God, or as in our text the Lamb that was slain. Christ was entitled to the highest ascriptions of praise in view of his divine perfections, being equal with the Father in the attributes of deity. In existence he is eternal, in wisdom he is omniscient, in power he is almighty, in authority he is supreme—in his nature, he is infinitely good, infinitely holy, infinitely just, and immutable, and therefore the multitudes around the throne might justly have rendered to him the ascriptions of our text in consideration of these perfections, apart from any reasons connected with his mediatorial work, and sufferings. But on that particular occasion he was regarded as the Lamb that was slain—he was worshiped and adored as the divine Redeemer, extolled for what he had done in the capacity of a Savior.

1. He was worthy of these ascriptions, *in view of the sacrifice he had made.* Those heavenly hosts around the throne had their

eyes upon the fact that this illustrious personage who had just taken the book out of the hand of Him who sat on the throne, and was about to proceed to break the seven seals thereof, had dwelt in the bosom of the Father from all eternity: but for the love he bare to sinners volunteered to humble himself, consented to be bound up in a covenant; which would require him in the fullness of time to be made of a woman, to be made under the law, that he might redeem them that are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; which would require him to make himself of no reputation, to take upon him the form of a servant, to be made in the likeness of men, to humble himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Such a sacrifice is unexampled in the history of our world. Some have made a sacrifice of their lives and of their substance for their country and their friends; but in no instance for their enemies, for these ordinarily fall not within the range of human compassions. Who among men ever thought of subjecting himself to inconvenience and cost for the benefit of his enemies? "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

When this sacrifice was made, we were unthankful, unholy, disobedient and rebellious—the enemies and not the friends of God. While we were "*yet sinners*" Christ died for us. He sacrificed his comfort, his reputation, and his life—he became a victim for the altar. As the lamb under the law, when intended for an offering, was brought up to the altar, had the sins of the congregation imputed unto it—had its life taken and its body consumed—so Christ having had the iniquities of men laid upon him, was once offered. Hence the multitude round the throne extolled him as the Lamb *that was slain*—as a Lamb, though holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, was stricken, smitten, afflicted of God, cut down at the altar, and brought down to the dust of death.

2. He was worthy of these ascriptions in view of *the reparation made to injured justice, and a violated law*. It afforded these celestial spirits matter for the sincerest pleasure and profoundest admiration to reflect that the disregarded, insulted, violated law had been magnified and made honorable—that justice with all its hitherto unrequited claims on sinners, had been fully met and satisfactorily

indemnified. For the plan of redemption to succeed, it was not necessary that justice should let itself down one fraction in any of its claims, or compromise in any of its requisitions. Christ the mediator made reparation to injured justice. Was the law dishonored, was it trampled upon, were its sanctions disregarded, were its precepts violated? The breach was repaired. So completely satisfactory was his obedience, that rigorous as justice may be supposed to be, it had no further demands—and as broad and as spiritual as the law may be, it was without one additional claim. He thus became the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. In the estimation of the angels, and redeemed saints, it was enough to entitle the Lamb that was slain to the highest praise, to have accomplished this most desirable work in reference to law and justice.

3. The Lamb that was slain had an additional claim upon these ascriptions of honor *in consequence of the reconciliation he had effected between God and man*. As a result of the introduction of sin, the earth became a revolted province of Jehovah's empire, and its inhabitants rebels against God. Sinners threw off their allegiance, denounced the authority of heaven, erected the standard of rebellion, and went out in quest of other lords, and other gods to have dominion over them. God was offended, withheld the light of his countenance, withdrew the tokens of his love, and left upon them the marks of his curse. The amicable relations which should have subsisted between earth and heaven, between man and his Maker, were broken up. How could an offended heaven look down with complacency upon that stiff-necked and rebellious house who were stained with the guilt of a heaven-daring impiety? And why should sinners whose hearts have been drawn or thwarted into a condition of antagonism to all good be expected to be other than hostile to God and holiness? But Christ interposed as the peacemaker, broke down the middle wall of partition, and made friends of the alienated parties. Had the question then been asked, Why should the Lamb that was slain be thus extolled with these high praises? the answer could very properly have been given, It was because he had accomplished the most desirable and at the same time the most apparently impracticable of all works—the reconciling of the world unto God. It was, then, because there was now peace on earth, and good will to men—because God through him was reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

4. The Lamb that was slain, was entitled to these ascriptions *in consideration of the sufferings he has alleviated and prevented*. In this particular both the righteous and the wicked are debtors. Even the wicked in this life, realize milder sufferings and a more tolerable existence in consequence of numerous temporal blessings flowing from the mediation of Christ. And as for the righteous, where are the figures or the words that can sum up the pains that are mitigated, the sorrows that are alleviated, the ten thousand evils for which successful anodynes have been prescribed—the calamities that are warded off, the wrath that is appeased—the indignation that is averted, and the undying woe that is prevented for their sakes? When you shall have counted up the cycles of eternity, and shall have made an estimate of what one lost soul may suffer in that bottomless pit whose smoke ascends up forever and ever, in that lake which burns with fire and brimstone—when you shall have measured the despair and the wailings of the spirit agonizing under that remorseful worm that dies not—when you shall have added the sum total of one individual's sufferings endured through eternity to all the sufferings that would be endured eternally by the whole number of the saved if lost,—then we may give you some adequate conception of the sufferings from which the vast multitudes of the household of faith have been delivered by Christ. “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, for he was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted—the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.” For that compassionate and enlightened throng around the throne. it was enough to know that for all this deliverance from condemnation, for all this lifting up from the pit and from woe, for all this rescuing from despair and death, and the power of the destroyer, the redeemed were indebted to the Lamb that was slain: to whom power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing should be ascribed in accents of a louder praise.

5. But when the celestial choir thought of *the number that were saved and added to the blessed from this lost and guilty race*, by the mediation of Christ, they struck their harps anew, pitched a higher key, and again made the vaults of heaven ring with their hallelujahs. “Glory to God in the highest,”—“worthy is the Lamb that was slain.” In the absence of this Lamb that was slain, not

one of all our multitudinous race would ever have passed up into the kingdom of light, and taken a place in the bright circles around the throne—not one would have been permitted to swell that celestial anthem which goes up as sweet incense to the throne of the Eternal from the harps and tongues of angels, and other primitive inhabitants of heaven. In his absence, there would have been no Abraham in the upper world to look down upon a long line of redeemed posterity, and to proclaim the faithfulness of God as witnessed in the fulfilment of the promise that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. There would have been no Moses to stand on the mount of God, to testify that Pharaohs, seas, deserts, and mountains are difficulties through which the Almighty can safely bring his people. there would have been no Manassehs, no Sauls of Tarsus, no John Newtons, no John Bunyans, no Thomas Scotts, to proclaim the long suffering, goodness and patience of God, in their salvation. In the absence of this Lamb that was slain, where would have been the one hundred and forty and four thousand who are now sealed in their foreheads with the seal of the living God—where would have been that great multitude which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who now stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands? Worthy then was the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

From these considerations, we are justified in entertaining the opinion that the redemption of Christ affords matter of thought to the whole intelligent universe. The investigation of that subject is not confined to the redeemed saints who are more immediately interested in its provisions. The angels desire to look into these things; for exalted as may be their views, this subject ranks high in their estimation, not as an unprofitable speculation, but as an ennobling, inspiring theme. In that redemption marvellous are the manifestations of inflexible justice, of condescending love, of sympathizing mercy, and of an enduring patience. There we find series of the grandest displays of the perfections of Jehovah—there justice proclaims to the universe that its claims can in no instance be disregarded with impunity—there, we see the marks of wisdom and power, there love shines out with a brilliancy that attracts the admiration of earth and heaven. In that redemption God is glorified, while multitudes of sinners are saved

When we reflect upon the exercises of that celestial assembly in singing, Glory, and honor, and blessing to the Lamb that was slain; when we hear of angels and redeemed saints in heaven shouting hallelujahs to the Redeemer; shall we of this lower world, who have our eyes upon the upper as our final home and everlasting rest, and upon that Savior as the door to the kingdom, and as the ladder on which we ascend from the pit up to our Father's house, be silent, while there goes up from nature around us, and from heaven above us, one stupendous anthem of praise to God ?

“ Begin, my soul, the exalted lay,  
Let each enraptured thought obey,  
And praise the Almighty's name.  
Lo ! heaven and earth, and seas and skies,  
In one melodious concert rise,  
To swell the inspiring theme.”

## S E R M O N X X I .

### THE RESURRECTION.

BY WILLIAM M' MILLAN, PROBATIONER,

*Of the First Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod of the West.*

"Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."—*Isaiah* 26: 19.

OUR earthly existence is but brief and transitory. Job utters—  
"We are but of yesterday and know nothing; because our days upon earth are as a shadow." "My days are swifter than a post; they flee away, they see no good." "They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey." "Man that is born of woman, is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down: he fleeth as a shadow and continueth not." David sang—"Behold thou hast made my days as a handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee; verily man at his best state is altogether vanity." "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and we flee away." "As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more." Isaiah proclaimed—"The voice said, Cry; and he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass." "We all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Such is our frail life, as set forth by the beautiful and pathetic language of Scripture. But notwithstanding this falling mortal state, we shall all rise and resume a living material existence; this



corruptible putting on incorruption, this mortal, immortality." "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body; yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me." "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for *thy* dew is *as* the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

Here, then, are proclaimed the tidings of a resurrection; a glorious uprising, as the revived exultation of vegetable nature in the joyous time of spring. But leaving this figurative dress of our subject, how may we substantiate the affirmed doctrine?

Let me adduce for this end, the original *intent or purpose* of the Deity; that intent as it was expressed by his primitive actions or procedure relative to man. These display purpose; for deeds do speak as well as words. Now this *intent or purpose* was the design of his will, that man's body, as well as spirit, should exist interminably, and this, consequently, would be independent of any subsequent event or affair that might temporarily transpire to conflict with it. Notwithstanding the temporary obstruction of material decay, which iniquity, as an incidental future event would bring to bear against the operation of this purposed plan—it was yet the primal and indomitable *intent* of the Creator that the material frame of his creature should continuously exist. This we premise as having been the actual case.

When, then, do we find the deeds of the Deity speaking such intent or purpose? We may, as before intimated, see them inculcating such in his primitive acts relative to man. Away back at that time of love unsullied—on the morn of finished existence—when he had just planted the garden of Eden and had made to "grow every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food"—when flowerets first sprang to inhale the air and then outshd their breath of scent, when every shrub and spreading bush first formed folding arbors and nature wove garlands fair—when earth sent up the incense of her first orison, and sweet mouthed songsters sang as taught by God—when over all in the expanse of the vaulted sky, in grandest celebration of creating love, "the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy;" then, in that time of new loveliness was discovered the Divine intent as to man's

continued existence; then did the Creator's procedure relative to his creature demonstrate our premised affirmation.

Here, then, we will give you an exhibition of those primal actions of the Divine Being, which, we deem, go to show substantially, that it was indeed according to his *intent* or *purpose* that man should exist on, and not be destroyed ultimately, in material constitution.

1. He formed him faultless in body as well as in spirit; without any corporeal defect; created him as free from decay as the mind of Jehovah was free from the wish that he should droop and die. He implanted in him no principle of death; sowed in his constitution no seeds of mortality. No quality antagonistic to life had place in his being. And as dissolution, according to the laws of Divine government, is the "wages of sin," so he could not, in the moral state wherein his Creator had placed him, be visited by death; because that state was not sinful, but was morally perfect and holy: Death, then, could not visit him while he stood in the moral position of created purity; nor could mortality arise from any incompleteness or imperfection in bodily organization, as in its entire constitution it was perfectly exempt from any mortal cause, and in formation of creative design, fully qualified to possess native vitality forever, according to the palpable will of the divine artificer. Here there is evidence of actional expression, that God designed man not to crumble and be fellow with the clod as in an ultimate, lost condition, but that he intended his destiny to be a living existence.

2. Continued bodily being as intended by the Creator to man was again displayed as being in accordance with his pleasure, in that after having given him *perfect life* he also enjoined him to keep it, retain it, and thus continue it, by abstaining to infringe the sacredness of covenanted stipulation and thereby keep perversion away from his moral harmony with God, and material wasting away from his body. He indirectly commanded him to live in charging him to withhold his taste from the fruit of the forbidden tree, the violation of which would bring mortality; in enjoining him to observe obedience unto Him, which would secure continuance of life, and in joining with all this the privilege of partaking of all other tree's fruitage, including even that of the tree of life. "Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." Man thus

found it to be the will of his Maker that he should obey and live—found himself privileged to eat of “every tree in the garden,” even the tree of life; none were denied save the tree of death. Here, then, is more evidence in the proceeding of Jehovah, demonstrating the will that his creature should not become but lifeless clod.

3. It is evident, again, that continuance of corporeal existence was purposed to man, inasmuch as He endowed this organism with an everliving soul. This we will assume—as many who deny the doctrine of resurrection or continuance of man’s material being, yet admit the soul to be immortal. This spiritual endowment, then, was the immortal image of an immortal God. He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. Man, therefore, was formed of two component parts; one, the body, from the element appertaining to the material world—the other, the soul, from the essence co-natural with the spiritual world. These composed the being, Man. Now to unite with matter a spiritual part, in closely joined fellowship—from the two elements thus constituting *one* nature—to associate in the composition of man’s being matter and spirit, does it not argue that in their having been created together and built up together to make one wonderful being, that this being’s material part was designed for eternity of existence, associated with his other part, the spirit? This union of immortal soul is a living argument that the Creator intended him to be an eternally existing thing. He was thus made *man*, material as well as spiritual, and was, according to apparent design, purposed to continue such a creature. But if the body fails, decays, and remains in the tomb, from any incidental cause subsequent to the revelation of original design respecting it, and continues resolved into dust as in an ultimate, lost condition, and the soul, the only remaining existence of him, goes on alone in being forever—then *man is no more man*, but spirit merely, as the angelic existences. And would not this contravene the primitive and creative design that this being should be *man, body* as well as soul? We say, then, as the Creator intended him to be man, and also mingled in the composition of his being an ingredient of immortal essence, as he created materiality crowned with spirituality, this association of spirit with matter to make the being, to complete the formation of the creature designed, evidently intimates the intent on the part of God, that man, as man, should exist on in a living destiny.

Here, then, is our premise authenticated. Man having been created with a body exempt from decay; having been indirectly commanded to continue his life; having been endued with an immortal spiritual capacity; it was, therefore, from these three authorities, palpably the intent or purpose of the divine mind that this creature should be a continued being.

Now having seen this, to a demonstration, to have been the case, we may, without contradiction affirm that all the intents or purposes of Jehovah will be successfully carried out. In the event of violation of the covenanted arrangement instituted between God and primeval man, the execution of the *purpose* of a retributive justice was invariably performed in remanding man's body to the dust. But this does not veto the accomplishment of his original intent respecting man's continued existence in body, although it do for a time delay it; because the operations of God do not clash, do not meet in antagonism, no more than the plans of his glorious mind are a medley of contradictions, or the attributes of his person are at war. The purpose of retributive justice must, and is now, in regard to man's body, obtaining its legitimate execution; so therefore must the purpose of the original design, with equal right, meet *its* grand consummation.

Now it cannot be argued from this basis, that as man was primitively happy, we will all again be happy; as man was primitively holy, we will all again be holy—such an inference cannot be made from any position of scriptural truth in the sacred volume; for the very reason that according to the moral state of men, foreseen by the Omniscient, He has purposed unhappiness and punishment to many, and has given to this effect, his own express testimony. But on the side of our argument for the continued destiny of man in body, He has entered no interdict, but has rather taught it in many a page and many a scripture in beauteous utterance, and consequently we may infer the correctness of the doctrine from any qualified scriptural basis whatever.

Then, to resume, will not the original intent or purpose be carried out? Certainly there cannot be any failure to His designs. This is a moral certainty. For when He gives demonstration of a design, it must inevitably obtain its accomplishment, as He is not only the Omnipotent but also the Unchangeable. In Him is no change of character. His purposes are ever moving onward in the

consummation of their ends; and although often seemingly inoperative, yet are they inscrutably, if not openly fulfilling. Although there may be many an opposing event brought to bear against them in intercepting agency—as a dark cloud intervening often hinders the further progress of the radiations of the sun—yet the obstruction, always foreseen, is ever expeditiously removed, so that his unvarying mind may obtain the execution of its unvarying intent. He is the immutable God. “I am the Lord, I change not.” He is not a creature like ourselves, given to mutation of purpose, mentally or morally. But He is the same everlasting, same purposing Deity, in whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning. Mark his ways over all the universe. They display all in their universal language, that He their author is not subject to variation; but consistent with equal order and undeviating rectitude. Nature as well as revelation lifts her voice, proclaiming in all the regularity of her created constitution that her Creator is of unwavering purpose and of unwavering execution, thus yielding her substantiating authority to the testimony of the scripture-oracle, which affirms Him to be the Unchangeable—“the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.” Can the original design, then, fail in consequence of a change of mind in Him, or vacillation of demeanor?

He, alone, is the Omnipotent, too, and his unchanging scheme, backed by such capacity, must inevitably be carried on. No power can there exist, among all the orders of being in the universe, sufficient in strength to thwart his designed end. No agent can there arise, under Divinity, competent to destroy the execution of his schemes. The insurgent power attempting to scale the battlements of the eternal Might, would fall like Satan and his embattled seraphim headlong hurled into the depths of perdition. And all opposing operations, like those of the arch-fiend, would be found to be in blind subservience to the designs of the omniscient Monarch of the universe. To the one Deity there can arise no equal. There can be but one Omnipotence. The idea of there existing two disconnected omnipotent beings is an absurdity; because each one being omnipotent, they could equally and reciprocally restrain their power over each other, and this equal sided barrier would consequently render the might of each in omnipotent, would render it limited. There can, then, be but one Omnipotence, and He it is who speaks to us in the lofty diction of this sacred oracle, and who displays to

all intelligences, the unity of his omnipotent capacity, in the unity of his created and wielded universe. All other powers, then, are finite creatures, subjects of his puissant sovereignty; and none can rise in any efficiency to pluck the accomplishment of the intention out of the hands of the eternal King.

Here, then, we may sum up the matter of our argument. God at the creation, in his proceedings relative to man, gave evidence that it was in accordance with his intent, or purpose, that man in body should continue existent. This was manifest, as we have seen, by the palpable expression of his actions. Now acts do speak a language, and he is as incapable of using deceit in them, as He is incapable of lying in word; and consequently if they demonstrated that it was in accordance with his pleasure that man should be a continued being, it must certainly have been so.

Again, we have seen that the Deity is immutable in his character; that in him is no vacillation of demeanor; that he is not subject to fickle caprice; that he is morally the eternal same; and consequently all his moral purposes, rising qualified by the bearing of his nature, remain as unchanging as the immutable Jehovah himself.

Again; we have seen, that there can be no other power in existence, competent to thwart his ends, as all others are merely finite in capacity of might, and as He alone is the Eternal Omnipotent.

If, then, the Almighty exhibited intent, originally, that man should exist on, and if his intents or purposes are immutable, and if no being can rise up in any efficiency to thwart them, man, therefore, is bound and fixed, inevitable as decree, even if now resting in the tomb, to resume continuation of existence in body; and independent of the obstruction of the grave, which thus can be but temporary, he is bound to rise from the dust to exist forever, to fulfill his destiny according to the original, unchanging, omnipotent purpose of the Eternal!

Has he given us no instances, illustrative of the practicability of this theory of his original intent or purpose? Has he not given teaching of real sample, demonstrating that this doctrinal scheme is feasible; that the grave has to be satisfied with but a temporal dominion over the body, and then must give it up for the fulfillment of any purpose Jehovah may will? Yea, indeed. When he descended officially to assume human nature to constitute the mediatorial person, and became "Immanuel, God with us;" when bands

of angels in the serene air of that happy day celebrated his nativity and the coursing, starry orb pointed out to men the place of his humanity's birth; when the divinity of his mission was testified by the obedience of devils and by the accomplishment of stupendous deeds and mighty acts of miracle: then, in those days of his infinite condescension, were exhibited before the astonished gaze of man, occasional instances which gave token that death's rule over the body is but brief and temporal: that the grave does indeed yield up to Jehovah its decayed treasure for the accomplishment of any purpose He may will.

Death had laid his touch of ice upon the heart of the virgin—had froze the current of her life. All lowly lay her form in solemn quiet—all pale and fallen rested her countenance. The bloom had faded, the animation flown. But lo, death's Victor approaches, in silent majesty but touches her hand, and the "maid arose"! to the embrace of her parents, to the greeting of her friends, to the praises of her God; and the sad voice of mourning wandered away on the passing air.

The pale king had pierced the bosom of the buoyant youth, had surprised the frolic of his young morn, stilled the throbbing of a joyous heart, arrested the agile footstep, silenced the merry voice of youthful mirth, had nipped the fair blooming promise of the widowed mother; but He who can be "touched by the feeling of our infirmities," with all the sympathy of man and all the graciousness of Deity, rebuked the grim monarch from his victim, saying gently, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise; and he that was dead rose up and began to speak."

The tomb had cast its gloomy pall over the fallen form of the brother of Martha and Mary; had veiled him from the serenity of day's mild light. The sombre shade of the sepulcher curtained that body, all stiff, and cold, and pale, yet once so animated with the principle of life. That heart which once throbbed in exultation at the enunciation of holy words, is now still; that eye which grew brilliant at recognition of the divine Savior is now dim. Death, fell enemy, cut him down, and the dark cave now held his remains. But behold Him approaching who wept at the sorrows of his followers. In voice of Deity he utters the mighty fiat, "Lazarus, come forth." Death fled affrighted, the tomb burst its barriers, "and he that was dead came forth" in the habiliments of the grave.

Thousands of life's frail mortals had spent their hour upon this stage of existence and had passed as flitting shadows; had sprung from the dust, made their little buzz, and then had returned to the bosom of their mother, earth; had all been resolved in the dusty material of their kindred clod; yet, at that awful time, when He exhibited to appalled nature his momentous death upon Mount Calvary—the sky robing herself in mourning, the sun putting on sackcloth in sorrow, earth trembling and quaking and rending herself in pain—then, also, was displayed to nature trembling, that He in his divine might, was the “resurrection and the life;” then the tomb was opened, “and many of the bodies of the saints which slept, arose and came out of their graves, after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many;” then did nature clear her brow and smile in brightness again, in recognition of the mighty evidence.

Here, then, are instances in history arguing the practicability of our theory of the Creator's design, illustrating and yielding testimony of fact, that the retributive justice of heaven formerly brought to bear upon man's material frame in dissolution, is in this respect but of temporary reign; that the grave therefore may give up the body to be reunited with the spirit, in order to consummate original purpose concerning it, and to recomplete the human being for its continued eternal destiny.

You have heard this truth, then, from the voice of moral utterance of scripture; now go out and attend to nature dumbly confirming it. She rises in all her beautiful picturing, showing her concurrence with the testimony of the written revelation, and yielding her figurative elucidation of the sacred truth. See earth in the pale reign of winter, the image of mortality. All faded has become the landscape, and all gray the naked trunks of the forest. The hills which were robed in the full dress of summer's garniture, now rear their bleak summits to the lowering elements. The ground is disrobed of its grassy coat and lies rigid in stiffness. The songster has flitted from the scene; all animation fled. And earth is stretched bare in winter death, cold and stiff and pale; the white snows her winding sheet, the canopy of mantling clouds her sable pall, and the moanings of stormy winds the strains of her requiem.

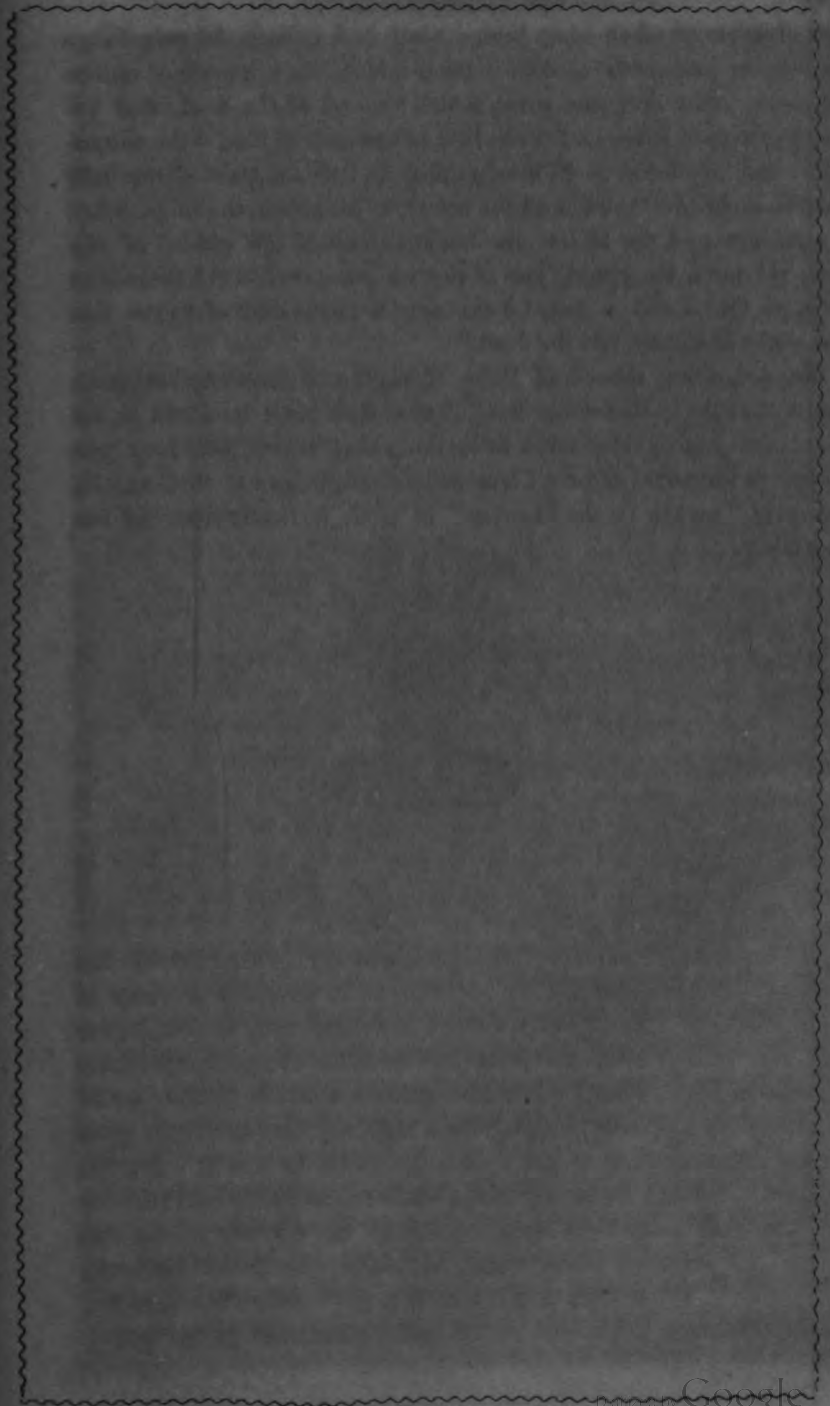
But, lo, O! man, “she is not dead but sleepeth!”

The spring-tide comes in mission of life—sheds genial influence—



her showers freshen—her beams vivify—dispelling the pale reign of winter; and earth freed from the thralldom rises in glorious emancipation. She doffs the gray, white apparel of the dead, and resumes verdure robes and terrestrial ornaments of life; “the mountains and hills break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field clap their hands;” and in all the beauty of language, she sings, “Lo! I arise again—I rise to live another life—behold the symbol of *thy* rise, O! man, the grand type of thy resurrection!”—“Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for *thy* dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”

Rejoice, then, thou frail thing of clay, and be exceeding glad; know that thy “Redeemer liveth,” that thou shalt lie down in the quiet dust but to sleep for a little time, that rested, you may rise to live in immortal vigor a life angelic or archangelic; that rested, you may “awake in the likeness” of God, in the attribute of immortality.





*Rev. Wm Davidson*

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# THE PULPIT

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ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH.

CONSISTING OF

SERMONS BY THE MINISTERS

OF THE

FOUR SYNODS OF THAT DENOMINATION.

EDITED BY

REV. JAMES PRESTLEY.

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## S E R M O N X X I I .

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### FREEDOM FROM CONDEMNATION.

BY REV. JOHN PINKERTON,

*Of the First Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod of the West.*

“There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 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.” *Romans, 8: 1-4.*

WHEN man had once drawn down on himself the wrath of God, and the impending curse of the condemning law, how he should get clear of this condemnation was a question, which nor men nor angels were able to solve. From the nature of that law under which man was placed, and which he had transgressed, no ground of hope could be inferred; nor was there, in that covenant transaction which was established between God and man in innocence, any provision explicitly made for the deliverance of the transgressor. The language of that law is, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.” But man has not continued in all things, nor does he continue, for all have sinned and do come short of the glory of God. All then must be naturally under the curse, or condemnation of the law, and that law condemns to death.

Nay more, all are in their natural state already dead. “For by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all, for that all have sinned.” They are already spiritually dead, and the law which is the strength of sin seals them down in this state of spiritual death, and binds them over to temporal and eternal death.

Thus are all under the condemnation of the law. They are condemned already; the sentence is passed and ready to be put into

the hands of the executioner. Over them hovers the curse of the broken law, as a cloud pregnant with Jehovah's vengeance, ready to burst forth on their devoted heads, in sulphurous streams of livid fire.

Viewing man in this condition, all creation would have said, There is no hope. Man stood self-condemned and had no plea. Behold him flying from the presence of the Lord God, and endeavoring to hide himself from the sight of his sovereign in the covert of the trees. Angels fled aloof and looked for speedy execution, and wondered that it was delayed. But lo! a voice is heard! 'Tis Jehovah speaks: "Save from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." Omniscience has devised a plan by which his chosen ones can be delivered from this condemnation, by letting it fall on another in their room. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." And this redemption from the curse of the law is effected by delivering them from the law itself in its covenant form. "For ye are not under the law," says the apostle, "but under grace." "Then," saith he, "there is no condemnation to you who are in Christ Jesus." The apostle here first states an important Christian privilege. He next shows how they are brought to the actual enjoyment of that privilege. He next shows the ground on which, in consistency with the laws and justice of God, they are brought to the enjoyment of this privilege. Blessed be God, that we are not prisoners of despair, but prisoners of hope. This hope, then, my brethren, I this day declare unto you. I declare it for the encouragement of those whose consciences testify that they are yet under condemnation. I declare it for the comfort and edification of those who have a heart-felt evidence that they have already been delivered from the curse of the law.

First, the privilege of those who are in Christ Jesus. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. This the apostle infers from what he had stated in the 14th verse of the 6th chapter, and had further illustrated in the beginning of the seventh; viz: that those who were united to Christ were not under the law but under grace. For they are become dead to the law by the body of Christ. "Therefore," says he, "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." And as there are but two states in which a man can stand, either in a state of condemnation or a state of justification; so if there be no condemna-

tion to them, they must be fully justified through the redemption that is in Christ. Let us, then, for a moment contemplate the importance of the privilege, by viewing both its sides—both *from what* the sinner is delivered, and *to what* he is brought.

He is delivered from a state of condemnation. This state of condemnation is dreadful, both in its nature and in its tendency. In its nature it separates from all gracious and happy intercourse or fellowship with God, and draws down on its subject all the punishments of sin in the present life. It blinds the mind by causing God to withhold all communications of divine light, and enshrouds the soul in thickest darkness. It prevents all gracious communications from God, in consequence of which the heart becomes hardened in sin; the conscience becomes seared as with a hot iron, and dead to every sense but the sense of horror. The whole soul becomes depraved and in all its faculties vitiated: dead to all pleasures but the baneful pleasures of sin; incessantly tortured by the continual collision of repugnant passions, and the horrible presentiment of future retribution.

But this is not all. The end of this sentence is death eternal; and if infinite mercy and grace prevent not, it will one day be fully executed in all its dread and in all its terrors—executed in everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and in the incessant outpouring of the wrath of the omnipotent God. How fearful the condition of those on whom the wrath of God abides, and with whom God is angry every day. And how wretched, O how desperately wretched! the condition of those on whom this wrath is fully executed.

From this dread sentence of condemnation then, says the apostle, it is the happy privilege of every one who is in Christ Jesus to be made free. The sentence of the law against them is canceled; a sentence of justification is passed upon them by which they are brought into a state of peace with God,—are released from the sentence of death, and adjudged to eternal life. As the sentence of condemnation draws with it its train of miseries, and binds over to eternal death, so the sentence of justification brings with it its train of blessings, and entitles its subjects to eternal life, founding a complete counterpart to all that misery and all that wickedness which is the condition of those who are under the former.

Here an inquiry naturally suggests itself: Who are they who are



possessed of this unspeakable privilege? How shall we know them, that we may join with the Psalmist in calling them blessed? or what is of infinitely more importance to us, How shall we know if we ourselves are amongst this happy number? The apostle has supplied us with a solution. The source of this blessedness is the fact that they are *in Christ Jesus*; and the evidence of this blessedness is derived from their character—they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. They are *in Christ Jesus*; by a true and a living faith united to him, having taken hold on him and his righteousness for their justification. And being thus in Christ by faith, there is no condemnation for them: for he that believeth on the Son is not condemned. This is the fundamental ground on which they are free from condemnation. And by this criterion we may know whether we be free from condemnation or not. If we have believed on the name of the Son of God, we are not condemned; but if we have not believed, we are condemned already and the wrath of God abideth on us.

Farther; “by their fruits ye shall know them.” They are a people who walk; they are not idle; they are active; they are employed: and ye may know them by their walk, for they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. It is only *in Christ Jesus* that they enjoy this privilege, and being in Christ Jesus they are new creatures, and their walk will be compatible with their nature. They are led by the Spirit of God, and therefore they walk after the Spirit. Hence may ye know the children of God. And thus may ye know if you yourselves be the children of God, and amongst the number of those happy ones to whom there is no condemnation; therefore examine yourselves.

“There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.” Nay more; there *can* be none. “For,” says he, “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” The apostle is here showing the manner in which they are brought to this happy condition. By the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, he evidently means the covenant of grace, as published in the Gospel, and administered in the effectual application of the benefits of redemption to the sinner. This is called the law of the spirit of life, in consequence of its influence in enabling and quickening sinners in a life of holy obedience; and because it forms

a complete counterpart to the covenant of works, which is the strength of sin; and hence called the law of sin and death. The publication of the covenant of grace is what constitutes the Gospel revelation; and this is the instrument by which God conveys Christ and his righteousness and all his fulness into the heart of the sinner. And that spirit of life which is by the Holy Ghost, through the instrumentality of the published covenant of grace conveyed into the heart of the sinner, is in Christ Jesus; Christ is our life. Therefore the apostle calls it the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. That, according to the tenor of which we are made spiritually alive, and living members of his body.

“This law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, then,” says the apostle, “has made me free from the law of sin and death.” We have already hinted that by the law of sin and death, the apostle means, the law as a broken covenant of works. This is called the law of sin and death, because its impending curse is the strength of sin, and because it binds over to eternal death. “Therefore,” says the apostle, “there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,” because they are delivered from the condemning law. They are not only discharged from the sentence of condemnation which stood against them, but they can never come into condemnation; because they are delivered from the law in its condemning form. Did they remain under that law in its covenant form they would still be exposed to condemnation, for its language is still, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them.” They are then delivered from it as a covenant of life and death, and brought under it as a rule of practical holiness in the hand of the Mediator. They therefore cannot fall into condemnation.

Here another question naturally presents itself: On what ground, in consistency with the justice of God, can the sinner be thus released? This the apostle shows in the next two verses. “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.”

Here, then, the apostle states the fundamental ground of the sinner's release from condemnation and the condemning law. It first

admits that the law could not justify the sinner; the reason of this is that it is weak through the flesh, not that the law is marred by man's sin. It is still holy, just and good, and still able to justify and award life, if men were innocent and able to fulfil its demands. The law, as a covenant, was accommodated to man in innocence, and was calculated to award life to perfect obedience, and death to disobedience. The law, as a covenant, never was intended to justify the ungodly. Man having then broken the law, cannot be justified by the law. And why? Because men cannot fulfil the demands of the law. The law, then, cannot justify the sinner, because it is weak. But that weakness is not *in* the law itself, for the law is perfect, but *in man*, who, because of the weakness and depravity of his nature, cannot satisfy the demands of the law.

But what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God provided that that might be done. And this he effected by sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, that he might satisfy all the demands of the law in our room, that thereby the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. Now the demands of the law are perfect obedience and full satisfaction. But this could not be rendered by man in his lost state. For were he even able to fulfil the precept of the law, he was still bound over to eternal death. Infinite justice demanded an infinite satisfaction?

God then sent his Son to deliver us from the demands of the law as a covenant. And he did not send him empty, but fully qualified. It was necessary that he should be sent and authorized to do the work of redemption, and that he should be qualified for doing it. Both these, then, the apostle brings to view. God sent his own Son. And here is the manner or form in which he sent him, "in the likeness of sinful flesh." He was not made sinful flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh. For had he been sinful flesh he could not have effected the object of his mission. For then he would have owed satisfaction for himself, and all his service would have been an abomination to the Lord. But it behooved him to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh, that the precepts of the law might be fulfilled and the demands of justice satisfied in that very nature which had sinned.

"As the children, then, were partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is the devil; and

might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." For seeing he did not take hold of angels in order to redeem them, but took hold of the seed of Abraham; "therefore it behooved him to be made in all things like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

Not only was he sent in the likeness of sinful flesh—not only did he assume our nature that he might be capable of fulfilling the law to which we owed perfect and perpetual obedience; but he was also made sin, or an offering for sin. Hence saith the apostle, "He gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice unto God for a sweet smelling savor." This was done that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. The righteousness of the law, that righteousness which the law required of us and behooved to be fulfilled in us, before we could be free from condemnation, consisted in conformity of soul to the law of God—conformity of life or conduct to the law of God, and full satisfaction to the infinite demands of justice, offended by the breach of the law of God. That the object then for which Christ came might be accomplished—that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled, it behooved Christ to be holy in his human nature, to be righteous in his life, and to make satisfaction to law and justice by yielding himself a sacrifice for sin. This he did. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; he was without sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. But although he knew no sin, yet was he made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. "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." He bore our sins in his own body on the tree, for the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. He made his soul an offering for sin—gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law, himself being made a curse for us. And all this, says the apostle, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." But how fulfilled in us? The same way in which Christ was made sin for us. For, as he, to redeem us from the curse of the law, came under the curse of the law, so that the law's demands on us were reckoned demands on him, so his fulfillment of all its demands are reckoned ours. He assumed

the debt of his people; his payment, then, of that debt discharges them. Thus is the law magnified and made honorable. All its demands are fulfilled; it has nothing more, then, to demand of those who are in Christ Jesus. As a law of life and death they are freed from it; for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Thus is not only the law magnified and made honorable, but every perfection of God is illustriously displayed. Infinite wisdom devised the plan with such propriety and suitableness, that the whole harmonized without a jarring jot, in giving all glory to God and being all good to men. Almighty power executed the plan in opposition to all obstacles which might present themselves, either arising from the malice of devils or the inveterate passions and prejudices of man depraved. His holiness is displayed in giving his Son to redeem men that they might be holy, a peculiar people, zealous of good works. His justice, in refusing to justify the sinner without a propitiation, and in inflicting the most dreadful punishment on his own dear Son, when charged with the sins of his chosen ones, and in freely justifying them through that righteousness which he hath wrought out in their name. He was set forth for a propitiation through faith to declare his righteousness, that God might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Shall we mention the goodness, the mercy, the grace and the love of God as displayed in this plan of deliverance from the condemnation of the law? Language would fail to describe—thought would fail to conceive of this glorious display. We shall leave it to you who have felt the horrors of a state of condemnation; whose hearts have shuddered and whose souls have trembled at the apprehension of impending wrath; and who have seen the terrors of hell, as fiery billows, roll beneath you; and have been plucked as brands from the burning, and as victims from the jaws of the yawning gulf; with such we would leave it to form some faint conception of the ineffable goodness, of the unparalleled mercy, of the unbounded grace, and of the highth and the depth, the length and the breadth of that infinite love which is gloriously displayed in this plan of deliverance.

By this plan of deliverance, then, nothing is lost to the honor of God, but all his perfections glorified; nothing is lost to the dignity and demands of the law as a covenant, but all its demands are fulfilled, both as it regards precept and penalty; it is magnified and

made honorable. Its demands, then, being satisfied, man is delivered from it as a covenant of life and death, and placed under it as a rule of life in the hand of the Mediator. There is, therefore, no condemnation to them who are *in* Christ Jesus, for they are not under the condemning law. And being in Christ Jesus, they are new creatures, led by the Spirit of God working sanctification in them—working in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Hence they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Thus is the holiness of God further displayed in making it one part of his plan by which he brings his children to glory, to redeem them from all iniquity and to purify them unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love.

Thus, my friends, have we endeavored to unfold to you the happy privilege of those who are in Christ Jesus, and the wretchedness of those who are not in Christ Jesus; the manner in which they come to the actual enjoyment of this privilege, and the ground on which this privilege proceeds.

From this subject, then, we learn the *greatness*, the *fulness*, and the *suitableness* of that salvation which God has provided for sinners. It is a great salvation to be saved from this condemnation; it is a great happiness to be brought to this state of justification—to a state of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ—to the present possession of eternal life—to the heirship of an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. It is a full salvation in which everything is provided for our deliverance—for our happiness, and for the security of that happiness. Those who are *in* Christ Jesus, are not only delivered from condemnation and brought to a state of justification; but they are freed from a liability to the former and irrevocably fixed in the latter. There is *no* condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus; there *can* be none; all the demands of the law are fulfilled in their name. Its condemnation has fallen on their Surety; he has borne the curse, that he might redeem his people from the curse. And he died not in vain. The accomplishment then of the object of his death (and his counsel shall stand) requires that those for whom he died be freed from condemnation. God has now become the God of their salvation, and every perfection of Jehovah is now engaged in their defense, and in the promotion of their spiritual welfare. Blessed the people are whose God Jehovah is.

But deceive not yourselves. You are told here who they are, who enjoy this blessedness. They are *in Christ Jesus*. They are those who, from a sight of their need and of the authority of God calling them in the Gospel, have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel. They are those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and have taken him to be the end of the law for righteousness—who have renounced all their unrighteousness, and counted all loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, that they might be found in him, not having their own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is by faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

Then examine yourselves. Are you in Christ Jesus? have you believed? have you taken him for wisdom, for righteousness, for sanctification and for redemption? Many of you will no doubt say, We hope we have. Do your works evidence your faith? Those who are *in Christ Jesus*, walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature. And his walk will be compatible with his nature. He is led by the Spirit of God; therefore he walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. He may step astray, but he will not be permitted to walk astray. Faith is an operative principle and produces good works. Faith which does not work by love is a dead faith, and the hope founded on such a faith is the hope of the hypocrite which shall perish. Therefore examine yourselves.

What is the result of your examination. Are there any here whose conscience bears witness that they are *not* in Christ Jesus—that they are yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. To such we are bound to declare, ye are prisoners under sentence of condemnation—ye are condemned already, because ye have not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. But it is my privilege to declare unto you that ye are prisoners of hope. Salvation is this day offered unto you. Christ Jesus, and in him all the fulness of grace and glory which God has provided for his people, is this day set before you. What do you want? Is it deliverance from condemnation and all its woes, and to be brought to a state of peace with God, and to the enjoyment of all the blessings of the new covenant? Here it is in Christ Jesus. “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that

believeth." In him is all fulness laid up. Take him then, and in him all the fulness of grace for the supply of all your wants. He is to be found in the Gospel publication of the covenant of grace. This law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus is the means by which God frees sinners from the law of sin and death. Paul says it has freed him; and it will free you, if you will receive it and all that which it offers.

Doubt not of your warrant to believe in Christ Jesus. The offer of God is your sufficient authority. "Unto you, O man, I call and my voice is to the sons of men." "And he that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." And do not stand back through a sense of your inability to believe. Your duty and your privilege is to essay believing, in humble dependence upon the grace and strength of Christ. And his promise is, "My grace shall be sufficient for you, and my strength will I perfect in your weakness."

But to such as are already in possession of this blessedness, what shall we say? Do you need your privilege portrayed before you? Need we descant on the works of wonder, of mercy, and of grace which God has done for you? Do not your hearts dilate with emotions of love, of gratitude and joy, on the remembrance of the unparalleled and the unmerited goodness of God to your souls? Manifest, then, that love and that gratitude by a walk and conversation becoming the Gospel; evidence your thankfulness by adorning the doctrine of God your Savior in your walk before men. Show forth the praises of him who hath called you from darkness to his marvelous light. Improve that Gospel by which you have been delivered from the law of sin and death—improve the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ for the destruction of the body of the sins of the flesh—honor and glorify God your Redeemer by walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Are any timid and fearful, and afraid to take this comfort to themselves? Do they lean on Jesus, trusting in the Lord and staying themselves on their God, and yet do they walk in darkness and have no light? Why do you fearing doubt? "Fear not," saith Jehovah, "I am with you,—be not dismayed, I am your God; I will help you, I will strengthen you, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness." "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" "It is God that 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 then shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Amen.

**NOTE.**—The Rev. John Pinkerton was born Oct. 20, 1797, in Abbeville District, S. C. His parents emigrated from Ireland in 1791. In Ireland they belonged to the Secession Church, and on removing to the United States joined the Associate Reformed, of which the father was long a prominent and active Ruling Elder. In 1815 the family emigrated to Preble Co., Ohio, and John with them, and settled in the bounds of the Hopewell congregation under the pastoral care of the Rev. Alexander Porter. In the spring of 1821, the subject of this notice graduated at Jefferson College, Pa., with the honors of the institution and the honors of his class, being one of the contesters in the exhibition, and receiving the credit of having read the best essay. He studied Divinity under the care of the First Presbytery of Ohio, and under the special direction of the Rev. A. L. Porter. He was licensed by the First Presbytery of Ohio, Jan. 1, 1823. Being afflicted with a cough and symptoms of pulmonary disease, he traveled South, and labored for some time in the bounds of the Southern Synod. Having returned into the bounds of his own Presbytery, and labored with much acceptance in the churches, he was ordained to the office of the holy ministry, August 11, 1824, and died near Mansfield, Ohio, the 20th of the following October. His death was felt to be a great loss to the Church. At that time we had but few ministers to meet the wants of the churches scattered over an extensive country, and but little prospect of increase. Besides, Mr. Pinkerton was regarded, and justly, for we knew him well, as a young man of more than ordinary promise. He had a strong clear discriminating and accurate mind, and possessed a striking force of character. Had he lived, he doubtless would have been a leading man in the church. But, as often occurs with such, the Master called him early to a higher sphere.

J. C.

## S E R M O N   X X I I I .

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### LOVE INCONSISTENT WITH FEAR.

BY REV. GEORGE STEWART,

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“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment.” 1 *John*, 4: 18.

THE penman of this epistle was the disciple whom Jesus loved. And it appears from his writings that he had drunk deep into his Master's love. This he everywhere studies to illustrate and enforce. He shows its origin, and insists much upon its practice. He places before us the great example after which ours is to be formed, and argues the necessity of it as an evidence of our being partakers of the love of God. He demonstrates that there can be no love to our fellow-man that is not founded upon love to God; and that all pretensions of love to God are false and deceitful, where there is not love to our fellow men. In the passage before us, the apostle lays down a principle illustrative of the nature of this love, and which at the same time affords data to determine whether we possess this love. The principle he lays down is, that this love is inconsistent with fear; and consequently, if we be under the influence of this fear which the apostle designs, we are not partakers of this love. In illustrating this text, we shall

I. Speak of the nature of this love.

II. Speak of the fear which the apostle says is not in love.

III. Inquire how this love casteth out fear.

I. The love mentioned in the text is different from the natural affection which one sinful creature may have for another, which prompts him to many acts of kindness. This affection, although it may answer many valuable purposes, scarcely deserves the name of love—

especially when compared with this of which the text speaks. Nor is it that admiration and respect for excellence which are often to be found in men estranged from the grace of God. But it is a reciprocation of the love that God has bestowed upon the sinner. It is a gracious principle in the heart, by which the affections are drawn out to God. In its most general acceptation, it is a disposition to do good to the object beloved. But none who have suitably reverential ideas of the great God will, for a moment, suppose that we can do him any good. We can not add to his enjoyment or happiness, and therefore he can not require of us a disposition to do so. But the love of the creature to the Creator, or the love of man to his God, is a complacential delight in him, in which he finds his supreme enjoyment. This love is founded upon the excellency of the divine character. This appears altogether amiable and entitled to the highest regard; and the soul that possesses this love, appropriates the language of the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon the earth whom I desire besides thee." In comparison with this excellence, that of the creature dwindles into nothing. Here is found, in the highest perfection, all that is amiable, all that is noble, all that is praiseworthy in the creature, when it is only in an imperfect degree.

But we should give a very imperfect account of this love, and mistake its nature very much, were we to suppose that its exercise terminated upon the majesty, or amiableness of the divine character, abstractly considered. It is our duty and our blessedness to include much more than this in the grounds of our love. We are to love God not only for what he is in himself, as our Creator, but also for what he has done for us as our deliverer from wrath. Every Christian knows that he has forfeited the favor of God; that he was obnoxious to his curse; and that he must have sunk down into the anguish of death, had not God interposed to deliver him. In order to deliver him from his merited death consistently with his justice, he has seen him executing that strange work, from which the sun hid his face; when the heavens put on sackcloth, and all nature seemed convulsed: he has seen him thrust the sword of justice into the heart of his only and well-beloved Son, and thence to open a fountain to wash him from his sin: he has seen him exchange, as it were, the tender relation of the "Father of mercies," for the more forbidding one of the inexorable judge, and execute a work which

filled heaven with admiration, earth with dismay, and hell with fear.

But when he remembers that this was done for him, to deliver him from the wrath and curse of God; to open a channel for the communication of blessings to him; when he beholds God in Christ reconciling the world to himself; when he reads that God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—“God commendeth his love to us in that when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:” and of Christ “He loved me and gave himself for me” —“He gave himself for me that he might redeem me from all iniquity and purify me to himself”—“Although he was rich, yet for my sake he became poor, that I by his poverty might be made rich;”—when he contemplates such proclamations of love, how deep must be the sense of his obligation; and how high must his breast swell with emotions of love.

Besides, when he views God as the God of promise—of exceeding great and precious promises, which cover all his wants in this world and the next, and which in Christ Jesus are yea and amen; and finds that his God has taught him thus to argue—“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for me, how shall he not with him freely give me all things;”—he cannot ask a stronger argument for his love: and if there be in his breast a single spot of sensibility, it must be excited to the highest pitch. Thus the consideration of what God has done for him, added to the infinite amiableness of his character, constrains the Christian to love, to reverence and adore him. He is convinced that it would be the highest ingratitude to withhold from such a being his supreme love; and being assured that he has a personal interest in all this excellency and love, he rests in his love with a delightful complacency. Hence a confidential repose in him, and a studied imitation of all his imitable perfections: for love must produce its like; and it is impossible to love an object without endeavoring a conformity to that object: and this conformity will be in proportion as the qualities it possesses are supposed to be amiable. Hence also must arise a careful watchfulness against sin; sincere obedience to God’s will; a tender regard for his honor, delight in his remembrance, and a desire to be with him.

These are the necessary effects of true love. Even among the

creatures we find much of this. Take two men whose friendship for each other is very warm: or take an individual of each sex in whose breasts this tender and affectionate regard—this principle of love—exists under its legitimate restrictions; it shall not require long inspection of their conduct, to discover how cautious each shall be to avoid everything that would offend the other—how solicitous to please—how jealous of the honor, and faithful to maintain the good name of each other—what pleasure in the remembrance of the absent, at least how much the thoughts are so employed, and how anxious the expected meeting.

And shall man act thus toward his fellow-creature, who at best is but a frail sinful mortal; but withhold this tribute from his God? If he be a *Christian*, he cannot. Nay, those who are partakers of this love of which we speak, must, and do express it in such acts. They are watchful against sin, because it is offensive against the holiness of God. It is that abominable thing which he hates, and they will hate it too. They are studious to please him by obeying all his will. They regard his honor and his name above all other things; of these they are jealous, and these they defend. Their holy souls are grieved when they hear these blasphemed; and to them the remembrance of his name is dear. The time of their absence from the object of their love is tedious. Faithful to their charge while here they *are*, but they had rather be with Christ who is to them the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. Thus, viewing God as their friend, they love him: and under the influence of this love they are prepared to do and to suffer everything to which he may call them. And thus actuated by a supreme love to God, this must evince itself in acts of kindness and love to their fellow men. It is impossible that love to God should be unaccompanied with love to our fellow men, especially to the Christian; because, besides the express command of God, there is in every Christian the same cause of love as in the Deity himself, though not in the same degree of perfection. Every Christian bears more or less the image of God upon him. He is a mirror in which much of his excellency is seen, and from which many of the rays of his glory are reflected. And it is impossible for him who loves God supremely, not to love his image where ever it is found; and just in proportion as the image approaches the original, must the Christian's affection increase for him who bears it. This is the

love which in its exercise toward our fellow-men, "Suffereth long and is kind; which envieth not; which vaunteth not itself, nor is puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Such being the nature and properties of this principle; so different from anything we see among men who know not the gospel; so divine in its acts, and so salutary in its effects, that we could scarcely mistake its origin were the Scriptures silent on the subject. But they are not. They reiterate the divinity of its origin. It is nothing less than the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. It is the reciprocation of that love which God has exercised toward the Christian. This diffuses a principle of love throughout the soul; and molds it into its own image. This draws out the soul in love to God and men, and forms in it a noble generosity which elevates it above all those little considerations which interrupt the friendship of the world. "We love him, because he first loved us.—Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to die for us.—I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee, saith Jehovah." And every exercise of this love, whether it be toward God, or toward the man who bears his image, is neither more nor less than this influence, these drawings of the love of God. So that the love of God toward the Christian, is both the origin and the exemplar of that love which he is required to exercise. Hence is the love of God so often used as an argument with the Christian, to love God and his brother. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Beloved if God so loved us we ought also to love one another." Such is the love of which the apostle speaks, and such are its blessed effects. In this love the apostle says there is no fear, but it casteth out fear.

II. What is this fear which this love casteth out? This is our second inquiry. It cannot, in the first place, be a fear of committing sin and falling under guilt. This fear is inseparable from this state of imperfection. So long as the Christian life is a warfare, so long

shall he have cause for this fear. This love, under the influence of which he now is; neither changes the nature of sin, nor its contrariety to God's holiness. Sin in the child of God is as much sin, as in the child of the devil, and even more sinful, because it resists his Spirit and his grace; and as there is not a man living that doeth good and sinneth not; as there is no supposable condition in which the Christian can say he is out of the reach of sin, neither is there any time when he can be delivered from the fear of committing it. He bears in his own bosom a root of bitterness, and his life is a perpetual conflict to keep that from rising up in thick luxuriance, and choking all that is good, all that is peaceful, all that is holy. "If we say that we have no sin," saith this same apostle, "we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." And as all sin and come short of the glory of God, so all must fear its guilt. Guilt is inseparable from sin, being the connecting link between it and punishment: and even the Christian is not exempt from that which in its own nature is really punishment. Sometimes he loses the light of his Father's countenance, and is left to go mourning in sackcloth: sometimes he brings upon him his chastening hand, and he is made to drink deep into his cup of judgment. "If they forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." And thus, in the agony of his spirit he is often constrained to cry out with the Psalmist, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned; have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions: hide thy face from my sins and blot out all mine iniquities: Cast me not from thy presence; and take not thy holy Spirit from me: restore to me the joy of thy salvation." "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand?" This is the language of a soul who has lost the light of God's countenance, and exposed himself to his displeasure because of sin: and surely every one who is capable of such a lamentation because of the effects, must be afraid of the cause. It must be so; and just in proportion as the love of God is operative upon his soul, will be the dread and abhorrence of sin; and the abhorrence of himself when he falls into it. The perfections of God are set against it; and he whose heart

is molded in any measure into those perfections—so long as he is liable to be overtaken by sin must be afraid of it. Nor is it anything better than the ravings of a madman, or the impudence of fanaticism, to pretend that the love of God raises any one above such a fear. Where there is not this fear, there is no love.

Nor is it that high and reverential regard of God, which is often spoken of under the name of fear, that is here intended. This is a gracious affection of the soul, and is peculiarly characteristic of the child of God. It evinces itself in a peculiarly tender regard for his honor, in carefully avoiding everything that would provoke the eyes of his holiness, and in a solicitous attention to everything in which he takes pleasure. In this respect, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It is by this fear that men depart from iniquity and hate evil. It was the honorable testimony of the angel of God, to Abraham when his faith was put to that strong test of offering up in sacrifice the child of promise: "I know that thou fearest God," "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God.—But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days which are as a shadow: because he feareth not before God." And "I will put my fear in their hearts, saith the Lord, that they shall not depart from me." This fear, then, includes in it, the whole of Christian obedience and reverence. It is the gift of God's Spirit, and cannot be where there is not love. It is indeed, a fruit of love, and when the love of God is most plentifully shed abroad in the heart, this fear will rise to the highest pitch. When the Christian is most powerfully drawn by the cords of love—when this divine principle is poured like a flood into his soul, and it is brought by the Spirit of adoption into the nearest access and sweetest fellowship with God—when all that is tender, all that is peaceful, all that is divine is let into the soul, then the heart swells with the most reverential awe: then the Christian would not offend his God for ten thousand worlds. He views him as his own father—his gracious and merciful father who is entitled to all the gratitude and devotion of his heart; and his greatest grief is, that he is capable of sinning against so much goodness and love. But this is not the fear of which the text speaks; and would to God such a fear was much more prevalent. But this fear is inconsistent with love, for love casteth it out. It must therefore be



That slavish fear which fills the mind with misgiving and repulsive thoughts of God. That bondage of spirit which is inseparable from the absence of his favor. The sinner beholds something of the greatness and the majesty of God, as the God who taketh vengeance upon the offender, but he sees nothing of the grace and benignity of his character as a sin pardoning God. The cause of this is guilt. His own conscience testifies that he is guilty before God, and passes the sentence of condemnation against him. The law of God also comes into his heart with its curse, and fills him with terror and dread. Let him turn his eyes whatever way he may, he sees nothing that can relieve him. The law is broken; its curse is suspended over his head and ready to be executed: he beholds God offended, and all that is just, all that is true, all that is mighty in God is arrayed against him. He is a rebel bound over to merited punishment, and the execution of that punishment is only suspended, perhaps, that it may come with tenfold severity. His conscience also is filled with remorse; it accuses within, while the law condemns without: and its accusations often fill the soul with horror, and sometimes drive it to despair. He stands self-convicted at the tribunal of God, and has no other expectation than that the curse of the law will be inflicted. Its threatenings fill his soul with horror; any views he may have of the attributes of God only aggravate that horror; because he knows that there is a controversy between God and him, and his end must be to perish.

The fear, then, which is here spoken of arises from two things. 1st. The sense of the guilt of sin upon the conscience without any assurance of its atonement; and 2d, A view of God as bound, by the necessity of his nature, to punish sin. That this account of the matter is just, is evident from the context, which affords three arguments in support of this view. 1st. The general design of that love of God which he has bestowed upon the Christian, or that about which it was in a peculiar manner concerned. This is expressed in the 10th and 14th verses. The great expression of this love was his sending his Son; but the especial design of that mission, and that about which the love of God was peculiarly concerned, was, that Jesus Christ should be the Savior of the world, (verse 14th,) and the way by which he should save the world, was by becoming a propitiation for sin, (verse 10th.) He was set forth that he should be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, for the remission of sins;

that he should be the mercy-seat at which the apostate rebel might meet with his God and commune with him about sin. Now it is very evident that the apostle in this discourse speaks of the love of God under this precise view—i. e., that it has a direct and immediate respect to the pardon of sin; and it is equally evident that when the reciprocation of that love on the part of the sinner is spoken of, it must have an immediate respect to his sin as pardoned:—its guilt, by which he was bound over to suffer the penalty of the broken law, removed. Although this love may, and certainly does, extend much further in its subsequent actings, yet it is evident that this is the first, and in the apostle's view, the principal thing about which it is here concerned; for if we do not admit this, we shall make this love as it is in the Christian, very different from its great exemplar, by supposing its immediate exercise to have respect to a different thing.

Our second argument is from the 17th verse; in which the apostle informs us that this love has an immediate respect to something which carries the mind forward to a day of general retribution. This can be nothing but the guilt of sin. It is guilt that makes men afraid to meet God. It is the testimony of the conscience—that the man who doeth such things is worthy of death, that fills the soul with dread, and causes it to shudder at the thought of an approaching judgment. And it is not possible that there should be boldness or a holy confidence in the prospect of such a day, when guilt reigns in the conscience. Nothing can give a man boldness or confidence in the prospect of being arraigned at the tribunal of God, but that which assures him that every cause of condemnation is removed. But this love of God does give him this assurance. It brings peace into his conscience, and quiets all his accusations. It bears testimony to the reconciliation of God; assures the soul that its sin is pardoned—that the guilt by which it was bound over to the judgment of the great day is absolved, and thus he is not afraid of meeting his God—although he is his judge. He can look upon that day when he shall be called to give up his account in the presence of an assembled universe, not only without dismay, but with a modest boldness and humble assurance that he shall not be cast off.

Our last reason is that which the apostle assigns in the text—"because fear hath torment." The word rendered torment has also a

respect to a condemnatory sentence. It is properly that punishment which is inflicted upon any one who is condemned by a judicial process. Thus the issue of that whole judicial process which is to be conducted by the Son of Man when he shall appear in his glory and sit upon his throne, as it respects the wicked is, "and these shall go away into everlasting punishment."—which is the same word that is here rendered *torment*. The apostle Peter tells us "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished"—i. e., to receive that punishment to which they shall be consigned by the judicial sentence of God, in that day when he shall discriminate between the righteous and the wicked. When Peter and John were seized and examined before the Sanhedrim for preaching, through Jesus, the resurrection of the dead; we are informed that they forbade them to speak at all or to teach in the name of Jesus; that they endeavored to terrify them by threats; and thus let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them. There is doubt that these people which composed this grand tribunal, were sincerely disposed to inflict exemplary punishment upon these bold defenders of the truth, who dared to obey God rather than them, but they had nothing upon which they could pass a sentence of condemnation with any show of reason. In each of these places, the word rendered punishment is either the same as the one here rendered torment, or a derivation from it. Oftener it does not occur in the New Testament; and in all these it has a respect to that punishment which is awarded by judicial process. And such is the force of the word in our text. It has a respect to that condemnatory sentence which the conscience of the sinner passes upon himself. The law of God has passed a sentence of condemnation upon every sinner. In his own heart is erected a tribunal where conscience sits as judge, and reiterates the sentence of condemnation.

It is very true he often bribes his conscience to silence; but whenever it does speak, its language is, Guilty, guilty. Hence the sting of remorse; the perplexing thought, the awful foreboding of death. To such a man, his whole life is nothing but a "fearful looking for of judgment." It is the curse that is suspended over his head: It is the curse brought home to his conscience, that fills his heart with fear. As the sentence of his conscience is but the precursor and the pledge of that of his judge; so the torment of his heart is only

the precursor and the pledge of the torment of the damned, after that judgment is given. The curse preys upon his soul: it drinks up his spirits. He beholds, when he looks at all, the perfections of Jehovah arrayed against him—his hope is gone—despondence fills his soul. As often as he looks into his heart, he finds anguish and perplexity. He is a guilty rebel, bound over by the sentence of a righteous Judge, to merited punishment, and there is nothing but the forbearance of the Judge that keeps him from being given over to the executioner, who shall inflict that punishment without abatement. This is the torment of which the text speaks; and it is the fear that hath this torment that is not in love—that is inconsistent with it—that love casts out.

III. We proceed, therefore, to our last inquiry—i. e., how this love casts out this fear? We have in some measure anticipated the answer to this question, by our consideration of the nature and effects of this love: however, the method in which we propose to treat the subject, requires us to be more particular. Both in their origin and their effects they are different. Fear arises from viewing God as our enemy: love, from viewing him as a friend. The effect of fear is to fill the mind with distrust and to drive it from God. Its language is, The furthest from God the best. It shuts out the thoughts of him as much as possible; and when such do intrude, they are treated as unwelcome guests. This fear keeps the man in bondage: he views God as a hard task-master, and never thinks of him but as demanding service and standing over him with the rod. He hears the voice and trembles at it. But when the love of God takes possession of his breast, it changes this state of feeling and these views. It is the love of a father, which has an operative influence in producing love in the bosom of the son. By this the sinner is drawn near to God: these are the cords by which he is sweetly constrained. This divine principle takes its seat in the heart and produces its image there. It has a direct influence to expel fear from the soul: and it does so by the testimony that it bears to the change of the sinner's condition. His fear arose from the consciousness of guilt; and this guilt bound him over to death. But this love carries home to his heart a testimony whereby he "knows that he has passed from death unto life." It evidences to the Christian that he is at peace with God; it quiets the accusations of conscience; and gives him confidence toward God. It assures him that he is no longer a servant, but a son: and because he

is a son, God has given him the spirit of his Son whereby he cries Abba—Father. He has not received the spirit of bondage to fear; but the Spirit of love; and that Spirit bearing witness with his own testifies that he is a son and an heir with Jesus Christ. This divine principle diffuses a holy joy over his whole soul. It introduces him, as it were, to the Father of mercies, and is the medium of a blessed intimacy between them. It creates a delight in his presence, and excites a longing desire for closer communion with him; and no moments of his life are so replete with joy as those that are spent in his immediate presence. He views him as his reconciled Father in Christ, and admires the perfections of his nature, in conformity to which consists his blessedness.

Whoever is possessed of such a love can no more doubt of his interest in God's favor, than he can doubt his own existence. It carries conviction to his conscience that God is his friend, and that his fidelity is pledged to conduct him safe to heaven. And why should he be afraid! He is translated out of the kingdom of darkness, and received into the kingdom of grace. For him there is no more condemnation, because he is in Christ. All the malice of men and the opposition of hell shall never be able to pluck him out of his Redeemer's hands. His conscience is purged from guilt,—and all the accusations of his own conscience and of his greatest enemies shall never invalidate the plea that he is able now to plead.

We do not say, however, that the Christian never has upon his conscience a sense of guilt. Did we say so, we should surely lie against the truth, and offend the generation of the righteous. Whatever may be their condition, it changes not the nature of sin. The holiness of God requires that sin be punished; and the recognition of its merited punishment is, by a constitution of God, inseparable from a consciousness of sin. This is the sense of guilt which is even more pungent in the believer than in the unbeliever; and in proportion to the intenseness of his love will be the keenness of his sense of guilt. But although he may have a keen sense of guilt which may fill him with sorrow, with shame and remorse; which may cause him to loathe and to detest himself; yet his thoughts have not the same respect to the issue. This love has brought him to the mercy-seat. If he sins, as he surely does, he knows that he has an Advocate with the Father. Realizing this comfortable truth, he comes to the mercy-seat to confess his sins and to obtain their forgiveness; "for if we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive

us our sins"—is the gracious promise, and this guilt is not permitted to prey upon the conscience. Being washed off almost as soon as it is contracted, by the renewed application of that blood of sprinkling which cleanseth from all sin, its stain is not permitted to sink deep or to spread. And this is a very important part of the life of faith. Daily repentance and daily application of the Redeemer's merits is the only way to keep the conscience easy. And sins unrepented of, or obstinately persevered in, shall most assuredly set the conscience upon the unpleasant task of condemnation; but this happens only when the Christian has fallen into some great temptation, and when the love of God has become languid, and almost inoperative. But when this love is operative, it is a security against that fear which hath torment. Afraid the Christian is—but he is afraid of sinning, to offend his God. Sin the Christian does—but his sins do not fill him with terror, but bring him to the mercy-seat. Unworthy he knows himself to be, but he deals not with God on the footing of his own worth. "Father! I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," is language which he shall often have cause to appropriate to himself; but his plea is mercy. His life being hid with Christ in God, and the love of God reigning in his heart, he follows his Divine Master in much weakness, but in much sincerity. He has a hope that maketh not ashamed, because this very love is shed abroad in his heart; and this hope shall carry him triumphantly out of all his trials, and lift him above every fear, until it be consummated in fruition, and leave him among the ransomed in his Father's house, beyond the possibility of incurring his displeasure.

**NOTE BY THE EDITOR.**—The Rev. George Stewart, author of the above sermon, was for years the Pastor of the Associate Reformed Church in Bloomingburg, Sullivan county, New-York. He was an acceptable preacher and useful pastor. He was indefatigable in his Master's work; and exposure of himself in it, it was supposed, induced the disease of which he died. There was no minister of his day, in that region of country, more generally beloved, or whose death was more generally lamented. Many of the older inhabitants, we have learned, still remember him with great affection. There was about a year in which he was not able to attend to his pulpit, and during this time his pulpit was chiefly supplied by the neighboring ministers—I am told there was none of his own denomination nearer than New-York—and thirty-three of them, though Bloomingburg was then but a small country village, attended his funeral.

He died in September. A. D. 1818. His end was peace. During his confinement he was frequently heard to repeat the triumphant language of Paul, commencing—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." &c.

## SERMON XXIV.

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### THE UNION OF CHRIST AND BELIEVERS.

BY REV. SAMUEL FINDLEY, JR.,

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“I am the vine. ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.” *John 15: 5.*

THE closeness and intimacy of the union subsisting between Christ and believers, and the important mutual relations growing out of this union, are represented in the word of God by apt and forceful illustrations. Jesus Christ is represented as a Bridegroom and the Church as his spouse, to teach us the freshness and vigor of their mutual love. Christ is designated their Husband, and believers his married wife, to represent the pureness and constancy of their first love—the pledge, on the part of Christ, to provide for, nourish, and protect his beloved companion, and to share with her his inheritance and his crown; and, on the part of believers, their pledge to love, honor, and obey him; and their indebtedness to him for spiritual sustenance, and for a participation with him of heavenly glory. Christ is designated a King, and believers his subjects, illustrative of his right to their service, his authority over their consciences, and their safety in him. To present the Lord Jesus Christ most clearly to our faith, as the Author of salvation, and the entire dependence of the believer upon him, for his spiritual being, he is represented as the foundation, the *sure* foundation, the chief corner-stone; and believers as lively stones built upon him, a spiritual building. 1 Cor. 3: 11. 1 Peter, 2: 4, 5. Jesus Christ is elsewhere designated the Head, and believers the members of his mystical body. As the Head, he is the wisdom, the light and the glory of the Church, his body; he directs the motions of the individual members; in him is centered all sensation, all life. As members of his body, believers

are taught their inferiority to, and dependence upon Christ, their union and communion with one-another, the diversity in the duties or offices performed by the members severally, and the intimate love and sympathy which should characterize their association with each other. "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."—1 Cor. 12: 25, 26.

Believers' dependence upon Christ, not merely for converting but for sanctifying grace, and the necessity of continued actings of faith upon Christ as the source of divine life, and the utter helplessness and entire sterility or spiritual barrenness of the soul, while ununited to Christ, are beautifully, clearly, and graphically portrayed before the sanctified imagination of the Christian, by the figurative language of my text—"*I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.*"

Here are taught,

I. The intimate union and mutual relations of Christ and believers.

II. That the fruitfulness of Christians is dependent upon their constant union with Christ.

III. The necessity of this union.

I. *The intimate union and mutual relations of Christ and believers.* Christ is here presented in the similitude of a vine, of which believers are the branches. As a vine possesses not the stateliness of the cedar or the oak, in external appearance, but by its fruitfulness honors God, and cheers the heart of man, so Christ in the view of the world, is as a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness, and no beauty that he should be desired; but by the fruit of his mediation he has exalted and magnified the glory of God, and communicated to the heart of the believer that "joy and peace in believing, which the world can neither give nor take away." Jesus Christ, who is the Lord of glory, the Creator and sovereign of the illimitable universe, does not reveal himself by similitudes of earthly grandeur; but having for our sakes become poor, he chooses from the natural world a rock, a foundation stone, a shadow, a vine, as the most apt representations of his character; possessing in himself a beauty not apparent to the eye of the unbe-



lieving multitude—an excellency—a virtue, and omnipotent power to save the soul, only appreciated by those who are united to him by faith.

The root of this vine is the divine nature of Christ in hypostatical union with his human nature, from which proceeds the stock of his mediatorial person. Through this stock the vivifying influence of the life-giving Spirit of God, ascends from the root, and flows throughout all the ramifications of the branches, covering them with the evergreen foliage of a lively profession, and with the abundant fruits of righteousness.

Of this vine believers are the branches; and no more intimately are the branches of a vine united to their parent stock, than the faithful are to Christ. But they are not the natural branches of this vine. Their parent stock is a dead stock, bringing forth the grapes of Sodom, and the clusters of Gomorrah. From this parent stock have all believers been severed by the axe of the law, and by grace have been taken up and engrafted into the true vine. And as a grafted branch becomes identified with the tree into which it is grafted, so believers become identified with Christ. They are one with him—one in spirit, one as to their animating principle, one as to their participancy of glory—for the Spirit of Christ influences them, the life of Christ animates them, and the glory of Christ is their unalienable inheritance.

This engrafting into, or union with Christ the true vine, divine grace accomplishes by working faith in the heart of the believer. This faith indissolubly binds the soul to Christ, and constitutes that heavenly cement by which the engrafted branch is held in union with the living vine. Thus engrafted into the stock, the branch draws all its vitalizing and fertilizing sap from the root of the vine, and it is thus identified with the vine itself as to its source of vitality. The same undying principle that animates Christ, the vine, animates the branches. Hence Christ says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." And the apostle, feeling the force of this same truth, says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The undying life of God that dwells in the root of this vine gives vitality to the stem, and foliage and fruit to the branches. Nor is it possible for this intimate union to cease to exist. It cannot cease on account of the inefficiency of faith. This engrafting cement by which the union was effected, is the preparation of God's Spirit. Its function

is to draw from the stock vitality for the branch, and thus it ever contributes to the life, growth and strength of the branch. Nor can any enemy sever the engrafted branch from the living vine, for God is the husbandman—omnipotent in his power—infinite in his tenderness and love—and ever watchful over his heritage. “He that keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.”

The *mutual relation* subsisting between Christ and believers could not be more clearly exhibited to the view of the saints, than it is by this similitude. As the vine gives to the branches all their life, their foliage, and their fertility, so Christ gives to believers their life, their freshness, and their fruitfulness. As the branches are dependent upon the vine for their existence and support; so believers are dependent upon Christ for spiritual being and sustaining grace. He is the independent, self-existent God—believers are dependent creatures, leaning upon his arm, and supported by his power. As the branch cannot subsist while lying in the dust severed from the vine; so neither can the believer exist for a moment, as such, were the vital union, by which he has become one with Christ, destroyed.

While thus life is communicated by the vine to the branches, the communication of glory is mutual. That Christ is the glory of the Church all admit. “God forbid,” says the apostle, “that I should glory save in the cross of Christ.” The believer regards Christ as the source of *all* his glory, for he it is that has rescued his soul from destruction, has purchased for him a name more illustrious far than that of earth’s most favored sons, and has prepared for him a place in the mansions of bliss. In his triumphant death he has destroyed the saints’ last and most deadly foe, and given them victory over the grave. “Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The crown of unfading glory that shall be worn by saints throughout eternal ages, will be cast before the throne of Immanuel by whom it was purchased; and the entire praise of their salvation will redound to Christ, who redeemed them to God by his blood, and made them unto their God kings and priests.—Rev. 5: 9, 10.

The Church is also the glory of Christ. As a vine stripped of its branches is neither beautiful nor fertile, but is regarded as worthless, so Christ’s mediatorial person and work would be wanting in every essential element of declarative glory, were he, as the true vine,

stripped of all his branches. It is the verdant foliage, and the thick-hanging clusters of the ripening and ripened grapes, that beautify the branch, and give worth, excellency and glory to the vine. So likewise is the Church the glory of Christ; it is the fulness of him that filleth all in all. How meager, how worthless, how vain would have been the mediatorial work of Christ, had it never resulted in the salvation of a single soul! Had the Son of God endured the curse of the law—heaven bled—and the Spirit of God, with all his omnipotence, striven to bring the sinner to God, and yet all in vain—oh! how bereft of glory would Christ the true vine appear to be, towering in his height to heaven, and in his depth penetrating beneath all worlds, and yet without a branch—without a single cluster of grapes to evidence existing life! It is the fertile branches which constitute the peculiar glory of the true vine. Christ is satisfied when he looks upon the living branches, bending with the weight of the clusters of the fruits of righteousness, and sees in their fertility that the travail of his soul has not been in vain. He regards them all as trophies of his grace, brands plucked from the burning by his omnipotent arm, and he is glorified. And especially, on that great and terrible day of the Lord, when he shall appear with all his holy angels, to judge the quick and the dead, will he be glorified in all his saints. Then shall this true vine, having arrived to the full maturity of its growth, appear before the assembled universe, in all its glory, thickly set with innumerable branches, evergreen with foliage almost concealed with the exuberant clusters of the richest grape.

II. *The fruitfulness of Christians is dependent upon their constant union with Christ.* “He that *abideth* in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth *much fruit*.” It is not enough that we *once* act faith upon Christ, and then forget our profession, if we would be fruitful Christians. The branch that brings forth fruit must *remain* united to the vine. The vital fluid which proceeds from the root of the vine, must circulate uncorrupted through the branch, else it cannot bring forth fruit in due season; so also must the vital fluid of the living vine, Christ Jesus, circulate through the heart of every believer, else he cannot be fruitful in every good word and work. In us, that is in our flesh, there dwelleth no good thing, nor would deeds of holiness or fruits of righteousness ever be developed in our life and conversation, were our spirits not the

habitation of the sanctifying Spirit of God. But such high honor alone pertains to those, who by virtue of their constant union to Christ, are ever drawing from him supplies of heavenly grace, and have dwelling in them the Spirit of the Savior.

Fruitfulness in holiness is a necessary result of the Christian's union to Christ, for not only does he abide in Christ, but Christ abides in him. "He that abideth in me, and *I in him.*" Christ himself dwelling in the Christian, so as to constitute his life, and to identify himself with the Christian, necessarily makes him fruitful. What are acts of holiness, or fruits of righteousness, but the phenomena of the inner life,—the development of the active and acting principle within. But the inner life, the active and acting principle within the Christian—that dictates every holy thought—that inspires every sanctified emotion—that excites every renewed desire—is the pure uncorrupt life of Christ. This life can in no other way develop itself, than in acts of holiness or fruits of righteousness; these are its only phenomena, and he therefore that abides in Christ must be fruitful. Neither is there any other source of fruitfulness to the Christian. If he rely on his own worth, and if in his own strength he attempt to please God, by deeds of charity, piety or devotion, he will utterly fail. He may bring forth fruit but it is not fruit unto God, it is deceptive. Like the waxen peach, its life-like tinge may deceive the uninitiated; but no sooner is the test applied, than its lifelessness and deceptive character are detected. Faith must first unite to Christ, and to this fundamental grace must be added virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity; and then, and not till then, will the Christian be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

III. *The necessity of this union.* "Without me ye can do nothing," or still more literally, "severed from me ye can do nothing." It is not here predicated of all men out of Christ, that they are incapable of action, that they are no longer free and responsible agents; but that they are incapable of spiritual well-doing, destitute of spiritual life, or as the apostle expresses it, "dead in trespasses and sins." The branch that is severed from the vine, may, for a time, retain the freshness of life, and the verdure of its foliage, but soon, very soon, it will wither and die. It is separated from its source of vitality,—the sap of the vine no longer circulates through its pores, nor do its respiratory organs, the leaves, any longer

perform their appropriate functions, and its withered appearance and brittleness of texture, give evidence that soon its organic structure will be destroyed. It is true, that while lying on the ground or resting upon a projecting branch of a contiguous tree, some poisonous vine may entwine itself around its lifeless form, and thus cover it with leaves, and clothe it with apparent life, so that the casual observer may mistake it for a living, fertile branch; but when the frosts of winter come, blighting the freshness of the poisonous vine, the lifelessness of the fallen branch will be clearly developed.

So it is with the professed Christian united to Christ. He may preserve, for a time, the verdant leaves of a lively profession, he may bend beneath the weight of many good works, which he falsely calls fruits of righteousness; but these are not the growth or development of the vital principle within him, for he is destitute of spiritual vitality; they are the native growth of that poisonous vine "*hypocrisy*," which entwines itself about so many professors of the religion of Jesus, giving them the appearance of vitality, whilst *in reality*, they are dead—covering them with clusters of fruit, but not the clusters of the true vine—thus deceiving even the under husbandman himself, who often mistakes them for living branches. But no sooner do the frosts of age come, and the dreaded summons of death, than their true character appears, and their destiny is fixed. "The hope of the hypocrite shall perish." Then shall the dried, withered and lifeless substance of the fallen branch, the false professor, be consumed by the wrath of God, and the fire of his indignation, in the day of his fierce anger. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Then will he realize the truth of this declaration, "*without me, ye can do nothing.*" But it will be an *awful* realization, to be repeated with increasing conviction, in every pang of pain, proceeding from the constant gnawing of the worm that never dies.

Separated from Christ, *unconverted sinner*, you must remain in the gall of bitterness, and the bonds of iniquity, without God, and without hope in the world. Life's pathway, to *you*, leads through a wilderness abounding in spiritual foes—impenetrable by the vitalizing-soul; regenerating rays of the Sun of righteousness—ever chilled by the cold and wintry blasts of the night of death—a wilderness skirted, at the terminus of your journey, with ruin's fath-

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*Rev. Wm Davidson  
Rossville*

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## CHURCH.

CONSISTING OF

SERMONS BY THE MINISTERS

OF THE

FOUR SYNODS OF THAT DENOMINATION.

EDITED BY

REV. JAMES PRESTLEY.

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### BACK NUMBERS.

SEVERAL applications having been made for back numbers of both the Pulpit and the United Presbyterian, we are sorry to say that we are not able to supply all the volume of either. Should we have the number applied for we will send it cheerfully.

Now is the time to procure and send on new subscribers. We will observe the terms announced last volume. We request the friendly offices of our friends—in and out of the ministry.

P.

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### THE FIRST PRESBYTERY OF OHIO

MEETS at *Springdale Church* (Rev. A. Aten's) on the *first Tuesday of April* next, at 2 o'clock, P. M.

*Clerk.*

omless gulf. And thither are your footsteps leading you, and ere long, the billows of that fathomless gulf, in all their tremendous, ruinous height, will rise before your view, and, if not speedily rescued, will sweep you away in their fury. To whom shall you apply for deliverance—whither shall you fly for safety? Christ replies to these important inquiries, “without me, ye can do nothing.”

“I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me.” “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved; and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” The same truth is taught by the apostle. “There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”

“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.” A way of escape has been provided for sinners, through riches of divine mercy in Christ Jesus. The provisions of grace, ratified and sealed by the atoning blood of Immanuel, are abundant and free to all. Those who accept of this proffered salvation will sit forever enthroned with Christ in glory; while those who refuse divine mercy, and remain ununited to Christ, must sink in the depths of ruin’s fathomless abyss, and drink the red wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God forever.

From this subject, infer,

1. *The glorious destiny of the Christian.* We have seen that the union of believers with Christ identifies them with Him in life, in interests, and glory. They become fellow-heirs with Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. What that inheritance is we know not now, but we shall know hereafter, when the crown of righteousness, which Christ the righteous Judge shall give, shall be put upon our head. As Christ is exalted to a seat at the right hand of God, so are believers destined to be exalted at his right hand, and to be made kings and priests unto God. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” Glorious destination—to be fellow-participants with Christ, the Son of God, in the heavenly throne, and to reign with him throughout the boundless empire of the Great Jehovah! To look out upon the vast, the limitless universe of the great Creator, the outer courts of which, alone, we have yet been privileged to contemplate—to travel throughout immensity, and to behold

revolving worlds, and systems of worlds, around their central suns, in beautiful and complicated harmony, perform their orbital rounds—to look upon all these as but *part* of that inheritance which pertains to such as are united to Christ—is it not a glorious destination!

Believers shall also be conformed to the glorious image of Christ. “As for me,” says the Psalmist, “I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” Ps. 17: 15. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” 1 John 3: 2. And what is it to be like Christ? This question we cannot fully answer, until we shall know as we are known, and see as we are seen; for now we see through a glass darkly, but then, face to face. This much we do know, that the body of Christ in his exalted state, is transcendently glorious. Faint glimpses of this glory have been afforded us, in the mount of transfiguration, on the way from Jerusalem to Damascus, and in the secluded isle of Patmos. And what created being could gaze upon his glorious body as here revealed? The beloved apostle who once familiarly leaned upon the bosom of Christ, at the table, fell down before him as one dead, when, in vision, he beheld him in the glory of his exalted state. And such is the pattern to which our resurrectionized bodies shall be conformed: for Christ himself “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself.”—Phil. 3: 21.

2. *The importance and necessity of watchfulness on the part of the believer.* “Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.”

3. This subject appeals to the unconverted sinner, to seek *now* and *forever* a saving interest in Jesus Christ.

## S E R M O N X X V .

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### THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN.

BY REV. THOMAS L. SPEER,

*Formerly Pastor of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Congregation  
of Cross Roads, Pennsylvania.*

“These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also.” *Acts, 17: 6.*

THAT there is a Supreme Being who upholds and governs the universe, mankind generally acknowledge. But when they are informed that the Son of God assumed human nature and suffered and died to ransom millions of fallen creatures from endless woe, in consequence of the depravity of their hearts they are inclined to disbelieve. This truth, although confirmed by evidence the most convincing, has been rejected by many. Even the Jews, the peculiar people of God, when Christ Jesus appeared in our world, raised their voices in opposition to him. The unbelief of this highly favored people is remarkable indeed. Notwithstanding they enjoyed the light of the Old Testament Scriptures, which afforded them all necessary information relative to the Savior's advent, yet when he appeared they would not acknowledge him to be the promised Messiah. The remarkable circumstances which accompanied his birth failed to convince them that a Savior was born. The numerous miracles which he performed during the period of his public ministry, evidenced beyond a doubt the divinity of his person, yet they accused him with being a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. Yea, they even charged him with blaspheming against God, and casting out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils. The events that occurred during the time of his crucifixion proclaimed to a guilty world that he who expired upon the cross was an extraordinary character; and his resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven, afforded

indisputable evidence that he who was born in Bethlehem and cradled in a manger, and at last crucified as a vile malefactor, was the Son of God, the glorious person of whom the prophets made frequent mention, and to whom the ceremonial institutions pointed as the Savior of sinners; yet in view of all this the Jews did not believe. The Lord of glory they rejected, and declared that they would not have him to rule over them. And his apostles who were employed in proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation to a lost and ruined world, they buffeted on every hand. Wherever they went they suffered much persecution from these great enemies of the cross of Christ. Various were the charges which they brought against them to prevent them from spreading the knowledge of a crucified Savior. But these men, intent upon the work to which their Master had called them, notwithstanding the opposition with which they met, journeyed from place to place to teach sinners of mankind the way that leads to the joys of the celestial paradise, where they would unite with the hierarchy of heaven in praising King Immanuel throughout eternity. And when Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, in company with Silas, came to the city of Thessalonica, the Jews becoming enraged at them, addressed the chief rulers or magistrates, saying, "These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also." What! the apostles of our Lord turn the world upside down! Surely they were not chargeable with having invaded the different nations of the earth with an army of men. They did not stir up a spirit of rebellion amongst the people, overthrow kingdoms or empires, or devastate cities or towns wherever they went. This was not their employment. To publish the good news of salvation they were commissioned by none other than the king of heaven; and if, in discharging the duties of their office, they turned the world upside down, as the Jews were pleased to say, certainly the change which they thus effected was most advantageous, and promoted the eternal interest of immortal souls.

That we may understand this subject, we shall proceed to inquire,

I. In what sense the apostles of our Lord were chargeable with turning the world upside down. And should we justify them in their conduct in this particular, we shall then endeavor to show,

II. How this change or revolution is now to be effected; and,

III. We shall offer a few remarks relative to the duty of those engaged in thus evangelizing the world.

I. According to this disposition of our subject, we are in the first place to ascertain, in what sense it may be said the apostles turned the world upside down. And that we may have a correct view of the change which they effected, it is necessary to advert to the dispensation of the Jews. It is well known to every attentive reader of the Bible, that for several hundred years before the Messiah's advent, the light of divine revelation was confined to the descendants of Abraham. The posterity of this patriarch constituted a particular people who were separated from the rest of the world, and to whom the sacred oracles were committed: on account of which the other nations of the earth were destitute of any information respecting the worship of the true God. The Jews being thus distinguished, having their synagogues to which they resorted on the Sabbath to engage in divine service, and their temple or tabernacle established in some suitable place, where, according to the injunctions of their law, they assembled three times a year to offer unto God praise and thanksgiving for his loving-kindness exercised towards them—the Jews, we say, in consequence of these distinguished privileges, were given to boasting, and thought that they would never be treated as the Gentile nations around them. But the economy which restricted the privilege of worshiping God to a particular people, was established to endure only for a time. The rites and ceremonies and sacrifices peculiar to the Jewish dispensation were to receive their accomplishment in him who was constituted priest forever after the order of Melchisedek, and the Gentiles to be introduced within the limits of the Church to enjoy the high privilege of engaging in divine service. And the time when this important change was to take place, according to the Old Testament prophets, was when the Messiah would appear in our world, suffer and die, and rise again from the dead. This period having arrived, the King of glory appears, clothed in human nature, and through his sufferings and death, and resurrection from the dead, abrogates the Jewish economy and introduces the Gospel dispensation in its stead; under which mankind of every nation, kindred, and tongue, are elevated to the exalted privilege of occupying a place in the Church of God, and of enjoying those blessings necessary to qualify them for the heavenly mansions. Glorious change! The privileges of the Gospel are now extended to all nations of the earth. The proclamation of this truth, however,

excited animosity in the minds of the Jews, and the idea that the Gentiles, with whom they had not been accustomed to associate, were raised to an equality with them in point of privilege, through the blood of a crucified Savior, they rejected with abhorrence. To King Messiah they would not acknowledge obedience, because he appeared unto them altogether different from what they anticipated. But notwithstanding they discovered neither form nor comeliness in him, and turned away from him, he was nevertheless the promised seed, the everlasting God clothed in human nature, and who through his obedience and death ransomed millions of fallen creatures from future and endless woe.

From this exalted character, shortly before his ascension to the celestial mansions, the apostles received their commission to go forth into the world and proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to every nation under heaven. And, accordingly, after they had received the gift of the Holy Ghost, by which they were enabled to speak a variety of languages, they went into different regions to teach the way of restoration to the favor of God through a crucified, but also risen and exalted, Redeemer. To the Jews first, as they had been directed, they preached the Gospel. Their synagogues they entered on the Sabbath and reasoned with them from the Old Testament Scriptures, showing that according to the prophets the promised Messiah had appeared, suffered and died, and risen again from the dead, on account of which another and more glorious dispensation was introduced. This was a subject on which they delighted greatly to dwell. Although they were exposed to the reproaches of a wicked world, often scourged and imprisoned by their enemies, yet wherever they went they did not hesitate to proclaim deliverance from wrath to come, through him who expired upon the cross as a malefactor. And thus preaching, they effected a change in the world so great that with propriety it may be said, they turned the world upside down. From place to place they journeyed, and urged upon sinners the necessity of faith in the blood of Christ, that they might enjoy the benefits of his atonement, and in the end obtain an everlasting rest for their souls. Every favorable opportunity of extending the boundaries of the Redeemer's kingdom they embraced, and in a very short time, notwithstanding the deep rooted prejudice of the Jews, and the animosity which they manifested to the introduction of the new dispensation, the various sys-

tems of philosophy which they had to encounter, and numerous other sources of opposition to the diffusion of the Gospel, they succeeded in establishing churches in various parts of the world. In Jerusalem, the city of David the monarch of Israel, and the place to which the Israelites came yearly to celebrate their festivals; in the capital city of the Roman empire which extended over a considerable part of the then known world; in Corinth, the metropolis of Greece, a place not less remarkable for immorality and crime, than for wealth and affluence; in Ephesus, celebrated for the magnificent temple of Diana; in the region of Galatia, and in many other places of which there is mention made in the Acts of the Apostles, they proclaimed the Gospel and organized Christian societies.

Great, indeed, was the success with which the apostles' labors were crowned. In opposition to the combined forces of a world under the direction of the prince of the infernal regions, they preached the Gospel, and directed multitudes to the fountain opened up for sin and for uncleanness. Nothing deterred them from prosecuting the work to which their Master had called them. Through fires of cruel and heart-rending persecution they passed—on fagots and chains they smiled—in cold and dismal dungeons they were often inclosed, and there reclined without a murmur—yea, in view of death itself, and that, too, of the most fearful kind, they moved on triumphantly, and rejoiced to publish the good news of salvation, through an all-perfect Savior. Many of the Jews they were instrumental in persuading that their dispensation with all its rites and ceremonies was done away in Christ, and to vast numbers of Gentiles they proclaimed that, through the death of Messiah, the handwriting of ordinances which was against them was forever blotted out; and in thus attending to the duties of their office, they extended the knowledge of a crucified Savior throughout a considerable part of the world, and directed sinners of different nations, kindreds and tongues in that way which lands its travelers safely in the celestial paradise.

It was in view of the success which accompanied the apostles' preaching, previous to their entrance into Thessalonica, that the Jews addressed the language under consideration to the chief rulers; yet their efforts to interrupt these men in the work to which they had devoted themselves, were fruitless. They went on in view of



perils of every kind, and raised their voices in opposition to every form of worship except that required under the Gospel dispensation; and in a very short time, as we have remarked, they were instrumental in converting multitudes, both of Jews and Gentiles, to the religion of Jesus. This was, indeed, turning the world upside down. A great, a wonderful revolution they effected. The vain systems of philosophy which were prevalent when they commenced preaching the Gospel, the idolatrous worship of the Gentiles, and many other pernicious customs, began to disappear, and the Christian religion to exercise its influence in many parts of the world. This is the sense in which it may be said the apostles evangelized a large portion of the human family, or in other words, turned the world upside down. And in bringing about this change no one can say that they were chargeable with any improprieties. Had they propagated the Christian religion by force, they would then have been chargeable with acting inconsistently with the spirit of the Gospel. But this they did not do. The success which attended their ministry was not owing to the terror of war, the force of arms, or any other device of man. To the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, whose work it is to put the sinner in possession of the benefits purchased by Christ, the rapid advancement of the Gospel must be attributed. This was the great, the all-conquering influence which gave efficacy to the apostles' preaching. To this power alone must be assigned the honor of bringing into subjection to King Jesus the proud and stubborn Jew, together with the vain and idolatrous Gentile. The disciples of our Lord would have preached in vain had not the word come unto those who heard it with the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit. It was this invisible power accompanying their ministry that rendered it effectual in the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. The apostles, then, were not chargeable with immorality in publishing the Gospel of peace and reconciliation. They acted in conformity with the will of God, and in so doing wherever they went their labors were blessed. Hence it was that the Jews reported them as having turned the world upside down. But notwithstanding they preached with so much success, and notwithstanding many hundred years have passed away, during which the ministers of Christ have been employed in proclaiming salvation to a guilty world, much yet remains to be accomplished. Asia, the home of millions

of human beings, is shrouded in moral darkness. The vast multitudes which inhabit that extensive country, are groping their way through moral gloom, wandering in the thick mazes of uncertainty, tottering upon the mountains of superstition, and at last passing off the stage of existence altogether ignorant of the way that leads to glory. Africa is yet to be brought under the influence of the Gospel. This is a land indeed over which demons howl and desolation reigns. And many parts of our own beloved country, together with South America and the various islands of the seas are yet to be evangelized, or, to use the figurative language of our text "turned upside down."

We need not, however, detain to give you a detail of the vast numbers that are perishing for lack of knowledge. A majority of you are, no doubt, familiar with the fact that millions of human beings in our day are passing down the shores of time, ignorant of him "who is the way, the truth, and the life."

But how are these regions of the globe to be brought under the influence of the Gospel? A discussion of the second part of our subject will, we presume, satisfactorily answer this question.

II. To show how the human family everywhere are to be Christianized, we need only refer to the example which the apostles have placed before us. They journeyed into various parts of the world to proclaim salvation through a crucified Savior, and if the ministers of Christ would follow their example, they must go into different regions and preach faithfully the doctrines of the glorious Gospel of Christ, and then urge upon sinners of mankind the duty of obedience. It was the invariable custom of Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, first to exhibit the doctrines of Christianity, and then to urge the duties of the religion which he preached—or in other words, first to propose the principles of faith, and then to inculcate the duty of obedience. This is manifest from his epistles, for the doctrinal parts generally stand before his exhortations to practical duty. Believing the example of this apostle worthy of imitation, we remark, that to evangelize the world, the ambassadors of the cross should go into all parts and exhibit the sublime doctrines of the Christian religion, and then enforce the duty of obedience. If they would thus preach to every nation under heaven, through their instrumentality the gloomy mists of ignorance and superstition which now brood over many lands would soon disap-

pear, and the kingdom of Christ extend over every habitable part of the earth.

But here it may not be improper to specify some of the leading doctrines of the Christian religion, which the ministers of Christ should teach sinners of mankind. And in the first place we remark, that they should exhibit to their view the true character of God as revealed in the inspired word. We are there taught that this great Being is infinite in all his perfections, that he is self-existent, independent, and omnipotent, that he is the Creator of all things visible and invisible—that he fills immensity with his presence, and views with his all-seeing eye, everything throughout the boundless region of space—that he is from everlasting to everlasting—that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, without variableness or the least shadow of turning—and that he is infinitely holy and just in all his ways, of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity. These perfections of Deity should be deeply impressed upon the minds of a people; for it would be a strange course of procedure to urge upon them the duty of worship before they had obtained any knowledge respecting the character of him whom they were under obligations to serve. But further, as all mankind are depraved by reason of sin, and, in consequence of this, justly stand exposed to the wrath of a sin-avenging God, so they should be taught their true character and the way of restoration to the favor of their offended Creator, that they may seek for mercy and pardon. Human depravity is indeed a subject to which the minister of Christ should frequently advert. In the sacred volume we are informed “that all are become filthy—that there is none that doeth good, no not one,” that “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned.” Such being the condition into which the human family is brought by the fall, the faithful ambassador should by all means endeavor to convince them of their true character. Without a knowledge of sin and the fearful end to which it ultimately leads, no one would supplicate the Most High for deliverance from the wrath to come. This is a point of very great importance, and demands serious consideration.

And after having illustrated and confirmed the lamentable truth that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, with propriety, the interesting subject, that Christ Jesus is the Savior of sin-

ners, may be introduced. In describing the fearful condition into which mankind are plunged by the disobedience of their first father, there is nothing calculated to please or attract the mind. But deliverance from wrath to come through the mediation of Christ Jesus is a subject on which the minister of reconciliation can dwell with the greatest delight. This exhibition does not always fail to impart consolation to the soul, raise the mind of the sinner from earth to heaven, and cheer it with the prospect of uninterrupted felicity throughout eternity. With emotions of joy he can proclaim to a guilty world that the Lord of glory, by his assumption of human nature, and sufferings and death, satisfied divine justice in behalf of rebellious man. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Great and marvelous condescension! Infinite, unbounded love! The eternal Son of God leaves for a time the heights of celestial blessedness, veils his glory, sojourns for a period of more than thirty years on earth, and at last expires upon the cross to ransom immortal souls from future and endless woe! Surely the rebellious cannot view this glorious personage upon Mount Calvary, accomplishing man's salvation, and refuse to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!" When they consider that through their apostasy they became servants of sin and stand exposed to the torments of a never-ending perdition, their souls must swell with emotions of joy and gratitude on account of the provision which their offended Creator has made, and in wonder and astonishment cry out,

"O love divine, harp lift thy voice on high!  
 - Shout angels, shout aloud, ye sons of men,  
 And burn our hearts with the eternal flame!  
 Our lyres be eloquent, with ceaseless praises!  
 O love divine! immeasurable love!  
 Stooping from heaven to earth, from earth to hell—  
 Without beginning, endless, boundless love."

But the ambassador of Jesus in unfolding the wonders of redeeming love, should be careful to urge upon the sinner the necessity of faith in the blood of atonement, that he may enjoy the purchased felicity. Christ Jesus has made atonement for sin, but without faith in his blood, pardon cannot be obtained. In vain need any of the fallen sons or daughters of Adam expect to enjoy the

favor of God, either in this or the world to come, without the exercise of that faith by which we are informed, in the inspired word, the just shall live. Hence the importance of explaining the nature and office of faith, that the transgressor, through a firm reliance upon, and cordial reception of Christ Jesus, may mount up as on eagle's wings and contemplate, with ineffable delight, the glories of the heavenly paradise. And as all who become interested in the Savior, who are constrained by divine grace to receive him as their Redeemer and everlasting portion, trust in no less a personage than the mighty God, so the believer's security is a subject which demands attentive consideration. "My sheep," said the Lord of glory, in the days of his flesh, "hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." What an inexhaustible source of consolation must these words, which were uttered by the incarnate God, by him who rides upon the heaven of heavens and sways a scepter of uncontrolled authority throughout the universe, afford to the humble believer. The security of him who exercises faith in the blood of atonement is, indeed, in none other than him who established the heavens and settled the ordinances of the universe, and who causes every planet to revolve with perfect safety in its respective orb. This is the exalted person whom the minister of reconciliation must exhibit to sinners of mankind as the object of their faith. To him, he must invite them to come, and urge upon them the necessity of faith in his blood, if they would become pillars in the celestial temple, and unite with redeemed and unfallen creatures in an eternal anthem of praise in honor of the King of glory.

Thus we have specified a few of the leading doctrines of Christianity which the ministers of Christ should be careful to explain and teach to sinners. Others of equal importance might be mentioned, but time will not permit us to detain any longer on this part of our subject. Suffice it to say, in conclusion, that these, together with all other doctrines revealed in the word of God, the faithful ambassador must proclaim, whether sinners will hear or whether they will forbear, if he would act his part in evangelizing the world. Let, then, the inspired word be faithfully expounded in all lands, and a glorious change will soon be effected. The purposes of Jehovah relative to the restoration of the Jews, his ancient

and peculiar people, would speedily be consummated, and King Immanuel honored with their tribute of praise and adoration. Roman Catholic superstition, pagan idolatry, and the religion of the false prophet Mohammed, together with every other system of worship inconsistent with the Gospel, would soon disappear, and the kingdom of Christ extend even to the ends of the earth. In a word, should the ministers of reconciliation proclaim the Gospel faithfully in all lands, as we have said, how soon would those prophecies relative to Christ's millennial glory be fulfilled! Under such a happy state of things, the idols of the heathen would soon be demolished; the clamors of war be no more heard in this or in any other land; tyranny and oppression everywhere would cease; the innocent and unoffending race of Africans, who have for years smarted under the lash of their unfeeling masters, would be liberated and permitted to rejoice in that liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free. Yea, peace and harmony would prevail throughout every habitable part of the earth, and all kings fall down before the Lord, and all nations serve him; men be blessed in him, and all people call him blessed. Then would, indeed, be heard one universal shout, "Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth," and all classes of men cordially join in the ascription, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion, forever and ever.

III. We shall now proceed, in the third place, to offer a few remarks relative to the duty of those engaged in the important work of evangelizing the world. Great and powerful is the opposition with which the ambassadors of Jesus have to contend. Satan with all his infernal host opposes them on every hand. This great enemy of the Redeemer's kingdom, in days that are gone, exercised his influence to its extent, and would, if he had been permitted, have blotted the memorial of Jesus from the earth, and overwhelmed his followers in indiscriminate ruin. Various are the devices which this mighty opposer of the truth employed to accomplish his fiendish purposes. Sometimes he excited a spirit of persecution against the advocates of the Christian faith, and thus endeavored to weaken their confidence in the Savior; and at others, when they were least apprehensive of danger or innovations being made upon them, embracing this favorable opportunity, he sent forth his emissaries to

propagate what the apostle Peter would pronounce "damnable heresies." In these ways the prince of darkness has perplexed the Christian community. Throughout its length and breadth his influence has been exercised to a certain extent; and in the present day there are many abroad in the world under the direction of this infernal spirit, executing his will, in consequence of which the Church is presented to our view in a very confused and disordered condition.

Hence it is the incumbent duty of the faithful minister, not only to preach the Gospel, but also to raise his voice in opposition to error of every kind. The inspired volume is sacred. Its author is Jehovah, and he who has any respect for the character of this great Being must vindicate the sublime doctrines of Christianity. "Contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," is an exhortation which demands attentive consideration from every ambassador of the cross. Those, then, who go forth into the world, to proclaim the good news of salvation, should on every appropriate occasion warn the Christian community against giving any encouragement to such as have been justly called "corrupters of the word." If the world be ever evangelized, it must be by the faithful exhibition of divine truth. The holy religion of Jesus must be unfolded to all nations in its purity. In opposition to Popery and Mohammedanism and every other vain system of worship, it must be proclaimed. The ministers of Christ, in thus preaching the Gospel throughout the world would, in a short time, effect a very great change. They would not only be instrumental in favoring millions of human beings with the information which imparts consolation to the soul, and which is necessary to conduct the sinner "to glory and to God," but also in rescuing many from under the influence of that system of worship introduced by the false prophet, as well as in overthrowing the abominations practiced by a diabolical host of Roman priests. But further, it is the duty of ministers to exercise their influence to destroy that schismatic spirit which has hitherto pervaded, and which does now pervade the Christian community. The apostles went forth into the world united in sentiment, and in so doing no one had any ground to charge them with inconsistency. As a band of brothers they moved on harmoniously and engaged with one heart and one mind in the work to which their Master had called them. This unanimity should char-

acterize the ministers of Christ everywhere. If, like the apostles, they were of one mind respecting the sublime doctrines of the Gospel, their influence would extend further and wider. The world could not charge them with fostering a factious spirit. Under such a state of things the enemies of Christ would be silenced, and the Church "shine forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." It is, then, the imperative duty of the ministers of reconciliation, in evangelizing the world, not only to oppose error of every kind, but also to exercise their influence to restore and preserve the unity of the Church. But have the people, those to whom the Gospel is preached, and who have made a profession of Christianity, no part to perform in this important work? Are they to remain inactive, manifesting no interest in the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom? Or have the multitudes that are groping their way through moral gloom, no claims upon the Christian world? Does not their condition call loudly, to those who are taught in the way of salvation, for their assistance in favoring them with the bread and water of life? Yea, much depends upon their exertion: and the claims of the destitute are many and must excite the charity of every true Christian. It is the duty of ministers to devote themselves exclusively to the propagation of the Gospel; but how are they to go into different regions of the globe to instruct their fellow-men in things pertaining to godliness and life eternal, unless the professors of Christianity contribute liberally to their support? They who preach the Gospel must live of the Gospel. Through the liberality or contributions of the people of God, their temporal comfort must be promoted. It is altogether vain to suppose, that he who has devoted himself to the ministry can, without any assistance, direct his course to the benighted portions of the earth, to make known, unto those who are in the region and shadow of death, the way that leads to the mansions of felicity. We need not, however, dwell upon this Christian duty. You have no doubt considered it, and we trust feel yourselves under obligation to discharge it faithfully and cordially. Should we tell you that you are altogether indifferent about the heathen, and that you have not manifested any disposition to promote their eternal welfare, we would be charging you with acting contrary to the dictates of your own consciences. From your presence Sabbath after Sabbath in the house of God, and the atten-



tion which you have hitherto given to the spread of the Gospel, we would infer, that the world, so far as you are concerned, is turned upside down, and that you earnestly desire the inestimable blessings which you enjoy may be conferred upon your fellow-men. You must permit me, however, to say that there are some in almost every Christian society, who take no part in sending the good news of salvation to the destitute. But, my friends, what must we think of such professors of Christianity? Is it possible that an individual may be brought under the influence of the Gospel, and yet refuse to open the hand of charity, refuse to contribute a small sum to favor the destitute, refuse to exercise his influence to save immortal souls from endless woe? To that professor of religion who thus acts, we may address the language of the apostle John, "Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" But it may be said, This has reference to temporal benefits, and therefore cannot be considered as applicable in the present case. True, it has. But if such language may be addressed to him who refuses to afford temporal relief to his fellow-man, surely that person, who enjoys the light of the Gospel and refuses to contribute his mite to send it to the destitute, may be interrogated, "How dwelleth the love of God in you?"

The salvation of immortal souls is infinitely more important than temporal deliverance: and let us, as we are highly favored, be active in the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. And for our encouragement thus to act, we may rest assured that the blessing of heaven will rest upon us. Although we may meet with much opposition in prosecuting this important work, yet, through our feeble exertions, we may be instrumental in plucking many brands from the flames of perdition.

This is not an imaginary thought. You know that the faithful proclamation of the Gospel in time that is past, did not fail to exercise a moralizing influence, and cheer the mind with the prospect of joys unspeakable in the celestial paradise; and has not the preaching of the word produced this happy influence over our minds, and caused us to look forward with joy to that time when we shall enter upon a life of unclouded glory in the eternal world? If we are what we profess to be, our own experience affords indisputable evidence of the heavenly influence which the Gospel of Christ is

calculated to exercise over the human mind. And hence, in the conclusion of our subject, for our comfort we may remark,

That the sacred volume is what it professes to be; namely, a revelation from heaven. This truth infidels, with all the ingenuity they could command, aided by the prince of darkness, have labored to overturn, but all to no purpose. The very same Gospel which was proclaimed by the apostles of our Lord is now preached in different regions of the globe. For more than eighteen hundred years this system of priestcraft, as the infidel would say, has been preserved, and produces the very same influence now which it did at first. Over different nations of the earth it has the same happy effect. Surely that, the mere proclamation of which produces such an influence, and which in the days of the apostles caused such a change in the state of things that they were charged with turning the world upside down, is not to be regarded as fabulous. And can the infidel contrast those nations of the earth which are under the influence of the Gospel, with those that are destitute of it, and yet pronounce the Scriptures a spurious production? Can he behold the bright prospects, which the Gospel is calculated to inspire in millions of human beings, of everlasting joy and felicity, and yet deny the divinity of the Scriptures? Can he behold the heart-broken mother under the influence of the Gospel bow before God, and hear her call upon him in a transport of faith to save her son from the gambler's fate, or the drunkard's end, and yet be an infidel? Can he go to the chamber of sickness and see a fellow-being in the closing scene of life—can he see the features of the dying lighted up with the prospect of a joyful eternity and hear the lips exclaim, "I long to go and be with Jesus," and yet deny the divinity of the word which inspires this hope? Can he break this heavenly calm? Can he breathe the withering clouds of darkness and despair upon this morning of eternal felicity? Can he pluck the aspiring spirit from the portals of bliss and blast it with doubts darker than the mantle that covers the dead? Can he here, in the solemn presence of death, array his light of nature against the majesty, and glory, and power of the Christian's hope? No, he cannot. The attempt would freeze his nerves and blast him as a demon. The invisible power that animates all nature would sting his conscience, yea, sink him into hopeless, helpless, endless despair. Those bright prospects of future glory which the Gospel inspires in mortal man,

the infidel cannot erase; and surely that which produces such a glorious influence, which raises the mind from earth to heaven and cheers it with the prospect of inconceivable bliss in eternity, must be from heaven. This is indisputable evidence of the divinity of that Gospel which we are under obligation to send to the millions that are at this time shrouded in moral darkness.

And let us, my Christian friends, do what we can to favor them with the means of salvation. Let us not only contribute of our resources freely and cordially to hasten on the noble work of evangelizing the human family, but also entreat the eternal God to send forth many heralds of the cross, that that period may speedily arrive when the Gospel trump will be heard throughout the world, and people of every nation, kindred, and tongue enjoy that light necessary to direct them in that way which lands its travelers safely in the paradise of God. And in thus engaging in this great and important work, we hesitate not to say but that we may be instrumental, not only in favoring millions of human beings with that information which imparts consolation to the soul, and which is necessary to conduct them to glory and to God, but also in rescuing many from under the influence of that system of worship introduced by the false prophet, Mohammed; as well as in overthrowing the abominations practiced by a host of popish priests.

The high places of trust in our country, which are at this time occupied by those who disregard the King of heaven and his sacred institutions, and who order the affairs of the nation in that way which appears best calculated to accomplish their fiendish purposes, will then be filled by men under the influence of the Gospel, whose time and talents will be employed, not only to promote the temporal interest of the people, but also the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. Will the Lord of glory follow with his enriching blessing the preaching of his word, and inspire his people with a disposition to contribute liberally to aid in the advancement of his cause! Amen.

## S E R M O N X X V I .

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### JESUS, THE BELIEVER'S INVALUABLE TREASURE

BY REV. MARION MORRISON,

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“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he has found one pearl of great price, went and sold all he had, and bought it.” Matt. 13: 45, 46.

OURS is a busy world, its inhabitants ever seeking for something valuable. Land and sea are traversed, to gain the precious things of earth. The happy home is left behind—wife and children, father and mother, brother and sister, all are forsaken, at least for a time—the happiness of enlightened and civilized society is exchanged for that of banditti or the semi-savage—the dreary wilderness is traversed—hunger and thirst are endured—the dangers of the ocean are hazarded—the dreary hut or the cold earth becomes the abode, instead of the happy fireside and the comfortable dwelling—toil is endured from day to day under the scorching sun or the torrents of rain; and all this, that the glittering dust of earth may be obtained, and with the hope of becoming rich in this world's goods. But how often, during all this toil and privation, is the great treasure, the pearl of great price, forgotten or left out of view? How seldom does the riches of the eternal life enter the mind! How seldom does Jesus animate the soul!

The parable in our text is doubtless intended to illustrate the great value of the Gospel treasure. But while the Gospel is intended to be illustrated, it will certainly be no great departure from the design of the parable to refer it to Jesus Christ, the pearl of great price, since he is the author, the substance and the glory of the Gospel. Who instituted the Gospel and appointed holy men of God to proclaim it? Who gives it efficacy in winning souls from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God? None

else than Jesus. Whence does the Gospel derive its excellence and glory, except from Jesus, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world?" Hence, whatever of grandeur, of excellency, and of preciousness there is in the Gospel, is derived from Jesus, who is its author, its subject and its glory. The sweetest and most precious designation of the Gospel is, that it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whosoever therefore really and truly embraces the Gospel, becomes possessor of this most precious pearl, Jesus, his everlasting Savior. Notice,

I. The resemblance between Jesus and an earthly pearl.

II. How Jesus, this precious pearl, may be obtained.

III. The happiness of those who possess him.

I. The resemblance between Jesus and an earthly pearl.

Here I would remark, that while there is a resemblance, there can be no comparison. Jesus, the pearl of great price, so far exceeds anything, however costly, of an earthly nature, that it will be impossible to conceive the difference. The most costly pearl of earth will perish, whilst Jesus is an imperishable treasure to all who possess him. Time may roll away—old age may fasten on us—wealth may take to itself wings and fly away—the cold and unrelenting hand of death may sieze upon us and snatch us from this world and all its allurements and enjoyments; but still, if Jesus is possessed—if faith has fixed upon him as our inheritance, then we have an "inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away;"—a treasure which possesses none of the elements of decay,—a treasure which will never become defiled itself, and which will never defile its possessors,—a treasure which will never lose any of its beauty and glory; hence a treasure which is beyond comparison. But whilst Jesus may not be compared to an earthly pearl, still there are points of resemblance between them.

1. The pearl is of mysterious formation. It is a gem, obtained within a certain kind of fish, the pearl oyster, found chiefly on Eastern shores. Naturalists have been at a loss to account for its manner of production. In this respect it is a very fit emblem of Jesus Christ, in the mysterious production of his human nature, and the mysterious union of his human and divine natures. How our Savior was born of a virgin the wisest philosopher cannot comprehend; how his human and divine natures were united in one person, is far beyond the conception of the human mind. Hence the erroneous views which have been entertained with reference to our Savior.

Because man, with his limited capacities cannot comprehend the mysterious production of our Savior's human nature, it has been maintained, that his assumption of humanity was only in appearance;—that his attending to the ordinary duties of a man was only in appearance;—that his increasing in strength and wisdom was only in appearance;—that his going about and doing good to men was only in appearance;—that all his suffering, and his ignominious death on the cross were only in appearance.

On the other hand, owing to man's inability to comprehend how the human and divine natures of our Savior could be united in one person, many have denied his divinity. Supposing that he is really and truly man, they are unable to see how he can, at the same time, be God; hence all their ingenuity has been set to work to so torture the word of God, that its teaching may correspond with their erroneous opinions, and they have torn from our divine Savior that part of his nature, which entitles him to an equality with his Father, and by which he was enabled to create all things in the beginning.

We do not design here to enter into an argument to prove either the divinity or the humanity of our Savior, but would simply remark, that it is most absurd for persons to deny either, simply because they are unable to comprehend how the two natures are combined in one person. How many things do we see, in the natural world, which are beyond our comprehension. For instance, who can comprehend the nature of the union between the soul and the body? Who can tell how the mind, the *living, thinking, acting* part of man, so operates upon the body, that action results at *will*? Who can tell how the mind of man so acts upon the body, that when he wills to raise his hand, he does it,—when he wills to speak, he does it,—when he wills to stand still, he does it,—when he wills to move he does it? We all feel confident that the mind does thus act upon the body, but *how* it does it, we cannot comprehend.

Take another illustration from nature. Who can comprehend how light passes through a pane of glass? The wisest philosophers have been unable to solve this mystery. True, they tell us, that a ray of light will pass through glass when it will not pass through wood or stone, because the one is transparent and the other is not. But this is not solving the mystery. The inquiry naturally arises; Why is glass transparent? To this, the only answer that can be

given is, that it is transparent because the light passes through it. Here then is an incomprehensible mystery. But who would be so simple as to deny, that the light does pass through the glass, because he cannot comprehend it. Many other things in the natural world are just as inexplicable, and yet we never think of denying that they exist. Why then deny, either the divinity or humanity of the Savior, because we cannot understand how the two natures are united in one person?

There is a mystery here; something which man with his limited powers of mind cannot comprehend. Well may it be said, "Great is the mystery of godliness." In this respect, then, Jesus is fitly represented by an earthly pearl. But we would consider that individual a madman, who should cast a pearl away from him, knowing its value, because he could not comprehend its manner of formation. Why not consider that individual a madman, in a still higher sense, who should reject Jesus, the pearl of great price, because he cannot comprehend his nature? All the merchantman wishes to know is, that his pearl is valuable, and he carefully stows it away; and all that the true Christian wishes to know is, that Jesus, his precious Savior, is of infinite value, and he takes him as his incorruptable, undefiled and never fading inheritance.

2. There is a resemblance between Jesus and an earthly pearl, since both are precious and valuable? That pearls are something valuable, is evident from the language of the text. "Who, when he had found one pearl of great price,"—what a striking simile of Jesus, the sinner's Savior. Who can tell the worth of such a Savior? His value is incalculable. All titles, all similes, all calculations, all conception,

"All are too mean to show his worth,  
Too mean to set his glories forth."

Pass through the various grades of society—collect all the honorary titles, which have been invented to elate the pride of mortal man;—draw all out in living colors, and what will all these tell you of the value of Jesus? Pass from this world, where the most honorary titles are tainted with sin and corruption, and ascend to heaven, and there gather up the glorious title of angel and archangel of those who delight in daily ministering in the presence of the Most High God, whose characters have never experienced the least taint of sin. Apply these titles to Jesus: but what will they

tell of his honor, his glory, or his value? All creature titles are lost when applied to him.

But just as all titles are lost on him, so all similes will fail to set forth his value. True, he is here set forth under the similitude of a pearl, and in the preceding verse, under the similitude of a treasure hidden in a field. But such likenesses are only calculated to convey to our minds of limited capacities, some feeble conception of Jesus, the precious pearl. You may traverse the seas and oceans of earth ;—gather all the pearls, there to be found, into one immense storehouse ;—then pass from nation to nation, from city to city, from habitation to habitation, and as you pass, gather up the immense treasures of those nations, cities and habitations,—carry them all with you, (if you can conceive of such a work being accomplished) add all this incalculable amount of wealth to the vast storehouse of precious pearls, which in imagination you have already collected—liken Jesus to this, and after all you will convey to the mind but a very feeble conception of the believer's invaluable treasure.

Again ; just as all titles and all similes fail to convey to the mind a correct conception of the value of Jesus, so all calculations must fail to compute his worth. Pass again through the nations of the earth ; collect all the wise men of those nations,—select from them those peculiarly skillful in calculations,—set them to work day after day, year after year, and age after age ; and when they have been thus engaged generation after generation, until the closing scene of time has arrived, sum up the whole amount, if you can in imagination ; still all this would fall far short of being a true estimate of the believer's treasure.

If neither titles, nor similes, nor calculations, can set forth the true value of our blessed Savior, collect if you will, from the nations of the earth, those possessed of the most splendid imagination—those who have, in imagination, soared above the realities of earth, and pictured the grandest imaginary scenes ;—let them combine their most splendid imaginations, to present something glorious and valuable ; still they will fail to soar so high even in imagination, as to present the true value of Jesus.

Our Savior himself has used language setting forth his incalculable value. Says he : "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Here our Savior teaches us, that one immortal soul is of more value than the whole world of wealth,



and honor, and glory and renown. If then, one immortal soul, so far exceeds in value the wealth of the world, what must be the value of Jesus, who, by his death, purchased the redemption of the souls of the millions of the redeemed.

Think of the essential dignity, majesty, and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. See him crowned with all the dignity, and honor, and glory of the great Jehovah. See how, at his command, the universe is ushered into existence; see how he is glorified in being the upholder of all things; but above all, see how he is glorified in the redemption of fallen man from the bondage of sin and Satan. See how he who was rich, so rich that he could claim the universe as his own, "yet for your sakes became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Think of the glory and honor conferred on him by the Father, when he calls him his only-begotten and well beloved Son. Think of the glory conferred upon him by the holy angels, when they, having veiled their faces, "Cried one to another, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." But still, all this will not elevate your minds, so that you can properly estimate the worth of Jesus your Redeemer. Eternity alone can reveal the fulness of his value to the believer's soul. The true Christian may have some foretaste of his preciousness to the soul, in this life; but it is only when freed from the evils of this wicked and sinful world, with the soul fully sanctified, and the body glorified and "made like unto Christ's glorious body," that the fulness, and richness, and completeness of Jesus, as the sinner's Savior, is realized. Such is the resemblance between Jesus and an earthly pearl. They are both of myterious formation—they are both precious and valuable. Inquire,

II. How Jesus, this pearl of great price, is to be obtained.

If we cannot calculate the value of Jesus, as the sinner's Savior, —if the imagination cannot conceive his worth, an interesting inquiry arises in the mind; Is there any way in which this invaluable treasure may be obtained. Yes, sinner, Jesus Christ, invaluable as he is, may become your portion. Invaluable as he is he has given himself up unto death, that you might have life. Although he was rich, for your sakes he became poor, that you might become rich, —that you might have an everlasting inheritance. He is saying to you, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This rest which he is offer-

ing to give you, is in himself—it is freely offered to you as a treasure. He is saying: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life,” and this life is in Jesus. He is not only offering himself to you, but he is entreating you—he is condescending to plead with you to come and receive him. He has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” Hence Jesus, the pearl of great price, is offering himself freely to you all. His cry this day is, “Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man,” and his Spirit is striving with you, to induce you hear and accept this call.

But is some one saying: “If this be true—if Jesus is offering himself freely to me, without money and without price, why need I make any effort to obtain him as my treasure? I will fold my arms and wait God’s time to give me an interest in Jesus.” If there be one here, who is thus reasoning, let me assure you, my friend, that in this way you have no promise that you will ever receive Jesus as your portion. Although salvation is freely offered to you, yet God has appointed certain means for you to use, in order that you may obtain it, and it is only in the use of those means, that he has promised to bestow it. You must “strive,” agonize, earnestly contend, “to enter in at the strait gate.”

But more particularly, if you would secure Jesus, as your inheritance, you must,

1. *Diligently seek for Him.* The Christian is compared, in our text, to a merchantman, who went to seek goodly pearls. The merchantman has read or heard, that in a certain part of the world, these pearls may be found. He has believed this to be true. He has spent much in fitting out a vessel to go in search of them, and now, would he not be looked upon as a madman, if he should permit his vessel to move away from them, instead of going toward them? But he does not this folly. He is well aware that such a course would entirely defeat his object,—of enriching himself with this merchandise. The helmsman is directed to steer for a certain point. That point gained, the merchantman anxiously seeks for his expected pearls, and uses all diligence, that he may succeed in his enterprise.

The Christian is here likened to such an one; and if like him, he will go forth and diligently seek for Jesus, his precious pearl. By divine truth his solicitude has been awakened,—by it he has heard

of Jesus, the precious Savior of sinners—by it he has learned that he is naturally a lost and ruined sinner—by it he has learned, that he has rebelled against heaven, and deserves eternal punishment in consequence of this rebellion—by it he has learned, that he must appear before the bar of God to answer to this high-handed rebellion—by it he has learned, that he cannot answer to God for one of the thousands of his sins; and learning these things, he is ready to sink down in despair. But there is one other truth which he learns, and which buoys up his sinking spirits. He there learns that Jesus, the eternal Son of God, has undertaken the sinner's salvation—has undertaken to deliver him from going down to the pit; and learning all these things, from that book which is truth itself, does not the sinner act the part of a madman, when he remains careless and indifferent about securing Jesus as his Savior. If the merchantman, having heard of those pearls, would act the part of a madman, by being careless whether he sailed to or from them, how much more so the sinner. Is not Jesus more valuable than any earthly pearl? If so, what folly, what madness, for the sinner to remain at ease, indifferent about securing an interest in Jesus!

Just as the merchantman, having heard of the goodly pearls, diligently seeks for them; so, when the sinner has learned by the light of divine truth, that he is a sinner, and that Jesus alone can save him, there is kindled in his bosom a desire for this only Savior. He becomes anxious to know where he may find this Savior, and how he may obtain an interest in him. With all earnestness he cries out, "Men and brethren, what must I do." To the inquiry of such an one, the answer comes: You may find Jesus as he is *offered to you in the Gospel*, and you may become interested in him *by a true and living faith*.

But having thus inquired for Jesus until you are assured that he is to be found, as he is offered to you in the Gospel, and that he may become your Savior by faith; aided still further by divine truth, you will mourn over your sins, as something very offensive in the sight of God. And this mourning will not be a simple regret for sin, but a deep and heartfelt sorrow for it. There is a worldly sorrow for sin, and a godly sorrow for it. When you are brought to a proper sense of your sins, as being the nails which fastened the hands and feet of the Savior to the cross, and the spear which pierced his side;—when you contemplate what Jesus has done and

suffered for you;—when you remember how he left his abode of glory in the heavens;—how, “He who was rich, for your sakes became poor, that you, through his poverty, might be rich;”—how, “He, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”—How he bore the reproaches of men;—how he endured the temptations of Satan;—and how, as though earth and hell were not enough to be combined against the Lord of glory, heaven’s oceans of vengeance were poured out upon him, and caused him to cry out in the garden, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!” and on the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Remembering all these things, and remembering that all this was done and suffered for you, that your sins might be forgiven, can it be possible, that there is no sorrow in your hearts for these sins?

Thus enlightened, the sinner will not only earnestly inquire for Jesus, and deeply mourn for him, but he will also strive for some manifestation of him. He will diligently seek that Jesus be shed abroad in his own heart, that he may become more and more like him.

2. He who would obtain Jesus as his inheritance, must be *willing to part with all for him*. True, we can never, by anything that we can do, or by anything that we can give, merit Jesus, as our portion. Did we bestow all we possessed; nay, more, did we offer in sacrifice, thousands of rams, and tens of thousands of rivers of oil; did we give our first-born for our transgression, and the fruit of our body for the sin of our soul; all this would avail nothing toward purchasing salvation. Christ is God’s free gift to the sinner, and only as such can the sinner receive him. But there is another, and an equally consistent sense, in which we must part with all for him.

Is some one startled when I say, that we must be willing to part with all for Christ, this Savior who is offered to us freely in the Gospel? I do not mean that you must part with all the property you possess, and thus purchase a title to salvation. I do not mean that having parted with your means of subsistence, you shall go to the rocks of the mountains and caves of the earth, and there live as

did those thousands and tens of thousands of monks, who thus lived during the dark ages, and as many still live, in connection with the Romish Church. Such conduct is far from being pleasing to God. He has created you social beings, adapted to social society; and having thus created you, he designed that you should thus live. God, it is true, has a right to your property, and you should hold it all subject to his call, to be disposed of for his glory.

But especially should you be willing to part with everything selfish. All your self-righteousness must be cast from you as filthy rags, that you may be clothed with the white robes of the Redeemer's righteousness. All your self-merit must be renounced, that your entire salvation may rest upon the Redeemer's merit. All your self-love must be given up, that the love of Jesus may reign supreme in your hearts. All your self-confidence must be forever renounced, that you may confide only in Jesus, and him crucified. You must disrobe yourself of your self-approbation, that you may stand approved only in Jesus. You must part with all your sinful lusts, and desires, and gratifications, if you would become interested in Jesus. Everything which might stand in the way of your making Jesus your all, your supreme desire, and supreme delight, must be cheerfully renounced—Christ must be your all in all.

The Christian will never be entirely free from these things, as long as he remains in this world. The ruins of the fall will still cling to him. Self-righteousness, self-love, self-esteem, self-confidence and self-approbation, are still lurking in the believer while in this world. His sinful lusts, desires, and affections, will still have a hold upon him. But he will be found fighting against these things. He will be found mourning over them, and pleading for entire freedom from them. It is thus Jesus is obtained. We must *diligently seek* for him, and we must be willing to *part with all for him*.

III. We are to notice the happiness and advantages of those who possess this treasure. When the sinner finds Jesus, he finds a portion for both worlds;—riches for time, and riches for eternity. While the chief, the supreme good, and supreme happiness of the believer is reserved for eternity; still he has much happiness and enjoyment in the present life. Although men of the world look upon the life of the Christian as one destitute of enjoyment, still there is enjoyment there to which they are entire strangers. They

know nothing of the peace of conscience, and peace with God, which reigns in the heart of the true Christian, in this world; they know nothing of the Christian's joy and comfort in affliction; they know nothing of the consolation which Jesus affords his children in the trying hour of death; and being strangers to these things, they suppose the Christian lives a slavish life. But truly, the enjoyment which they have in the pleasures of sin, is as nothing, compared with the heavenly enjoyment of the true Christian. Hence those who possess Jesus, enjoy much happiness in the life that now is. But their chief, their supreme happiness is reserved for a future world.

That the happiness and advantages of the believer may be more manifest, notice,

1. *That in Christ is all his need.* Think of the wants of the soul;—although many, they are all met in Jesus. Are we ignorant—ignorant of God, in his true nature and perfections;—ignorant of ourselves in our sinful, wretched and helpless condition;—ignorant of Jesus our only Savior? in Jesus is our knowledge and wisdom. Are we naturally naked, destitute of any righteousness, that would serve as a cloak to cover our sins that they rise not in judgment against us; in Jesus is provided a robe of righteousness sufficient to hide a multitude of sins. Are we hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Jesus is the bread and water of life. Are we guilty? Jesus is our pardon, our righteousness by which we are justified and freed from the condemnation of the law. Are we unholy? are the remains of sin still visible upon us? Jesus is our purifier, to cleanse us from all sin, and enable us to “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Are we wretched? Jesus is our peace, calming the troubled spirit. Are we perishing—fast hurried on by our sins, in the broad road to eternal ruin? Jesus is our deliverer, to snatch us from everlasting burnings. To the sinner that has found Jesus, it may truly be said: “All are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.”

2. In Christ is, not only all the Christian's need, but all his desire. Every holy and spiritual desire terminates in him. Are your hearts going out in longing desires after holiness? Do you wish to become more entirely freed from sin? Do you wish to become more and more like your heavenly Father, and more like your blessed Savior? Do you wish the work of sanctification to be car-

ried on within you, so that "you may be renewed in the whole man after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, and enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto holiness?" in Jesus all such desires are met. Are you desiring peace—peace with God, peace with your fellowmen, and peace with your consciences? in Jesus is this desire met. Are your hearts longing for that peculiar joy which belongs to the saints of God? this, too, is met in Jesus. Do you desire the happiness of heaven? in Jesus is this desire met. All such desires terminate in him, for he sanctifies and makes holy. He delivers from trouble and grief, and bestows peace and joy. He glorifies, and makes the sinner fit for heaven.

3. Not only all the believer's need, and all his desire, but his *eternal salvation* is in Jesus. He is the Christian's portion forever. As long as God shall continue to sit upon his eternal throne, so long shall the Christian enjoy Jesus as his portion,—so long shall he bear the Redeemer's likeness,—so long shall his dwelling be our home, if we are his children,—so long shall his glories be our ceaseless bliss,—so long shall his love be our song,—so long shall we sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." To see him as he is, to be with him, and to enjoy him, is eternal life. Rich indeed are those who have Jesus as their inheritance. Such are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

In conclusion; we learn the happiness of the true believer. How rich is he? There is secured to him, "an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." He is also highly exalted. Raised above the vanities of earth, there is secured to him a throne of glory, and a crown of righteousness. But just as he is rich and exalted, he is also blessed and happy; and this is what makes his inheritance, and kingdom, and crown, an enjoyment to him. He might possess all these and still be miserable. If the society he was to enjoy in heaven was that of devils, then all these things would be blackened by the smoke of their torments. But the greatest joy and happiness of heaven, is the blessed society there enjoyed. What encouragement, then, is presented, to urge the Christian on, to use all diligence to make his calling and election sure!

And, impenitent sinner, is there not something here to urge you

on to secure Jesus as your inheritance? Have you never professed to take Jesus as your portion, then why do you stand aloof? Why do you not unite with the people of God, that you may be partaker with them, of their rich inheritance? Is it because this inheritance has not value enough to stimulate you? Think, for a moment, what it is you secure; even the salvation of your own immortal soul from the agonies of an eternal death. This, truly, is a consideration which ought to urge you on to obtain it, cost what it might. Did it require you to give up all the joys and comforts of this life—were you called upon to experience the severest pain of body, and anguish of mind—were you called upon even to surrender your lives; all this would be nothing, compared with the value of the treasure you would secure. But when Jesus is offering you salvation freely, how great is the inducement to come, and receive it from him! Just think for a moment, what infatuation it is for you to neglect this precious Savior. You choose a present but meager portion, and by so doing you lose a future, but an eternal and invaluable portion. You prefer the vanities of this world to the riches of eternity.



# S E R M O N   X X V I I

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## CIVIL MAGISTRACY.

BY REV. BENJAMIN WADDLE,

*Pastor of the Associate Reformed Church, New Concord, Ohio.*

“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.” *Titus, 3: 1.*

It is not to be expected that preachers of the Gospel will be always unfolding new doctrines to their hearers and enjoining new duties upon them. Were it even possible for them, in all their public teachings, to advance unheard of truths and exhort to the performance of duties before unknown; such teaching would, perhaps, not be the most profitable. So forgetful are men in general, that it becomes necessary to direct their attention repeatedly to the same doctrines, and again and again remind them of the same duties. Accordingly, Paul bade Titus to *remind* his hearers of their duty in relation to civil rulers. “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers,” &c. Forgetfulness is a common frailty. Ministers, however, are remembrancers to the people. Said Peter, “I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them and be established in the present truth.” The terms “principalities and powers” have several significations in the word of God. In Ephesians 1: 21, they mean good angels of different orders. Christ is said to be exalted more highly than they, being raised “far above all *principality*, and *power*, and might and dominion.” In the 3: 10, they are used in the same sense.—“To the intent that now unto the *principalities* and *powers*, in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold grace of God.” *Fallen* angels are also denominated *principalities* and *powers*. See Col. 2: 15, “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly.”

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## TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS—THE NEXT VOLUME.

WE invite attention to the following remarks in regard to the Pulpit. The PULPIT will appear on entirely new, and larger type, procured expressly for it. This will improve its appearance and render it more acceptable to aged persons. The paper will be, as heretofore, of the best quality. No expense will be spared to render it what it should be in point of execution, and all pains taken to bring out the sermons of the brethren in the best manner.

The PULPIT has met with much favor heretofore, and we anticipate an increased and increasing interest in it. We request our brethren in the ministry, and all our other friends, to take an interest in the Pulpit in their respective localities. We will reciprocate all favors. It is not possible, situated as we are, to visit the Church on an agency for either of our periodicals, we must from necessity depend on our friends. Will they be pleased to use their influence in our favor and exert themselves in our behalf?

The contributors to the next volume will render it equal to any that has been issued: and we may say, as they are the sermons of our brethren, of the volumes that have been issued, that they are highly creditable to the Church. Our object has been to publish all—excluding none—that the Pulpit might be a fair exhibit of the sermonizing talent of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. It will compare favorably, in our opinion, with any similar publication of any Church, even where the sermons are from select men. This is our opinion, and we know it is the opinion of others.

The *terms* will be as heretofore, *one dollar per year, in advance*, one dollar and twenty-five cents after the meeting of the Synod in the fall.

Any person procuring three new subscribers and sending the money, in advance, shall be entitled to a fourth copy, gratis.

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Again, Ephesians 6: 12, "For we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers." But in our text these terms refer to civil rulers. Christians are exhorted to be subject to them. We know not of any divine command requiring Christ's people to submit to an ordinance of angels, either *fallen* or *unfallen*. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake," is a divine injunction, binding all the followers of Jesus to yield obedience to those, who in the providence of God, bear lawful rule over them. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men: for kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." In our text, "principalities and powers" may mean different orders of human legislators; "to obey magistrates" signifies prompt submission to superiors, *especially* to those who possess executive power, and "to be ready to every good work" is the duty of all men, but emphatically the duty of every avowed follower of Jesus, "who went about and did good."

Though our text relates mainly to the *duties of the ruled* in a civil point of view, still the reader will permit us,

- I. To notice the origin of civil magistracy.
- II. The qualifications of civil rulers.
- III. Their duties; and,
- IV. The duties of the ruled.

I. **THE ORIGIN OF CIVIL MAGISTRACY.** Man is a social creature; therefore he naturally associates with his fellow-man. This he does, not merely for mutual help and protection, but also from a natural love to society. Now, if it be agreeable to human nature that men should associate with each other it is evident, that laws are necessary to enable them to live together in any tolerable degree of happiness. Man is a depraved creature. Selfishness naturally predominates in his heart. There is a need for laws to regulate and restrain the selfish passions of men; preserve order in society; protect the rights of each member, and promote the good of the whole. In civil communities, composed of such a race as ours, disputes will arise from the ignorance, prejudice and selfishness of men. And if laws be necessary, they must be enacted and executed. There must be, therefore, rulers and ruled. This relation arises out of the nature of man, who is a *social* creature; and consequently civil govern-

ment is an ordinance of God, who is as much the author of those good institutions which arise out of the nature of things, as he is of those for which there is his positive command. Moreover, the Bible expressly ascribes the origin of civil government to God, "By me kings reign and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." "He removeth kings and he setteth up kings." "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." "Governors are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well." These texts establish the doctrine, *that civil government is of divine appointment*. It does not appear, however, that any *one form* of civil government was divinely instituted, to be obligatory on all communities, to the exclusion of *every other form*. There are three simple forms of civil government: Monarchy, Aristocracy and Democracy. There are different modifications of these; and there are mixed forms which combine something of some, or of all the simple forms of government. We will not now define every form; point out the advantages and disadvantages of each, and decide the question, *which is the best form of civil government*. It does not belong to a sermon to do so. It is sufficient to know that civil government is *appointed* by Jehovah, but *constituted* and *administered* by men. A representative republic seems to us best calculated to promote all the ends of civil government—general and individual happiness. And it is the form which enlightened men would most likely adopt. Suppose a number of men were thrown together on some remote island. Their social nature would induce them to form a government. When they would assemble for the purpose of organizing, no one could stand up and in truth say, "I came into the world with the insignia of royalty about me; a crown on my head and a sword in my hand, and I will rule you as I please: *my will* shall henceforth be *your law*." Neither would all the rest have a right to say to any one, "you *must* reign over us." How, then, could they form a government? Easily; by some consenting to rule according to a fixed constitution agreed upon by all, or a majority of the persons to be ruled. The term of office may be long or short, and the conditions of holding it be more or less numerous, according to the constitution. As soon as such a chosen ruler would manifestly disregard the constitution and enact and administer arbitrary laws he would

become an usurper and might be deposed without the charge of treason on the part of the people. In all this there is nothing at variance either with reason or revelation. Imperfections there have been and will be in the constitution and administration of civil government, owing to the imperfections and sinfulness of men. Still any civil government, better than anarchy, should be regarded as an ordinance of God. For if a government among men be better than anarchy, and yet be a government of Satan and a league with hell, then it follows that Satan is capable of doing good, and if we coax him, he may fix up among men a very good government. This we cannot admit. Our belief is, that it is agreeable to the revealed will of God that men live together in civil communities; and that they constitute and administer government for his glory and the protection of their persons, their property and their good name; but, that civil rulers have no right to prescribe to their subjects, articles of *religious faith* and modes of divine worship.

II. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF CIVIL RULERS. A summary of these we have in Exodus 18: 21. "Thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens."

*Ability* is one important trait in the character of a good ruler. That this qualification is necessary to fit a person to be a ruler, especially in the higher and more important and difficult offices of state, must appear manifest to every intelligent person. The ability of which we speak includes knowledge, wisdom, firmness and integrity. It is a great mistake that every honest man is fit to be a ruler. Honesty is a necessary and important qualification. Still, however honest a man may be, if he be weak or ignorant, he is not fit to fill the offices of government. On this point the saying of Solomon is applicable, "Woe to thee! O land, when thy king is a child." Eccl. 10: 16. This woe must be pronounced on account of the incapacity of a child. Many who are grown to years of maturity are children in intellect and incapable of governing.

Another qualification of a good ruler is that he *fears God*. "Provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God." "He that ruleth over men must be just, *ruling in the fear of God*." The pious Jehoshaphat appointed officers under him in the fenced cities and charged them—"Wherefore, now, let the *fear of the Lord be upon you*:"



Take heed and do it. Thus shall ye do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully and with a perfect heart." The importance of rulers being actuated by the fear of God, appears from the duties which the scriptures enjoin upon them; to the right performance of which the fear of God is requisite. And the same is proved by the history of nations which have enjoyed the light of revelation; especially by the history of Judah and Israel. We uniformly find in these nations, that when their rulers feared God, things generally went well, and the people were prosperous and happy. But when the rulers were wicked, vice was gradually diffused among all orders of the people; the nation declined in prosperity, and oftentimes suffered severely. Accordingly the sweet singer of Israel remarked, "The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted." And Jeremiah said, "When the wicked bear rule, the land mourneth."

Moreover, rulers should be "men of truth." Faithful men searching out the truth; receiving it and acting according to it. A sincere regard to the public welfare should characterize them. And further, they should "hate covetousness." Their hands should be shut fast against corrupting bribes. They should not aggrandize themselves by schemes of ambition, expensive and disastrous to their people. The prophet Ezekiel spake of this self-aggrandizement, actuating rulers, as one of the grievous sins of the Jews, which provoked God to send desolating judgments upon the nation. "Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey to shed blood, and destroy souls, to get dishonest gain." Self-aggrandizement, and not the public welfare, has no doubt sometimes been the object of men in seeking and accepting offices, even to the supplanting others who acted from principle and filled their stations with wisdom, diligence and fidelity. This principle of regard to the public good, and not to private aggrandizement, ought to influence public officers in every department of state, legislative, executive, and judiciary.

Men of intellectual ability, having the fear of God in their hearts and before their eyes, men of truth and without covetousness, possess the principal and necessary qualifications of good civil rulers. Government in the hands of such men is calculated to promote human happiness. But civil power has often been abused, and in the hands of wicked rulers has sometimes become an engine of very great

oppression and cruelty. This has arisen, not from government in itself being evil; but through the depravity of human nature, and the abuse of that which is good in itself and admirably adapted to promote individual and general happiness.

III. THE DUTIES OF CIVIL RULERS. In general it is their duty to exercise the authority with which they are vested, for the good of the people over whom they bear rule. In order to this they should,

In the *first place*, cherish an affectionate regard for their subjects. Love to the people should constantly characterize civil rulers. They are the heads of the body politic and the people are the members. There is an intimate union between rulers and ruled; and the former ought to feel a tender regard for the latter, and by all proper means within their power promote their welfare. A sense of duty to the God of magistracy and a desire to advance the real happiness of the people should always actuate such as rule over men.

In the *second place*, those invested with legislative authority ought to enact wise and good laws, so as to be a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well. "A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them."—Prov. 20: 26. Writing to the Christians at Rome, Paul declared "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid: for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." And Peter exhorted those to whom he wrote, to submit "unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers and for the praise of them that do well." Evidently then, it is the duty of rulers to discountenance and punish the wicked, and to encourage the good, by enacting laws against the vicious and for the protection of the virtuous.

*Thirdly*, the executors of civil laws ought to do *strict justice* without respect of persons. Without delay they should attend to the case of the poor when they are wronged and oppressed. This duty is often enjoined in the word of God. "I charged your judges at that time, saying, hear the causes between your brethren; and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not

be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's."—Deut. 1: 16, 17. "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee: and they shall judge the people with just judgment: thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift."—Deut. 16: 18, 19. "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."—Deut. 25: 1. Let civil rulers, then, constantly cherish an affectionate regard for the ruled, enact righteous laws against evil-doers and for the encouragement of virtue, and administer justice to all impartially; thus they will advance the glory of God and the good of community. The civil magistrate, as such, has no right to preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, or preside over the courts of Christ's house. It is no part of his business, authoritatively to define articles of religious faith to his subjects; prescribe the order of divine worship, &c., or *officiate* in the church of Christ. "And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense; go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from the Lord God."—2 Chron. 26: 18. Clothe the civil magistrate with power over the faith and worship of Christians, and persecution will soon come.

IV. THE DUTIES OF THE RULED. *First.* People ought to desire and pray for good rulers: and in a government like ours, where the people choose their rulers, they ought to elect to office men who answer to what the scriptures teach us civil rulers ought to be—men who fear God, and who will feel that they are his ministers for good to the people, and are accountable to him for the faithful discharge of the duties of their office. Christians with the Book of God in their hands, in which he has declared the qualifications of rulers, certainly can not doubt, that where they have the choice of rulers, they ought to seek for men who will meet the divine approbation, and when such can be found, conscientiously to give their suffrages to them. Have we not reason, however, to fear that these evident Christian duties are too little regarded even by professing Christians? Especially, the point whether the candidate for office fears God or not? Do not Christians frequently suffer party

considerations to outweigh the will of God made known in his word? Some professors of Christianity practically renounce the authority of God in civil affairs. These things ought not so to be.

*Secondly.* The ruled ought to *submit* to the authority of those who are invested with civil power over them. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. The powers that be are ordained of God." "Whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God."—Rom. 13: 1, 6. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him. For so is the will of God."—1 Peter 2: 13–15. The motive to such obedience should be the authority of God. A good Christian must be a good citizen. We are to obey as rendering obedience to the Lord and for conscience' sake. This obedience is to be rendered to the powers that be, whether the rulers are our choice or not. When in the providence of God they are placed over us, we are on christian principles, bound to be subject. In case some of the laws be such that we cannot approve them; and even if they be oppressive, we are in duty bound to submit and seek redress in a legal way. There is however *one* exception to this rule, and that is, when rulers pass laws violating the rights of conscience and requiring us to break the laws of God. In such a case we are not bound to obey. We *must* obey God rather than man. The correctness of these observations is evident from the sacred scriptures. That we are to be obedient even to bad rulers in everything that does not require us to break God's commandments, is clear from the conduct of Joseph in Egypt, Daniel in Chaldea, and others mentioned in the word of God. And it is worthy of particular remark, that at the time the apostle commanded, in the name of God, every Christian to be subject to the powers that be, Nero, one of the most capricious and abandoned tyrants that ever disgraced the world, sat upon the throne of the Roman empire! And yet Christians were enjoined to submit, not for wrath, but for conscience' sake. But when this same Nero commanded Christians to renounce the religion of Jesus and sacrifice to heathen idols, this same apostle Paul was the first to resist even unto blood, striving against sin, and to lay down his life rather than comply. Hence it is evident, that except when the rights of conscience are invaded, a man in order to be a good Christian must render obedience to all the laws of his country. In

transgressing any law of the land which does not require us to break God's commandments, we sin against him.

*Thirdly.* It is the duty of the people to respect and honor their rulers. This they ought to do on account of the office which they bear. Such respect and honor are important to the good of community; for if the persons of rulers be despised, their authority will soon be trampled upon and all the miseries of insubordination and the horrors of anarchy certainly follow. Peter spake of those who transgressed in this way: "The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. But chiefly them that despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed: they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord."—2 Peter, 2: 9–11. And Jude described them as follows: "These filthy dreamers despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities."—Jude 8.

*Fourthly.* The people ought cheerfully to pay their taxes, which are levied for the support of government. If government be necessary and useful, as has been shown in the first part of this discourse, it must be supported. And this duty is enjoined in the word of God. "For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers attending continually on this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom." Rom. 13: 6, 7. And our Savior said, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."—Matt. 22: 21. And he himself paid tribute.

*Finally.* People ought to pray for their magistrates and thank God for good rulers. The duties of those in authority are important and arduous, and divine assistance is needed to enable them to discharge aright their duties. And civil government properly administered is such a great blessing as to claim our particular thanksgivings to God for it. Accordingly, Paul addressed Timothy—"I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: for kings and all that are in authority: that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior."

In the improvement of this discourse:

1st. Let preachers continue to carry out Paul's exhortation to

Titus: "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates and be ready unto every good word."

2d. Let magistrates consider their duties as set forth in God's word, and their responsibility to him for the faithful discharge of these duties, wherein they have come short of their duty and transgressed the royal law of heaven, let them be humbled and seek divine forgiveness for Christ's sake.

3d. Let the people take care and beware: in all cases where God and conscience require, or even allow, obedience to magistrates, let the obedience be punctually and cheerfully rendered as unto the Lord. Where the authority of God and men is clearly contradictory, then let the people not fail to obey God rather than man. In reference to the horrible "fugitive slave law," let Christians neither assist in its execution, nor make physical resistance to it, but feed the hungry and clothe the naked; and petition Congress to repeal the cruel law. Whatever be the defects and wrongs in the constitution and laws of our nation, still our national government is a thousandfold better than anarchy. Let it not be destroyed but reformed. At least, let a new house be built for our wives and our little ones, before the old house is broken to pieces. If the government of the United States be not an ordinance of God, then no civil government is such an ordinance, for it is admitted that ours is as good as any, if not the best, in the world; so it would follow that while the Almighty has maintained the ordinances of nature, *day and night, summer, winter, &c.*, and maintained the ecclesiastical ordinances, *the word, the sabbath, the sacraments, the living ministry, &c.*, he has failed to maintain civil government, as an ordinance of his on the earth! This we cannot admit. May the Lord bless our rulers and all the people. Amen.

## SERMON XXVIII.

### THE PURPOSE OF GOD.

BY REV. HENRY ALLEN,

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"But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth." *Job, 23: 13.*

DEITY is omnipotent. To Abraham Jehovah said, "I *am* the Almighty God."—Gen. 17: 1. By Daniel he teaches us that "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"—Dan. 4: 35. And in the text we are told that "What his soul desireth, even that he doeth." I might adduce additional testimony; but let these two or three witnesses suffice at present, to prove the truth of God's omnipotence.

Deity is immutable. By Balaam, in the field of Zophim, on the top of Pisgah, Jehovah said, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good." He spake also by Samuel to Saul in Gilgal, saying, "The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man that he should repent."—1 Sam. 15: 29. He teaches us by Paul that he is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever;" Heb. 13: 8, and by James, that "with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."—James 1: 17. These and similar statements serve to explain and confirm the averment in the text.—"He is in one *mind*."

No person should desire further testimony to satisfy him, that the mind of Deity is unchangeable, and that his power is irresistible. Indeed no person can, in the midst of the light which is around and in us, without being guilty of the grossest impiety, either think or say, that the Almighty is disappointed in any particular, or changes

in any sense. No, verily! "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations," Ps. 33: 11: "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand," Isa. 14: 24: are scriptures which are permanently impressed upon the soul of every mortal, who is taught of God.

True it is, there are scriptures which *seem* to teach that God is mutable; and some may adduce them to refute what has been said. Moses tells us that "It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."—Gen. 6: 6. We also read that the word of the Lord came unto Samuel, saying, "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king."—1 Sam. 15: 11. I observe, however, that these and such like scriptures were clearly not designed to be understood literally by us. They are kindred to those others, which represent the Sovereign of heaven and earth as having hands and feet, as walking and resting, as sleeping and waking, or as being moved by human passions, such as anger, revenge and grief, and are to have a similar interpretation. All such language, when used with respect to Deity, is figurative and adapted to our humble conceptions. It says not that God is mutable; but it teaches us that the Most High often changes the operations of his providence. As a change of conduct on the part of man always evidences a change of mind going before, so the scriptures referred to speak of the changes which Deity was about to introduce; not those of which he himself was the subject. Indeed there could be no ground for change in the Divine mind in either of the cases referred to, because from the first Jehovah knew the human race would apostatize, and that Saul would turn back from following him, and would not perform his commandments.

It is to that portion of the text which affirms the unchangeableness of Deity, I would especially invite your attention. It teaches in a plain and comprehensive way the doctrine of predestination, or of God's eternal and absolute purpose, which we are now to consider, and which, I trust, will receive your candid and prayerful investigation. From such an examination no one should be withheld by the thought that it is unnecessary and unimportant. The knowledge and belief of whatsoever God has been pleased to make known to us can neither be useless or undeserving of our attention. There is no part of scripture but is profitable, either for doctrine,



or reproof, or correction, or instruction in righteousness. Every portion of it is needful, in order that we may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.—2 Tim. 3: 16, 17. So long as God speaks, man should be disposed to listen and to learn; but his inquiries should terminate the moment the Almighty closes his lips.

“He *is* in one *mind*.” Whosoever receives this statement cannot certainly believe that Jehovah, before time began and before he was adored and served by any creature, deliberated with himself concerning the advantages and disadvantages which would result from this or that system of things;—he cannot, I say, believe that he deliberated with himself about the propriety and impropriety of things as creatures do. Nor can he believe that God has ever formed, or will ever form new purposes and plans in time, or that he ever has canceled or ever will cancel, in any particular, or in any sense, what in eternity he purposed. Because to believe all, or any of these things would, at least, imply that the mind of the Most High is mutable—a falsity my text denies.

“He *is* in one *mind*.”—In other words, the mind of Jehovah is one. He never has had, and never will have a will, counsel, or purpose but one. Accordingly the Bible, when it speaks of the purpose of the Almighty, always speaks of it in the singular. True it is, we often speak of the divine purpose in the plural; nevertheless we never, for one moment, suppose he purposed one thing at one time, and another thing at another time, or after any interval whatsoever. We speak of it in the plural simply because the unnumbered events, which take place in time, were all ordered and fixed, by the appointment of Heaven, as surely as if each one separately had been the subject of a special decree. We do always regard the purpose of God as one simple individual act of his sovereign will; and we believe that by that one simple volition he willed into being everything, in its own order and time, that has been heretofore, is now, or hereafter shall be in being.

Let us suppose, if we can, that this is not so, but that Deity purposed many things in time which were not determined in eternity—that he is constantly forming purposes and plans, and what is and must be the true and unavoidable inference? Is it not that his mind is constantly changing? Certainly, if the Almighty has purposed anything to-day which he did not think of—or if he did think of it, refused to purpose it in eternity; it must of necessity

follow that he is this day wiser, or is influenced by considerations which failed to influence him in eternity. Such suppositions as these, are, to our mind, exceedingly derogatory to God, and are in direct contradiction to Paul, who says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." We repudiate, therefore, all such falsities, and return to our former position; because it is certainly obvious that as Deity is in one mind, so also he is in one purpose; and that he is—as James assures us he is—altogether immutable, insomuch that with him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," so also his purpose is without variation or change. Hence our Church has very properly said—"God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatever comes to pass."—Con. chap. 3d, sec. 1. This is clearly taught in the text—it follows irresistably from the statement here made.

It should by all means be carefully noted, however, that no one who *rightly* receives this doctrine, believes that God is, either directly or indirectly, concerned in effecting all that is comprised in his eternal and absolute purpose. That purpose extends to all things that God *does*, and to all things that he *permits to be done*. Whatsoever is morally good he efficaciously brings about; whatsoever is morally evil he permits to be brought to pass by other agents, and effectively overrules it for the promotion of his own glory. Hence we read, in the seventy-sixth Psalm, at the tenth verse: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Just so far as the wickedness of Satan and ungodly men tends to promote God's purpose and glory, so far it is permitted to go, but no further. Judas could betray his Master, the enemies of Jesus could crucify him; but the devil and all his fiends combined could not keep our Savior in the tomb, nor crush Christianity, nor prevent the furnishing of the Church and the world with the most clear and undeniable evidence of the truth of our holy religion.

It should also be observed here, that the means as well as the end are comprehended in the purpose of God. Those causes by which events, whether natural or moral, are brought about, are all a part of the unalterable plan of him whose eyes are upon man, and who seeth all his goings.

Common sense tells us that the doctrine of God's eternal and

absolute purpose is true. No wise man ever acts but with a view to the accomplishment of some end. The considerate man first fixes upon an end, then upon the means he deems suitable for the effecting of that end, and, finally, he conducts these chosen means to the bringing about of the purposed issue. This mode of action is the one pursued by every prudent agent on earth. Shall we say, it is not the one pursued by God, the author of all wisdom? Shall we say, that he alone, of all intelligent beings acts hap-hazard, neither knowing how he acts, or why he acts? Shall we believe, that he has called into being this great and complex system, of which we individually are parts, for no specific purpose, and concerning the effects and end of which he is ignorant? Were it not, I ask, to outrage common sense to believe and say so? Whatever be our individual views concerning this matter, certain it is, no considerate student of nature will ever suppose that these heavens, gemmed so beautifully; that this earth so transportingly diversified with hill and dale, with mountain and valley, with sea and land; and that those ten thousand tribes of rational and irrational creatures which people it, each species separately preserved; men, all of them erect, being also about equally divided into male and female, and no two exactly alike; together with the regular return of day and night, of summer and winter, of seed-time and harvest—I say that no considerate student of nature will ever suppose that these things were produced without a plan, and without a view to the accomplishment of some specific and purposed end. William, prince of Orange, afterward king of England, a man noted for his considerateness and acuteness of penetration, being once asked if he could believe this doctrine of predestination, replied, “I cannot help believing it; for I cannot degrade my Maker below the character of a wise man, by thinking that he acted without a plan, and without regard to the consequences of what he did.”

Moreover, we must believe that the Almighty knew in eternity all things whatsoever he would do or permit to be done in time, or else we can not believe in the perfection of his nature. If any event, it matters not how momentous or trifling it may be in our esteem, which has occurred or which may occur in time, escaped his knowledge in eternity, it is undeniable that he is wiser upon his obtaining the knowledge of that event than he was before. Upon the supposition, therefore, that Deity was—either from necessity or choice,

it matters not which—unacquainted in eternity with any event whatsoever, which has occurred or which may occur in time, he is constantly adding to his stock of knowledge, and, like ourselves, is growing wiser as time grows older. Such a faith as this might be pardonable in the heathen, whose gods and goddesses are all creatures of their own creation; but for us, amid the light and knowledge which surround us, to entertain a belief like this concerning the God of the Bible were the darkest conceivable impiety. Far, far away from our minds be such an unhallowed thought! It is too black and blasphemous to be indulged for a moment! We much prefer identifying our faith with that of the apostles, and elders, and brethren, as expressed by James in the first Christian synod in Jerusalem, “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.”—Acts, 15: 13.

But observe, nothing can be foreknown that remains uncertain. An event not certain may be the subject of conjecture, but it cannot possibly be the subject of absolute knowledge. If, therefore, future events are known, they must of necessity be certain. Nothing, it does seem to us, can be plainer than this. Now before the events take place, hundreds of years before they occur, nothing, as far as we know, could make them absolutely certain save the will or purpose of God. Nothing it seems to us, could make those events, which are in time, certain in eternity, but God willing or determining that a system should go into operation, which would infallibly produce those events at their proper time with all their accompanying circumstances. Hence the purpose and foreknowledge of God are inseparably conjoined. You can not, in any conceivable way, disjoin them. If, in human thought, they are to be distinguished, the one from the other, the latter must be conceived to depend on the former. God's eternal and absolute purpose must be made to precede his foreknowledge, and his foreknowledge to depend on his decree. Hence we would say, Jehovah knew in eternity whatsoever he would do or permit to be done in time; because he positively purposed or willed, then, that whatsoever comes to pass in time, should come to pass.

There are some who deny the foreknowledge of God. The reasonings of such persons are too far removed from truth to be deserving of any serious notice. There are others who hold that the foreknowledge of God is the basis of his purpose. In other words,

they tell us that God purposed, in eternity, all events that are in time, because he knew, then, that these events would come to pass. Perhaps there is wisdom involved in this view of the subject; if so, we really can't see it. If God saw in eternity, without his purposing it, that what comes to pass in time would certainly come to pass; where was the ground or reason for his purposing, that what comes to pass in time, should come to pass? Assuredly there could be none; because, according to this view of the subject, the existence of those events was certain, independent of his will or purpose.

There are still others, who say that Deity foreknew all things without having purposed anything. This view of the subject is apparently more reasonable than the former, but only apparently; it is involved in the same difficulties. Indeed, all such views are only abortive attempts to get clear of a startling difficulty. The advocates of these theories have never advanced anything which, when properly considered, affords any manner of relief as to the difficulty from which they would fondly escape.

Let us suppose, for one moment, what our opposers would have us believe. That is, God foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, because he knew that all those things would come to pass—or that he foreknew all things but determined nothing; and what is gained? I affirm, nothing—absolutely nothing. The stubborn fact still remains, that with a perfect knowledge of what free moral agents would be and do, with all the consequences which would follow, Jehovah gave being to those agents. He did, with all the facts before him, put into operation that system of things which he knew would result, beyond the possibility of a doubt, in all their actions with all their consequences. Now, if there are those who can discover any important difference between this, and his determining that those actions, events and consequences should certainly occur, I am not one of them. Because, is it not clear that if he did not will or purpose that all these things should certainly occur, he would have abstained from putting into operation a system of things which he knew would infallibly produce them? Or, do these things come to pass in spite of his will or purpose?

Our faith is opposed by another theory, according to which God in eternity knew all things—some things as certain, other things as contingent or uncertain. Mr. Watson is its advocate in his Theo-

logical Institutes, and he refers us to the story of David taking refuge in the city of Keilah, and of his inquiring of the Lord whether or not Saul would come down against him, and if the men of Keilah would deliver him into the hands of his enemy, as an illustration and proof of it. We presume he had no doubt of this being an event which God knew as contingent. But was there, in truth, anything connected with the whole transaction that was a matter of uncertainty with God? If there was it still remains a subject of uncertainty with him; for "he is in one mind." It seems to us the learned theologian might have found a more familiar and perhaps just as apposite a proof of his theory in the history of our Redeemer. Was not the betrayal of Jesus Christ, by Judas, as much a matter of contingency as the betrayal of David by the citizens of Keilah? Adopt the belief that there is or can be any event the occurrence or non-occurrence of which God did not certainly foreknow, and you nullify the perfections of his nature at once.

The Bible teaches us that the doctrine of God's eternal and absolute purpose is true.

In the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, at the beginning, we read, "To every *thing there is* a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die." This statement may properly be rendered thus—"To every *thing there is* a fixed season, and a time for every matter under the heavens. A time to be born and a time to die." Agreeing with this are the well known statements in Job: "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?" "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." The fact that God's eternal and absolute purpose extends to every thing that takes place in time, even to the period of every man's sojourn upon earth, pressed upon the soul of the Psalmist. Hence his expressed request, "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am." In connection with these Scriptures we should not neglect to read the statement of Paul, found in the seventeenth chapter of the Acts and twenty-sixth verse. God, he says, "Hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." Whence you see that the birth and

death of nations, as well as their geographical boundaries, are as much the subjects of God's eternal and absolute purpose as the birth and death of the individuals of whom those nations are composed. In this passage the apostle specifies events, than which none can be more contingent; and yet he assures us they are all fixed in the purpose of God. He affirms, you observe, that the whole human race sprung from one common stock, that it is, in the purpose of God, separated into nations, that "the times" when these nations have started or may yet start as such into being are "determined," and that the space they shall respectively occupy, as well as the period they shall continue to exist, are "before appointed or foreordained." Now to say that this is so with respect to the nations as such, and not also with respect to the individuals of whom they are composed, is clearly absurd. We are thrown back, therefore, upon the Scriptures already referred to, and constrained to say, that the time and place of our birth, our respective places of abode—the part we shall each act in the great drama of life, together with the time, and place, and circumstances of our death, are all a part of the unalterable plan of him, whose purpose shall stand, and the thoughts of whose heart shall continue throughout all generations.

In the forty-sixth chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah, at the ninth verse, we read—"I *am God*, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Here it is expressly affirmed that God has, in eternity, fixed upon an end; that that end is made sure by his counsel or purpose; that from the beginning he has been declaring, more or less clearly, that end, or the things contained in his purpose; and that his counsel cannot be nullified or rendered abortive, but it shall stand and he will do all his pleasure. How truthfully, then, could James say in the Synod in Jerusalem, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." That is, from eternity; because it is thus that eternity is often expressed in Scripture.

Our conclusion, then, from all the facts passed in review is, that God in eternity absolutely knew everything that he would do or permit to be done in time; but events that are uncertain cannot be the subjects of certain foreknowledge. Nothing could make those

events, which take place in time, certain in eternity, save the will or purpose of God. Therefore, "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass."

I shall now notice some charges, and reply to some objections, which are preferred against this doctrine.

The doctrine of God's eternal and absolute purpose, and those who believe it, are charged with making God the author of sin, with depriving man of freedom of will, and reducing him to the condition of a mere machine, and with taking away all second causes or means, and introducing the gloomy reign of fatalism.

All these allegations are most emphatically denied by every one, who rightly believes the doctrine. The Westminster Assembly of Divines, and all who properly receive the Confession, which that pious and learned body prepared, say distinctly that they believe the doctrine of God's eternal and absolute purpose—"So as thereby is God neither the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty and contingency of second causes taken away but rather established." Con. chap. 3rd, sec. 1. Is it not, then, most unfair and unrighteous to charge us, in the face of this explicit disclaimer, with crimes so black and blasphemous? Let our opposers point out something, either in our principles or practice, which will justify such an accusation before they will dare to prefer it.

It is insisted on, however, that these repulsive things are consequences necessarily flowing from the doctrine. This we constantly affirm is not so. We indignantly repudiate them. And if men will persist in drawing them, let them not charge them upon us. Why should reasonable men thus take for granted the whole matter in dispute; instead of pursuing an honorable and straight-forward course? Why not leave off reasoning from consequences, and show at once that the doctrine itself is not a doctrine of the Bible? This, it seems to us, were the wiser and better way. We think we have shown it to be a doctrine agreeing both with the Bible and common sense. Will some one show that it does not?

But we are told, the freedom of the will, the holiness of God, and the contingency of second causes, or means, cannot be reconciled with the doctrine which says, "God foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." I admit there is a difficulty here, and I have no disposi-



tion to evade it. I certainly should not blush to confess my ignorance of that which some of the best minds old England ever saw, were unable to comprehend, but which, nevertheless, they undoubtedly believed. "If," says Locke, writing to a friend, "you will argue for or against liberty from consequences, I will not undertake to answer you; for I own freely to you the weakness of my understanding, that though it be unquestionable that there is omnipotence and omniscience in God our Maker, and I cannot have a clearer perception of anything than that I am free, yet I cannot make freedom in man consist with omnipotence and omniscience in God, though I am as fully persuaded of both as of any truth I most firmly assent to. And therefore I have long since given up the consideration of that question, resolving all into this short conclusion: That if it be possible for God to make a free agent, then man is free, though I see not the way of it." The difficulty here is similar to, and not greater than, the one we have already noticed in the history of the fall. The introduction of sin into a spotless universe under the absolute control of Almighty God, and the consequent ruin of a great multitude of his intelligent creatures, can not be harmonized by man with the holiness and omnipotence of Deity. Nevertheless, this ignorance and inability of ours are no hindrance in the way of our believing the facts. God, we say, is omnipotent and holy, and sin obtains in the world. Now why should our ignorance of many things belonging to God and his government, and our inability to harmonize the eternal and absolute purpose of Deity with his holiness, our freedom, and the existence of second causes, stand in the way of our believing the facts? For my own part I cannot conceive.

Let us now see if we can show that all these things, namely, God's purpose, human freedom, and second causes exist together.

The first proof I would refer to is the removal of the entire family of Israel into Egypt. About two hundred and five years before that event "God said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and they shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." Here you have the purpose of God revealed. The history of its accomplishment is familiar to you all. Joseph was freely and wickedly sold by his brethren, and carried by Ishmaelites a slave into Egypt. There he rose to honor and authority. A famine pre-

vailed in Canaan—in the land of Ham there was abundance of provisions. Jacob took his departure with all that he had, not only freely but rejoicingly, for the country in which his children were to serve as bondmen. Can you discover in all this any thing in which free agency or second causes were set aside, or in the least interfered with? Do not these things obtain as perfectly as they could or would have obtained if God had purposed nothing concerning it?

Take another familiar proof. The destruction of the Babylonish empire. About one hundred and seventy-four years before its overthrow, God declared by Isaiah and Jeremiah, not only that it should be overturned, but also designated Cyrus, by name, as his chief agent in the matter; and described when and how it should be brought about. But notwithstanding God's purpose we observe human means brought into requisition abundantly, and men acting freely and accountably; and none more so than Cyrus himself, addressing whom God said, "Thou art my battle-axe and weapons of war; for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms."—Jer. 51: 20. Can that statement be reconciled with our notions of human freedom? If not, will it be denied?

Once more, I would refer you to the work of man's redemption, which is a part of that eternal and absolute purpose which God declared from the beginning. Many things relating to it are particularly noted. The notorious traitor is not obscurely designated. He was to be an acquaintance or companion of Christ—one who did eat of his bread, and who, to all human appearance, was his familiar friend—he was to be sold, and even the price is specified, thirty pieces of silver—this money was to be put to a special use, it was to purchase the potter's field—his raiment was to be divided among his enemies, and his outer garment was to be disposed of by lot—his hands and feet were to be pierced. These are but some of the things which were determined concerning this greatest of all events. The Divine purpose relating to it is referred to in almost every part of the Old Testament scriptures. Now consider the history of its fulfilment. See how every circumstance foretold, in relation to it, was strictly accomplished. Were second causes dispensed with? or were the agents concerned in it deprived of their freedom and released from their accountability? Did ever men

labor more freely and industriously to effect their own ends, than did the enemies of Jesus to effect their unrighteous purpose? And yet God says, "For of a truth, against the holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."—Acts 4: 27, 28. Can this revealed portion of God's purpose be harmonized with our notions of human freedom? If it cannot, will it be gainsayed?

Thus we have shown that the purpose of God, human freedom, and second causes are facts—facts, too, existing together. To point out the relation which these facts sustain, the one to the other, and to show that that relation is an harmonious one is another and independent labor, the performance of which is by no means necessary to our believing the facts, and the non-performance of which can never be a righteous reason for our denying the facts. Let us, my hearers, walk in the light we have, and in the belief of every truth which God has been pleased to reveal, and as humble, teachable children await, in the devout performance of all our duties, the blessed time when that which is imperfect shall be done away and we shall see and know even as we are seen and known.

There are many charges and objections brought against this doctrine which I would fondly notice, but time and strength fail me—one, however, which I find in a little work called "Doctrinal Tracts," page 99, must be noticed before I close. The writer says our doctrine makes God the author of sin, nor does it help us to say that men sin willingly; for he affirms that "this shift is just as if I should take a child, unable to resist me, and throw it down from a high precipice. The weight of its body indeed makes it go readily down, and the violence of its fall beats out its brains. But though the weight of its body, and not any immediate stroke of my hand, makes the child die; whether is the child or I the proper cause of its death?" Of course all will say he is. But does it follow that because God purposed to permit the introduction of sin into our world and the eternal death of all unbelievers, that therefore he is chargeable with guilt? He cannot reconcile God's eternal and absolute purpose with his notions of human freedom, and therefore he would render that purpose ridiculous and odious. Let us see how his reasoning will operate against himself. He believes the doctrine

of God's foreknowledge. That doctrine, according to his showing, makes God the author of sin and for him to say it does not is a miserable shift, "just as if I take a child, unable to resist me," and leave it where I certainly know it shall perish. The situation of the child and the surrounding circumstances make the child die. But though the child die in consequence of exposedness and want, and not by any "immediate stroke of my hand; whether is the child or I the proper cause of its death?" If God gave being to Satan knowing that he would certainly become the father of all lies and liars, that he would introduce sin into our world, and that he would bring ruin upon our race, who is to blame, the creature or the Creator? Perhaps he did not know when he gave being to Satan what he would be and do. What then must have been his feelings and views when he made, too late, the discovery? It is even into this impiety and blasphemy that all such reasoning from consequences, as that pursued by the author of the tract above referred to, tend. No argument can be advanced against the eternal and absolute purpose of God; but what will make equally against his eternal foreknowledge. Because, as we have already seen, they are intimately and inseparably conjoined. Deny God's purpose and you must deny his foreknowledge, which depends on his purpose. Deny his foreknowledge and you deny himself. From all such errors may the good Lord deliver us, and save us in his kingdom through the sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth. Amen.

## S E R M O N   X X I X .

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### THE TERROR OF THE WICKED ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

BY REV. JOHN E. BONNER,

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“And the kings of the earth and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the rocks and mountains, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand.” *Revelation*, 6: 15, 16, 17.

OF the book of Revelation it might doubtless be said with as much propriety as Peter said of Paul's writings—“in it there are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” There are many, we have reason to believe, who have attempted to explain the prophecies contained in this book as well as other parts of the prophetic writings, who had better not have undertaken the task, for it is evident they undertook that for which they were wholly incompetent. It is very probable that some of the prophecies contained in this book, as well as elsewhere, will not be fully understood until eternity reveals them. For even with respect to those prophecies which it is supposed have been fulfilled long ago, there appears a great diversity of opinion. The events recorded in this chapter, from which our text is taken, and signified by the opening of the seals, are such as are supposed to have taken place between the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ and the accession of Constantine to the throne, when religion became universal or triumphant throughout the Roman empire, embracing a period of nearly 300 years.

The *first seal*, or what was seen in the opening of it, represents the victories of our Lord Jesus Christ, or the spread of the Gospel.

The *second* represents wars and commotions, or bloody persecutions which were brought about by the enemies of the Gospel; Jews and Christians were slain in vast numbers. The *third* vision, represents great distress, lamentation and mourning, occasioned by the famine and pestilence, and this brought about by the desolating wars which prevailed. The balances in the hand of the rider, indicating great distress in consequence of the lack of provision. The *fourth* represents the fearful ravages of death; for how vast must his conquests have been when there were wars, famine and pestilence all engaged in wasting the human family. Though by *hell* here is meant, probably, no more than the grave or state of the dead, yet it is to be feared that many who fell before him who sat on the *pale horse*, sank down into the place of eternal despair, into that place where "the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." The *fifth* vision represents the condition of those who had suffered martyrdom for the sake of the Gospel, and the favor shown them by him for whose sake they had suffered, and the forbearance which he exercises toward his and their enemies. The *sixth* and last vision, represented the overthrow or entire subjugation of the pagan or persecuting power, and the great revolution which took place at the downfall of paganism and the ascension of a Christian prince to the throne, exercising at that time universal dominion. The sun, moon, and stars, represent those exercising civil power or those high in office. Our text represents the consternation of these as well as those who were but menial subjects of the very lowest class, on the triumph of the Gospel. Seeing the Gospel would prevail notwithstanding their opposition to it, they were forced to acknowledge it divine, and in consternation they attempt to flee away from him who is its author. Filled with remorse and horror of conscience on account of the opposition which they had made, and dreading eternal ruin, they seek to conceal themselves in the mountains, and dens, and caves of the earth. As all prophecies, however, most generally, have a twofold meaning, this doubtless has reference not only to the time of which we have been speaking, but likewise to the time of the final judgment, when sinners in consternation at the sight of the approaching Judge, and the fury of his countenance, and sensible of what are their deserts, will be ready to cry out in despair, "Rocks, mountains, fall on us," &c.

In the further prosecution of this subject we shall inquire,

I. Who that exalted personage is whose countenance is so terrifying to sinners.

II. How comes the wrath of the "*great day*" and the Lamb to be so terrifying.

III. How vain and insufficient will all the subterfuges prove, to which sinners may betake themselves, when the Lord is about to execute judgment upon them.

I. Who that exalted personage is whose countenance is so terrifying to sinners.

In the word of God we are taught that all the persons of the Trinity will take a part in the transactions of the "*great day*," in fixing the destinies of men—in rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked. But, inasmuch as Christ Jesus is the only Mediator between God, the Father, and sinful men—and has been appointed the great King and Head of the Church, and invested with all power and authority, to judge the world, and reward the righteous and wicked according to their deserts, it has been more especially assigned to him. And it is on this account that we hear our Lord Jesus thus saying to the Jews on a certain occasion—"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."—John 5: 22. Moreover, we are told that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of *Christ*; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."—2 Cor. 5: 10. Our Lord Jesus is well qualified for the great work assigned him, better than the other persons of the Trinity, if we may so express ourselves, inasmuch as he has his human nature connected with the divine, and can therefore be visibly present to all the universe when they stand before him to be judged. "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."—John 1: 18. This glorious personage, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God-man and possessed with such unbounded authority—holding the destinies of men and angels in his hand—is that personage spoken of in the text, whose countenance shall strike such terror into the hearts of his enemies. He informed his disciples whilst conversing with them before his crucifixion, and said by his servant John when in the isle of Patmos, that his coming to judgment would be a source of terror to all who were unreconciled to him. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then

shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24: 30. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."—Rev. 1:8. The psalmist David also, speaking of the Lord Jesus, exhorts his enemies without delay to make up their peace with him before the day of vengeance came—or they would surely be consumed in their iniquity. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." Ps. 2: 10–12.

We might suppose because that he is represented as a *Lamb*, and as a "*Lamb slain*," he would not likely be so terrifying. If he is represented as a lamb he is also represented as a lion. "The Lion of the tribe of Judah." He is like a lamb in his nature and disposition toward his people, but like a lion toward his enemies. "The Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."—Joel 3: 16. He may be styled a Lamb,

*First*, because of his innocence and meekness, which he manifested so plainly whilst on earth. He was without sin—"He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. When he was reviled he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."—1 Peter 22: 23. He endured without a murmur the most insulting abuse, the most violent sufferings, trials and persecutions. "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was led as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearer is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."—Isa. 53: 7.

*Secondly*, he was called a Lamb because he was given up by God the Father to make atonement for the sins of men, or as the great sacrificial Lamb which should take away the sins of the world. Says Peter, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, *as of a lamb*, without blemish and without spot." Under the Jewish dispensation, on the great day of atonement, two kids of the goats were selected from the flock, one to be sacrificed, the other to be led away into the wilderness as a scape-goat; both



which were intended to typify the sufferings and death of Christ, and the reconciliation which he should make for sinners. One was sacrificed to show that Christ's death was necessary—"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission."—Heb. 9: 22. The other was led away into the wilderness to teach us that Christ takes away our sins, nailing them to the cross. Under that dispensation there was likewise a lamb offered in sacrifice every morning and evening, which was to represent the continual intercession of Christ in behalf of his people. He was likewise represented by the paschal lamb, for "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." He may therefore well be styled a "Lamb," for as the Lamb of God he hath borne our sins in his own body on the tree; and whilst a lamb slain from the foundation of the world which taketh away the sins of all who truly believe on him,—he is as a lion to his enemies, and, as "an old lion, who shall rouse him up?" The rejection of him who appeared as a "Lamb," and laid down his life to make an atonement for sinners, will awfully aggravate the misery of those who reject him. "According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense."—Isa. 59: 18.

II. We are to inquire—How comes the wrath of the "great day" to be so terrifying.

When our Lord and Savior was upon the earth we find him denouncing awful judgments upon certain cities, because they did not improve the means of grace which they enjoyed, and declares that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for such. Now it is a principle clearly set forth in the Scriptures, that the greater the privileges are which we enjoy, so much greater will be our condemnation if we abuse them. "To whom much is given of them will much be required."—Luke 12: 48. Those who live in a land of Bibles—who have the word preached and the ordinances dispensed to them from Sabbath to Sabbath, and yet slight such privileges, will have indeed an awful account to give up at the last day. Their condemnation will be much greater than that of the heathen who never enjoyed such privileges. And we find that the scriptures will bear us out in this assertion. Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, 2: 2, says, "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great

salvation." And again in chap. 10: 26th and 27th verses, "For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." And Peter, 2 epistle, 22: 21, thus speaks, "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."

*Secondly*, This wrath will be terrible to sinners, for the blessings which they have rejected are *invaluable*. God, in speaking of his vineyard, says, "What more could I have done for my vineyard than I have done." At an infinite expense, even at the expense of his life, our Lord Jesus provided a way of life and salvation. He left his glorious habitation, came to earth, assumed our nature, endured the wrath of God and the contradiction of sinners against himself—yes, even suffered the utmost abuse that the malignity of men and devils could inflict. "He gave his back to the smiters and his cheek to them that plucked off the hair, he hid not his face from shame and spitting."—Isa. 50: 6. This was the price of our redemption—'twas *blood*: the blood of the most exalted personage that ever walked the earth must be shed in order to secure salvation for us guilty sinners: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the *precious blood* of Christ."—1 Peter 1: 18, 19. Now if this precious blood is trampled upon, slighted, or considered of little or no importance, will not those who thus despise it have to answer for it? Most certainly,—and a fearful account they will have to render up. No wonder they are represented as not being able to face their Judge. A sense of shame might make them wish to avoid the presence of him whose kindness they have abused. Their doom is thus denounced by Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, 10: 28, 29: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much soever punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God," &c.

*Thirdly*, This wrath is terrible to sinners, because in rejecting Christ they have rejected the kindest offers ever made to sinful men. Treating an ambassador with indifference or disrespect is considered a very heinous offence in the eyes of the government that sends him, and is considered a sufficient ground for declaring war.

Now the Lord Jesus has sent and continues to send his ambassadors, the ministers of the Gospel, to this sinful world, and by them he urges sinners to repentance—to submit to his authority and become his willing and obedient subjects. An insult, therefore, offered to one of these ambassadors is accounted as offensive and as deserving of punishment as if offered to the Prince of Peace himself. “He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me,—he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.”—Matt. 10: 40; Luke 10: 16. And there are many, no doubt, who are guilty of this very thing who perhaps are not aware of their doing so; they are rejecters of the Gospel and of him who sends it and despisers of those by whom it is sent—if so, they will at last be found among those who call upon the rocks and mountains to fall on them. To bring about so fearful an end it is not necessary that any openly insult and abuse the Gospel, and those who proclaim it, nor yet that we openly blaspheme the God that made us, but we slight the Gospel and those who proclaim it when we refuse to embrace it, when we hear the Gospel time and again offered and we turn a deaf ear to the calls and invitations of mercy. O, my hearers, is this the case with any of you? Have you not been long sitting under the sound of the Gospel? Have you not the word of God in your hands? Have you not had the ordinances administered before your eyes? And now what is your state or condition? Consider, I pray you, before it be too late. And you, especially, who have made a profession of religion, examine well your foundation and see that it be on Christ Jesus and on him alone. Although our Lord Jesus is long suffering, meek and lowly of heart, yet, if his Gospel is despised and those who proclaim it treated with indifference or contempt, he will arise in all the majesty of his strength and “roar” out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and repay fury to his adversaries.

*Fourthly*, A dread of this wrath arises from the consideration that his patience has been most sadly abused. “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”—Eccl. 8: 11. Sinners take advantage of the long-suffering of God. They suppose that because God makes no immediate visible breach, or puts no outward mark of his displeasure upon them, therefore he connives at

their wickedness, or does not notice them, and that they are privileged to sin on with impunity. God, however, bears long with sinners. He gives them time and space for repentance; but, if after all his forbearance with them they continue in sin, and go on from bad to worse, he will wait no longer, but in wrath he will arise and shut to the door, and issue the sentence, "Cut them down, why cumber they any longer the ground." And if they then become alarmed at their situation, he will say unto them, "I called but ye refused, I stretched out my hand but no man regarded," &c.—Prov. 1: 24–27. This wrath will speedily be executed upon sinners. Though the Judge may seem to delay the sentence, yet we are told that "their judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."—2 Peter, 2: 3. When once the sentence has gone forth, when the summer is ended and the harvest past, tremble, sinner! tremble! for the day of divine vengeance has come, or is about to overtake you. You may take up your everlasting wailing, and reproach yourself for your consummate folly, saying, "How have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof."—Prov. 5: 12. This wrath you must forever experience. From the dark abode into which your sins will sink you, you can never be delivered. Eternal despair will seize upon you. Having sinned away your day of grace, the door of mercy will have closed upon you forever, and into those dark and dismal regions not one ray of hope shall ever enter. There you shall be forever dying and yet not cease to live; you shall long and earnestly desire to die, but death shall flee from you. You shall feel the gnawings of the worm that never dies, and that without intermission. Your companions in misery shall be devils and damned spirits like yourself, and your employment roaring and cursing and blaspheming God and gnawing your tongues for pain. O that you would in time take warning and exclaim with holy horror at the very thought of such an end, and of being cast into such company, "O my soul, come not thou into their secret, unto their assembly mine honor be not thou united."—Gen. 49: 6.

III. We are to consider, How vain and insufficient will all the subterfuges prove to which sinners may betake themselves when God is about to execute judgment upon them.

When sinners at any time become alarmed for their safety, which is sometimes the case, unless their consciences are seared as it were

with a hot iron, they are disposed rather to flee to the creature than to the Creator for help. Yes, many, when conscience is aroused, fly to the intoxicating bowl, and strive to drown the divine monitor in inebriation. Some seek relief in the fascinating pleasures of the world; some quiet the divine monitor by a recital of their good works and almsdeeds which they have done. Like the proud pharisee they are ready to say, "God, we thank thee that we are not as other men are—extortioners, unjust, or adulterers—we fast twice in the week, and give tithes of all we possess."—Luke 18: 11, 12. Others again, in their distress, apply to the Virgin Mary, or some patron saint, but all to no purpose, for "The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it."—Isa. 28: 20. All these refuges of lies will avail nothing when the storm of wrath arises; they shall be swept away in a moment, with those who build on them. They will no more avail the sinner in the day of adversity than the rocks and mountains will serve as a shelter to screen him from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. Where is that created intelligence to be found who can help us against the Almighty? Who dare oppose their authority to his sovereign will? Who can defy Omnipotence? Who has an arm like the Almighty? Behold, the heavens are not clean in his sight, and he charge his angels with folly! He weighs the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance, and taketh up the isles as a very little thing. See Isa. 40: 12–18.

Rocks and mountains, though places of great security for man from the rage of his fellow man, or from the violence of ravenous beasts of prey, will afford no shelter to the sinner from the avenging wrath of God, for thus speaks the prophet Nahum, 1: 5: "The mountains quake at him and the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his presence; yea, the world and all that dwelleth therein. Who can stand before his indignation? And who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him." There is, therefore, no refuge for sinners who will not flee to Jesus—they must perish. When God lays judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet, "the hail shall sweep away their refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow their hiding place. Their covenant with death shall be disannulled, and their agreement with hell shall not stand, when the overflowing

scourge shall pass through, then shall ye be trodden down by it." Besides these refuges of lies which we have mentioned, to which many betake themselves for safety, there are some who take entirely a different course. Some endeavor to persuade themselves into the belief that there is no hereafter—no such place as heaven or hell—that when they die, that shall be the last of them. Wicked and ungodly men who have spent their days in sin, and who are too proud to submit to the divine authority, and who have some forebodings of what awaits them, would, no doubt, be glad if they could perish out of mind or become annihilated. This to them would be preferable to an eternity of suffering. But the Psalmist David says, "The desire of the wicked shall perish." Those who have all their life time turned a deaf ear to the calls and invitations of mercy, and made a sport of religion and those who professed it, and lived only for the gratification of their sensual appetites, will find to their sorrow that God will not be mocked, for that which a man soweth that also shall he reap.

Again, there are those who endeavor to persuade themselves that *all men* will be saved. And, so well persuaded are they of the truth of their theory, that they see it plainly taught in the word of God. O the depravity and desperate wickedness of the human heart! Man that was at first created after the image of God—turning aside after Satan, and being given over, therefore, to blindness of mind and hardness of heart, and searedness of conscience, attempts to draw poison from the well of life, and that which corrupts the soul and unfits it for eternal happiness—from the word of the living God. Such a doctrine as universal salvation is not countenanced in the word of God. It is not taught either by precept, example, or plain inference. If there were no other passages of Scripture to discountenance it, our text is sufficient. Why such horror on the part of sinners—such fearful forebodings when the Son of Man appeareth on the great white throne to judge the world, if it be not this, that they are persuaded that the denunciations in the word of God are true and will be executed upon them to the uttermost, without respect of persons. "The wicked shall be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God."—Ps. 9: 17. See Daniel 12: 2, and Rev. 21: 8. How fearful and hopeless then must be the sinner's situation, when these things we have named, with others of a similar kind, are all the foundation they have to build

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their hopes upon for eternal happiness. When the storm of divine wrath arises and beats against them they must fall, and their destruction will be great.

From this subject let us learn,

1st. The wretched mistake of those who suppose that God is all mercy and love and that he will not punish sin. If he is a God of mercy he is also a God of justice. He will by no means clear the guilty. What would we think of that nation that either had no laws, or failed to put in force those which they may have had? Would not anarchy soon prevail? Most certainly. God as a wise ruler and governor has given us a code of laws, and these laws he will have observed, and wo be to those who trample them under foot.

2d.. Though God be long suffering, yet his patience may be exhausted, and if we abuse his patience, better were it for us if we never had been born.

3rd. How will the thoughts and views of sinners change when the realities of eternity stare them in the face! Once they were proud, haughty, insolent, and cherished a heart of unbelief. Now all unbelief has forever fled—they bow and cringe, and are filled with shame, and seek to hide their guilty heads. See how horror-stricken they are! They, in utter despair, think to move the inanimate creation to screen them from the face of the angry Judge.

4th. The danger, there, is in rejecting the Gospel. Those who now slight it, who live careless lives, refuse to come to Christ and make an open profession of religion, do not sufficiently reflect as to what may be the end of these things. My fellow sinners! every sermon you hear, every reproof given you, every means of grace enjoyed will only add to your condemnation, unless you make a wise and proper use of them. Flee, flee then, to Jesus as your only hope. Make him your friend—secure his favor now, and on the "*great day*" he will not disown you. Those who trust in Christ Jesus, who cleave fast to him as the anchor of their souls, need not fear the storms of adversity, for they shall at last enter in safety the haven of rest, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, and be forever employed in celebrating the praises of redeeming love. Amen.

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*To Delinquents.*—We are in need of funds, and will be much obliged to all in arrears if they will immediately forward the amount of their bills, sent to them last fall.

Do not wait for *any agent*. Send by mail, post paid, at our risk. Take the receipt of Post Master, to render yourselves secure, beyond any question.

*Discontinuances.*—If any person wishes to discontinue, *now* is the time; not after we may have sent half a volume, as we have sometimes been treated. If any friend must discontinue he will oblige us if he can procure some one to fill his place.

JAMES PRESTLEY, *Ed. and Pub. of Pulpit.*

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