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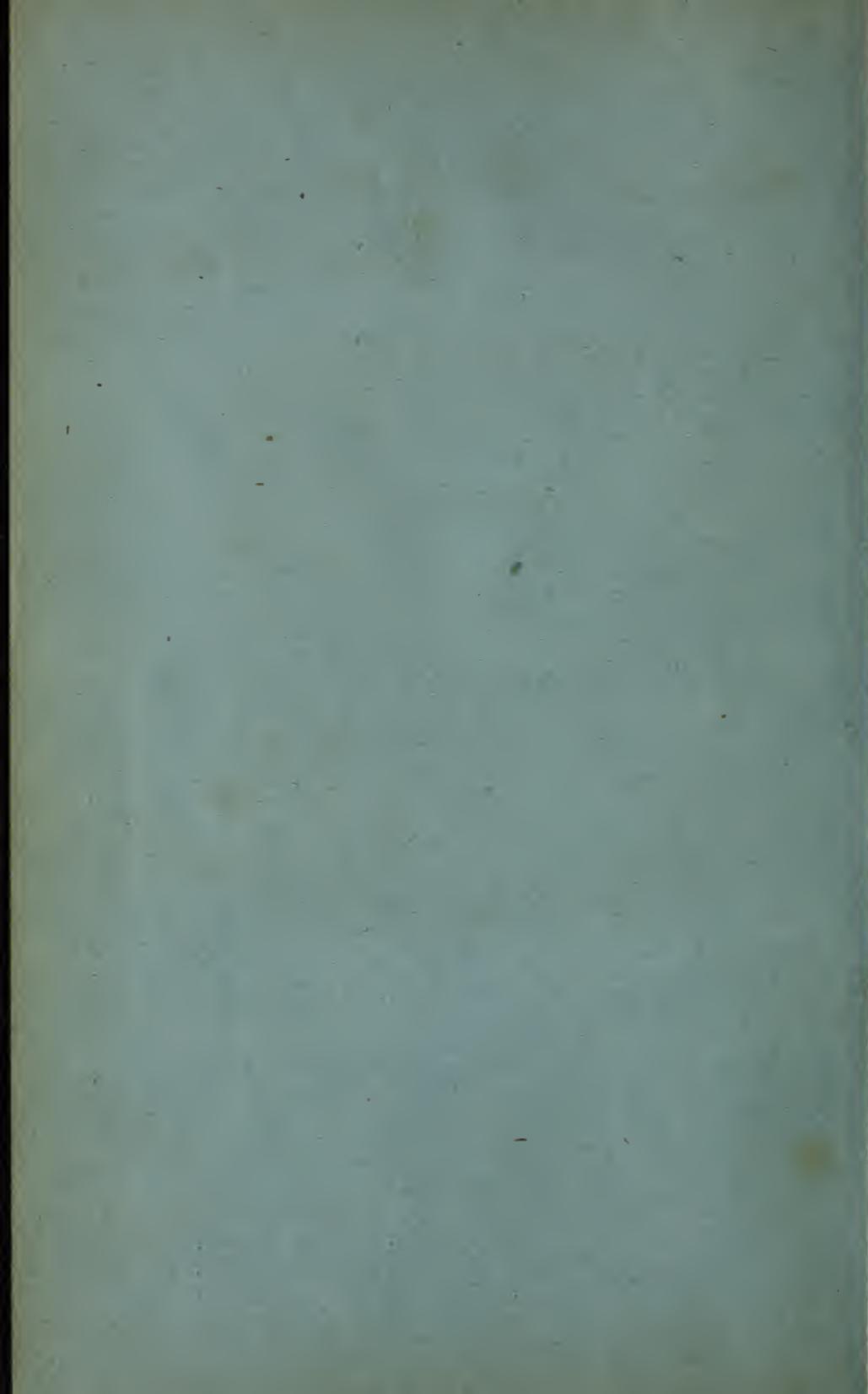
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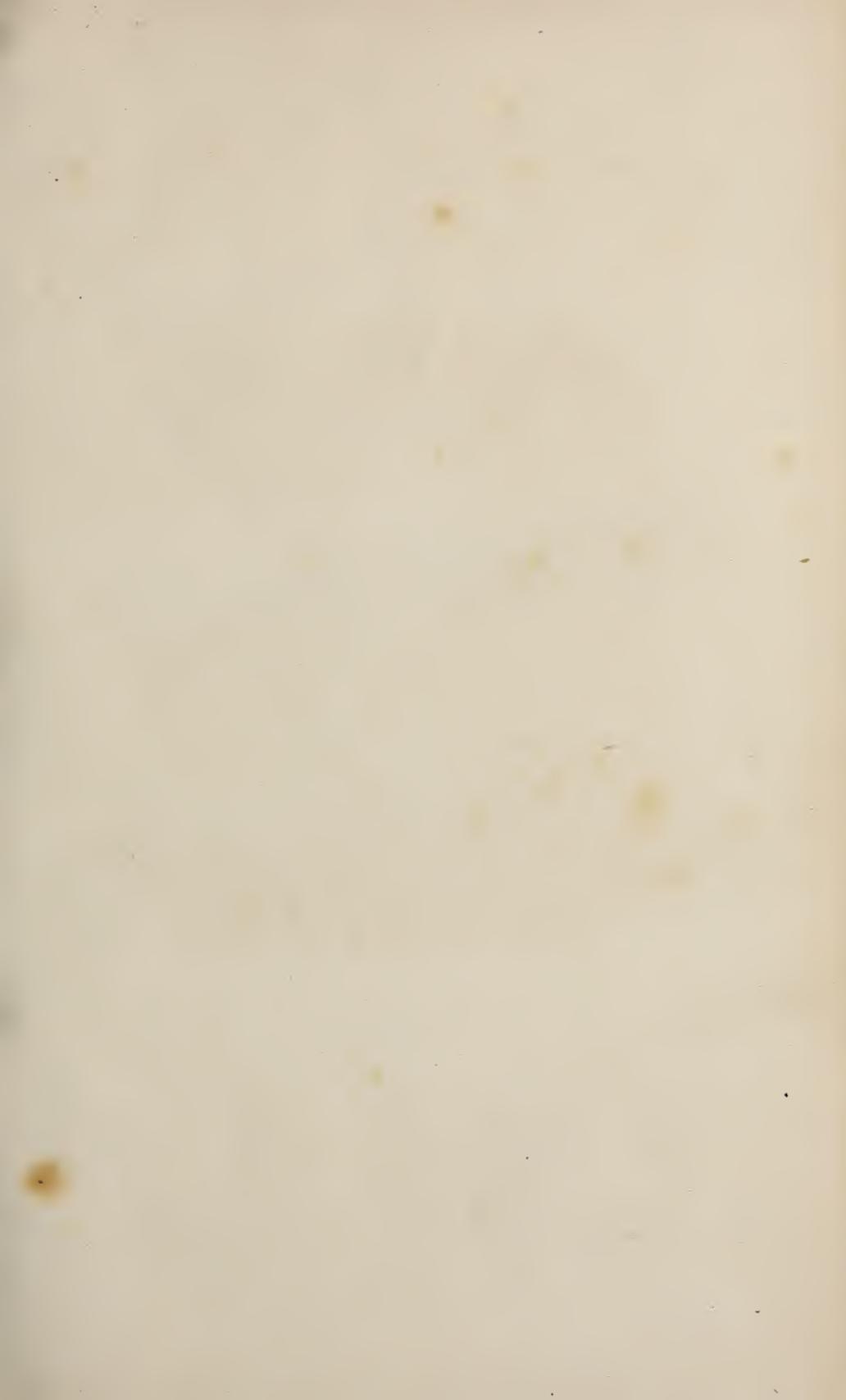
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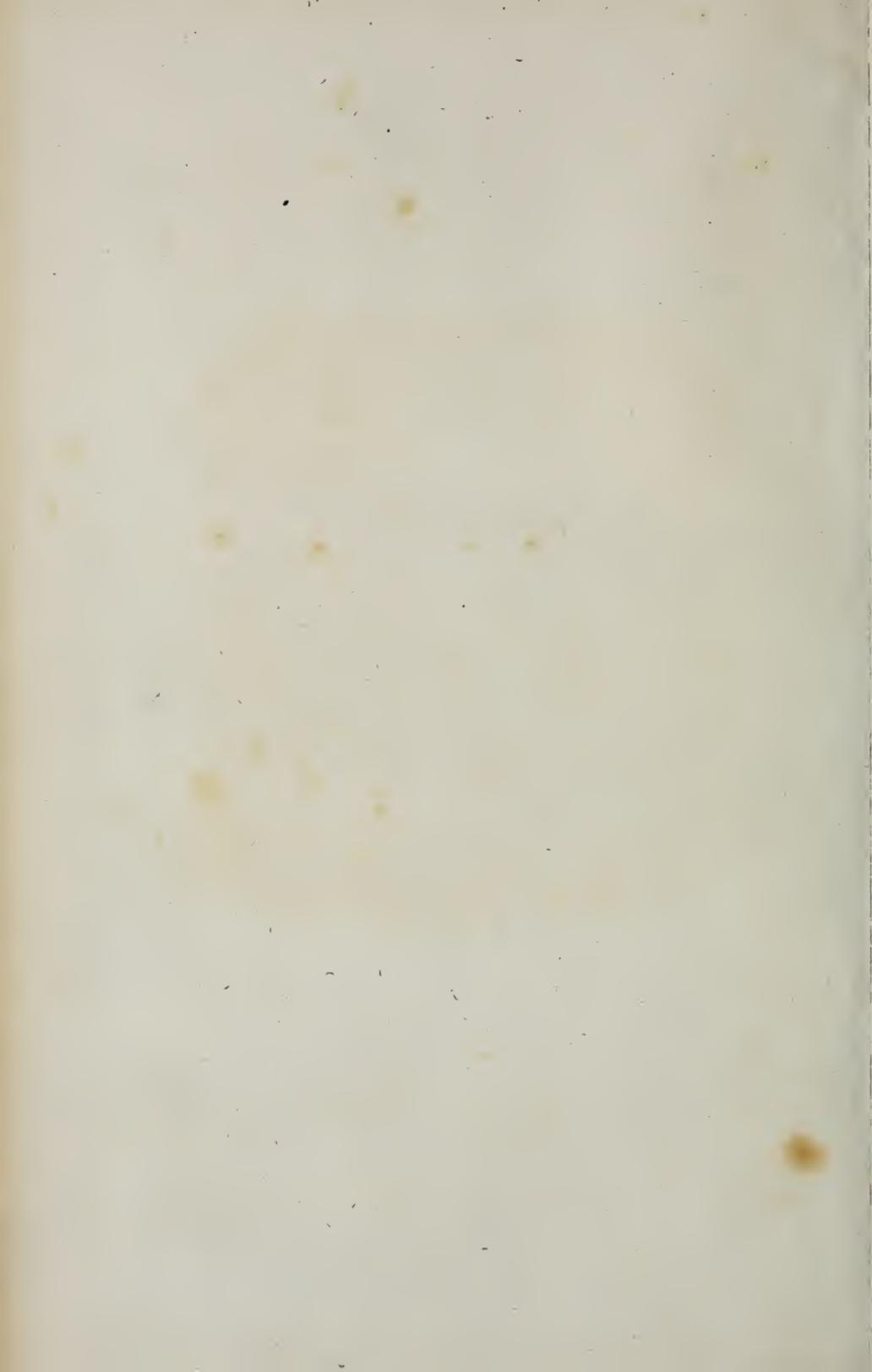
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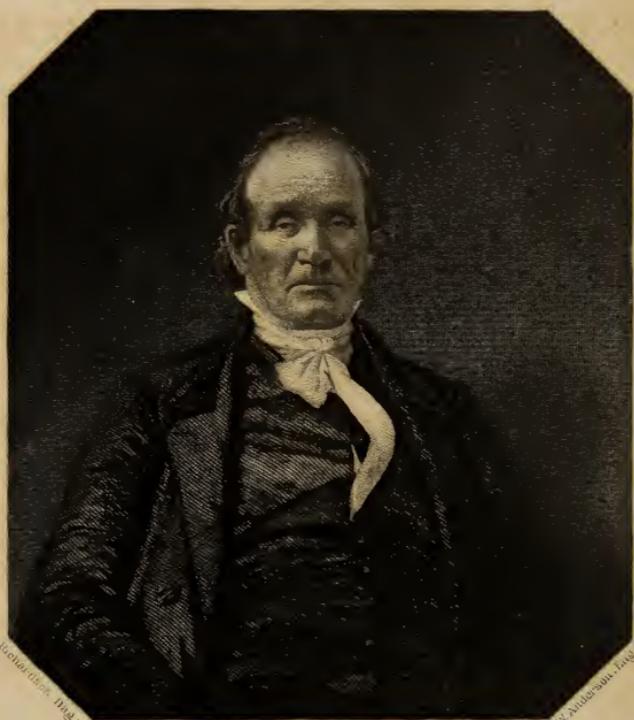
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James Young

THE  
OHIO CONFERENCE OFFERING;

OR,

Sermons and Sketches of Sermons,

ON

FAMILIAR AND PRACTICAL SUBJECTS,

FROM

The Living and the Dead.

IN TWO PARTS.

EDITED BY

REV. MAXWELL P. GADDIS,  
OF THE OHIO CONFERENCE.

Cincinnati:

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FOR THE EDITOR.

R. P. THOMPSON, PRINTER.

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E. A. K. Oct. 6. 05  
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TO

The Rev. Jacob Young,

OF

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

THE

OLDEST EFFECTIVE MINISTER OF THE OHIO ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE,

IN THE SEVENTY-FIFTH YEAR OF HIS AGE, AND FIFTY-FIRST OF HIS ITIN-  
ERANT MINISTRY—AN ABLE ADVOCATE OF THE DOCTRINES, DISCIPLINE,  
AND USAGES OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH—A ZEALOUS  
PATRON OF SANCTIFIED LEARNING—AN ARDENT LOVER  
OF YOUNG MEN—THE FRIEND OF THE  
WIDOW AND ORPHAN,

This Offering

IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY HIS

ATTACHED FRIEND AND JUNIOR FELLOW-LABORER IN THE VINEYARD OF  
IMMANUEL,

MAXWELL PIERSON GADDIS.



## P R E F A C E .

---

THE history of the "Ohio Conference Offering," or volume of sermons and sketches, may be given in few words. About twelve months since, on awaking early in the morning, I found "sleep had departed from my eyes, and slumber from my eyelids," and my mind unusually calm and peaceful. As I waited for the Lord as they that "watch for the morning," a voice from the spirit-land seemed to whisper in my ear, "TELL THEM TO REMEMBER MY WIFE AND DEAR LITTLE CHILDREN!" In a moment I was transported back to the spring of 1842, when these emphatic words were addressed to me personally by a bold champion of the cross upon his dying bed. For more than *twenty-three years* he had toiled in the itinerant field without missing an appointment from ill health; but the "hand of God had touched him," and the noble form was prostrated by an incurable disease; the signet of death was on his brow; and now, while the most tender earthly ties were sundering, and the flashing eye was becoming dim, he took my hand in his, and, with a look of inexpressible tenderness, remarked: "Tell my brethren of the OHIO CONFERENCE that I love them; yea, that I love them in the bowels of Jesus Christ; that I love them better than any men whom I have ever known on earth; because they are the most *affectionate and charita-*

*ble!* TELL THEM TO REMEMBER MY WIFE AND DEAR LITTLE CHILDREN!" He could add no more; his work was finished. Gentle reader, let me ask you if you can imagine any thing more touching than a scene like this.

After recalling to mind all the thrilling incidents of the never-to-be-forgotten death-bed scene of that noble minister of Jesus, my heart became deeply affected, and, as I mused upon the melancholy picture, I wept, and fancied I could hear a soft and gentle whisper from the graves of the loved and departed Quinn, Sale, Collins, Barrett, Butler, Finley, Fernandes, Ferree, Christie, Baldwin, Parrish, Anderson, Jones, Morrow, and Stroud, saying, "TELL THEM, O TELL THEM TO REMEMBER MY WIFE AND CHILDREN!" After pondering deeply on these solemn things, and reflecting on the sacredness of the duty once imposed upon me, and how poorly I had discharged that duty, I asked myself the question, "Can any thing more be done to aid these widows and orphans than the usual annual collections from the circuits and stations?" "I prayed to the God of heaven," and soon felt his good hand rested upon me. The following plan presented itself to my mind: Call on the junior ministers of the conference for short, practical sermons, and publish the same in a handsome volume at the Western Book Concern, and appropriate the *entire* proceeds of the annual sales to the relief of the widows and orphan children of our brethren who "died at their post." This plan, by request, was made public, through the "Advocate;" and, on ascertaining that it was most cordially approved by the ministry and laity of our

Church, I immediately commenced soliciting suitable sermons from my junior co-laborers in the conference.

At the session of our last conference, in Chillicothe, the following preamble and resolution, approving the undertaking, was offered by Professor Howard, and unanimously adopted by the conference:

“Whereas, we learn that Rev. Maxwell P. Gaddis, during the past year, has collected a number of sermons from the junior preachers of this conference, and, also, a number of sermons and sketches from distinguished and beloved ministers who have died in the work; and, whereas, brother Gaddis proposes to publish said sermons and sketches in a book to be called the “OHIO CONFERENCE OFFERING,” the proceeds to be applied to the benefit of the widows and orphans of deceased ministers of the Ohio annual conference; therefore,

“*Resolved*, That we cordially approve of this benevolent and praiseworthy undertaking of brother Gaddis, and recommend its speedy publication; and we moreover promise, that we will use our influence to encourage its circulation in our respective fields of labor.

“Signed,

SOLOMON HOWARD,  
JOSEPH S. TOMLINSON,  
JOHN W. WEAKLEY,  
WILLIAM YOUNG,  
JOHN MILEY,  
FREDERICK MERRICK,  
GRANVILLE MOODY.”

In presenting the Church with this humble “Offering,” I feel an inward consciousness that I have

been prompted by the purest motives, and actuated, from first to last, by a true spirit of disinterested benevolence, a sincere and fervent desire to glorify God, and an anxious solicitude to co-operate with my brethren of the conference, in drying the tears of the heart-stricken widow of the deceased itinerant, and, also, to contribute my mite to assuage the woes of helpless orphanage. I have spent much time in collecting the manuscripts of the departed. This has been a mournful yet pleasant task. But my work is now done. It has brought its own reward.

“For if there be one joy above another,  
Which minds of earthly mold may borrow,  
To thee that angel bliss is given,  
While weeping for another’s sorrow.”

With this brief explanation of the origin and design of the work, this unpretending little volume, with its gentle VOICES of love and warning from earth and heaven—the *living and the dead*—is sent forth on its errand of mercy and mission of benevolence.

MAXWELL P. GADDIS.

*Springfield, O., May 3, 1851.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

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SERMONS form a valuable part of the literature of the Church. They are also important in a historical point of view, as they serve to indicate the peculiar doctrines and tone of piety of the Church from which they emanate, as well as the prevalent errors of the age and the spirit of the times.

The existence of any prevailing error, or the attention bestowed upon any peculiar doctrine, will be reflected from the pulpit as necessarily as the ever-varying phases of society are indicated by the secular press. Not that we would for a moment entertain the idea or convey the remotest hint that the pulpit bears the slightest resemblance to the press in catering for the various tastes and pursuits of the age; for this would be to degrade it from its high and commanding position as the light of the world; but it is evident that the various tastes and pursuits of the times constitute the occasion for the pulpit's expression in regard to their character and tendency in their bearings upon society. Whatever eulogies may be pronounced upon the press, as the "second ark," in which is preserved all the literature and science of the past and all the hope of the future, it must be conceded that it owes its very existence, as well as its almost ubiquitous power, to the fostering light of Christianity. The pulpit and the press

are conservatives of the public morals, and are held accountable, in a greater or less degree, for the influence they wield upon society, in creating and controlling public opinion. Both are, more or less, susceptible to the influences around them, and both are liable to corruption; but not equally so. The one is *the voice of the Church*, the other *the voice of the people*; and their testimony forms the data from which the historian makes up his opinion of the religious and political condition of the age, as well as the criteria by which a judgment may be formed of its character.

The sermons of Christ were peculiarly adapted to the times, and serve to throw more light upon the habits, manners, tastes, and opinions of the people among whom he labored than all the profane, collateral testimony which can be produced. The sermons of the apostle Paul at Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome constitute the true and faithful exponents of the prevailing tastes, habits, and opinions of those ancient seats of idolatry and sin.

The sermons delivered in the days of Luther, Cranmer, and Wesley form important indices of the times in which they lived. In Bishop Horne's preface to his discourses he says: "There is a taste in moral and religious, as well as in other compositions, which varies in different ages, and may very lawfully and innocently be indulged. Thousands received instruction and consolation formerly from sermons which would not now be endured. The preachers of them served their generation, and are blessed for evermore. But because provision was made for the wants of the last century in one way, there is no

reason why it should not be made for the wants of this in another. The next century will behold a set of writers of a qualification suited to it, when our discourses shall, in their turn, be antiquated and forgotten among men; though, if any good be wrought by them in this their day, our hope is with that of faithful Jeremiah, that our God will remember us concerning them." It is said by an English critic of Bishop Latimer's sermons, "that they were neither erudite, elegant, nor well arranged; but they were faithful, striking, and practical, presenting an affecting picture of the times in which he lived. Some expressions in his sermons could scarcely be tolerated on any plea, and can only be accounted for by the times in which he lived."

The sermons of the present age will give a clew to the internal and external condition of the Church, as forming a cotemporary history, and will remain as a monument, through all coming time, of the genius and character of the age, as well in a literary as a moral and ecclesiastical aspect.

The following sermons belong to this age, and, with few exceptions, are the productions of living, efficient preachers, fresh from the fields of their profession. They were not delivered before theological classes in schools of divinity, or in the pulpits of universities, where theology may appear in *state*, coming forth arrayed in the full armor of a rich and massive erudition, where the costly stores of things *new and old* are drawn from her vast resources, and exhibited to public view. It is well enough, however, for the enemies of religion to know that the Church possesses opulence and strength adequate to any emerg-

ency, and that her outposts are well guarded by sentinels full armed; that neither moth nor rust has destroyed her treasures or corroded the weapons of her warfare, and that thieves have not broken through nor carried away her magazines and armories.

These discourses were not written to gratify the ears which lust for curious investigations or finely-woven metaphysical disquisitions. The book was not designed to excite an attention like to that which attracts crowds to the race-course or theater, where panting candidates contend for the crown or the palm. Such a design would make it utterly unworthy of the object its benevolent projector had in view, as well as defeat all the ends of that Gospel which to the prejudiced "Jew was a stumbling-block," and to the skeptical "Greek, foolishness," but to all sincere inquirers is "the power of God unto salvation."

They are the productions of men who have studied theology from the Bible and nature, in the "grand, old woods" of the west, and who are as familiar with its men, and character, and wants as they are with its bold and expansive scenery, and will clearly evince that they have not fallen behind in the mighty march of progress.

This volume will awaken a thousand hallowed associations. It will recall, most vividly, scenes upon which the pious heart loves to linger. Past, but not forgotten events, occurring during the labors of the men of God whose sermons are here recorded, when they, as ambassadors for Christ, poured from the living fountains of their hearts the breathing thoughts and burning words of a message full of mercy and love, will come back again fresh to the

memory, and pass before it as beautiful visions, mel-  
lowed by the light of other days. To the young  
convert, we ask who possesses the pathos, power,  
and eloquence of that beloved minister who guided  
him through the rugged and sorrowful path of re-  
pentance to the foot of the cross, and there assisted  
him in casting his soul and body, for time and eter-  
nity, upon its bleeding victim? And as it is with  
the believer, so it is with the pastor. "There are  
none," said the apostle, "like minded, who will care  
for your souls." Here may be brought to mind the  
faithful admonitions, the glorious truths, and the  
heart-cheering promises of those whose love for us,  
and whose concern for our salvation, is the same as  
when they took us by the hand and gently led us  
through the green pastures and beside the still  
waters of a Savior's love. In this changeful world  
our dearest friends may die, or, what is worse, may  
cease to love us; but the love of a pastor is change-  
less. The soul brought, through his agency, to taste  
the pardoning love of God, is endeared to his heart  
in an affection stronger than that which made David  
and Jonathan so "pleasant and lovely in their lives,"  
and kept them in "death undivided." It may be  
illustrated by the affection subsisting between a  
father and his child, or the higher, holier, stronger  
love which existed in the heart of Jesus for his dis-  
ciples, which continued to the end.

This book will awaken other associations. Gotten  
up, as it was, for the benefit of the widows of ministers  
who lived, labored, and died in the work of spread-  
ing abroad a Savior's love, memories of their zeal  
and devotion in the Master's service will cluster

around us, and call up from the heart's deep fount the tenderest emotions.

Their sainted dust consecrates our cemeteries in city and country. No splendid mausoleums mark the places of their repose; no high-wrought eulogies in brass or marble tell of their deep, self-sacrificing devotion; but their deeds are graven on ten thousand hearts, and will live in the Church as her richest legacy. These sermons will be a *memento mori* to coming generations, and will serve as a monument to perpetuate the names of those who fell in their work, while the occasion of their publication will call to remembrance the loved ones left to our protection and support. Apart from these considerations, we are sure the *Ohio Conference Offering* will meet with that favor from the Church and a discriminating public it so richly deserves.

WILLIAM P. STRICKLAND.

# S E R M O N S

ON

*Familiar and Practical Subjects,*

BY

THE JUNIOR MINISTERS OF THE OHIO ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

## P A R T I .

“To win a soul is your noblest prize; and the more you win, the richer and greater will be the crown of your rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.”—REV. RICHARD WATSON.



THE  
OHIO CONFERENCE OFFERING.

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SERMON I.

BY REV. URIAH HEATH.

ADOPTION OF THE FATHERLESS AND THE WIDOW.

“A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow, is God in his holy habitation,” PSALM LXVIII, 5.

AMID the rejoicings of Israel's hosts, as they chanted before the ark the aspirations of their hearts, in the words of their pious king, and claimed, by faith, an answer to their prayer, there was no one declaration upon which they dwelt with more of devotion and rapture than the words of our subject. They saw the symbol of God's presence, going up to the place prepared for it, as the abode of the “mighty God of Jacob.” Before the eye of their faith, the enemies of the Lord were scattered as the smoke is dispersed by the driving wind, and the strength of their foes was dissolved as the wax is melted before the fire. They rejoiced in the prospect of security from future invasion, and broke forth into a song of praise to Him who “rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH.” But when they embody that joy, in the language of distinct specification, their mind recurs to the care of God over his people, and they sing, in the fullness of their soul, “A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow, is God in his holy habitation.” We consider our subject as presenting principles of action, by which God has been

pleased to declare he would govern his administration toward man, not only in the far-off days of the Jewish monarchy, but down to the last hour, when an orphan might be left to mourn the loneliness of his unprotected state, or a widow to weep under the bitings of avarice, or pine amidst the coldness of neglect. For, while, in the Old Testament, we hear the Almighty cheering the spirit of the dying father, by the announcement of that blessed declaration, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me," in the New we see the Lord Jesus Christ literally tearing the mask from the concealed heart of the avaricious Pharisee, and thundering in his ear, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: these shall receive greater damnation!" The spirit of both covenants is embodied in the action of the Savior, as he stands by the bier of the fatherless, and sympathizes with that worn and wasted form, whose "coal was quenched in Israel," and brings again the thrill of joy from that withered heart, by presenting to the fondness of maternal embrace that son for whom she mourned as dead. In the consideration of this subject we notice the following points:

I. THAT THE CASES OF THE FATHERLESS AND WIDOWS PRESENT STRONG CLAIMS TO THE BEST FEELINGS OF OUR NATURE.

II. THAT, IN THE PRESENT CONDITION OF SOCIETY, THOSE CLAIMS ARE OFTEN DISREGARDED.

III. THAT, IN THE DEFENSELESS CONDITION OF THE CLAIMANTS, THE ALMIGHTY PROCLAIMS HIMSELF THE FATHER OF THE ONE AND THE JUDGE OF THE OTHER.

In this order, then, we notice,

I. THAT THE CASES OF THE FATHERLESS AND WIDOWS PRESENT STRONG CLAIMS TO THE BEST FEELINGS OF OUR NATURE.

These claims we will urge from the following considerations :

1. *Deeply fallen as we are, it is still generally admitted, that every generous mind is favorably affected by any case of entire dependence and deep distress.* So deeply is this principle interwoven in our nature, that the theater and the novel press seem almost entirely based upon it. The minions of Satan present before a hardened audience the *mere picture* of human suffering, and by the bare description of ties which bound kindred spirits—riven by the hand of rude interference—hopes once cherished by the dependent and confiding, crushed by the unwelcome approach of death, they draw tears from the eyes of the malicious, and bring a sigh from the cold heart of hatred and revenge. Shall fiction arouse man's nature, and falsehood, clothed in the livery of truth, stir the depth of his soul, while all the living interest thrown around dependent childhood, orphaned in its deepest feeling, or widowhood, mourning at the grave of departed hope, present their claim in vain? No: bad as is the world, and deeply as we are sunk in crime, the claim is generally acknowledged, and, when there is no influence of the spirit of covetousness, the claim is fully met. There is a something, within the breast of the feeling and the generous, that will not turn away the plea made by the bare sight of helpless suffering, or close their ear against the accents which fall from the lips of the widow. As the eye rests on the orphan, the heart becomes interested to know who will instruct this tender mind; who pluck away the weeds of sin; who bend the tendrils of thought around the supports of truth; who provide for those who do not know the extent of their own want. The remembrance of our own dear, dependent ones, the interest of their inquiring and confiding countenance, and the deep and untold feeling of a father's heart,

all arise unbidden to our view, and call forth an interest in behalf of those who suffer. Our own fond hopes with regard to our offspring, the hours of sleepless interest we have passed in planning, or in prayer, and the deep, unutterable sigh which has escaped our heart, at the bare thought that the mother who smiles upon the babes we call our own, may, one day, bedew their faces with the tears of bereavement, and those little ones stand weeping around the grave of their father, all forbid our looking with indifference on the orphan, or passing slightly over the claims of the widow. But the interest we feel should not arise from the mere thought of what they suffer, but

2. *From a sense of the importance of the period of youth to make the proper impression for after days, and the necessity of some friendly hand to make that impression.*

If the mind of youth be like the yielding wax, which bears the full impression of the seal, or the block of marble in the hand of the sculptor, we see the importance of early impressions being made by one who feels as a father only can feel—who is resolved to give “line upon line, precept upon precept,” till he shall distinctly behold the opening powers of youthful intellect bearing the impression of scientific culture and Scriptural devotion. The great truth presented in the word of God, “train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,” has been acknowledged, to a greater or less extent, in every age, and in every nation; and all nature has been taxed to furnish illustrations which might arrest the attention and fix impression upon the mind. The man of threescore years, in all the ripeness of mental improvement, and all the richness of Christian experience, still refers, with grateful emotion, to the hours of early parental training, and delights to think of the days when he sat by the knee of his father and heard the lessons of morning and evening instruction. The urgency

of petition to the throne of grace, and the confidence manifested in the protection of God, which so deeply affected his heart in the days of his childhood, still live in his memory, and he blesses the God of his fathers for parental watch-care and Christian example. The son who returns from his distant wanderings, bears testimony to the fact, that amid the maddening scenes of dissipation, surrounded by those who would have led him to forget the lessons of his early youth, he heard, above the roar of their laughter, the calm communings of his father, and in the darkest shades of the night he *saw* the tearful face of his mother. The earnest prayer for his safety on earth, and salvation in heaven; the sight of the last token of parental love, still looking out from its place of neglect, as the only book worthy of his entire confidence; the recurrence of the hour when loved ones gathered around the altar made sacred by a thousand remembrances, have all borne upon his heart, and, in spite of his pride, in defiance of his philosophy, and under the very eye of thoughtless and wicked associates, have caused him to sigh for the home of his happier days, and driven him to seek for a place where, unobserved by seducers, he might shed the tears of bitterness, and pour out the prayer of repentance. And even the man of crime, who, for years, has been reaping, within the walls of a prison, the fruits of a life spent in disobedience to the laws of God and man, speaks from the cell of his incarceration, and charges the fearfulness of his doom to the lack of early parental culture. Viewed, then, in the light of immortal beings, purchased by the blood of the Son of God, and destined to exert an influence on the world to the latest time, but surrounded by influences calculated to deceive, to ensnare, and to destroy, the orphan, unguided and lonely, certainly has a claim to the sympathy of every generous spirit.

3. *If the doctrine be true, that "whatsoever a man*

soweth that shall he also reap," the orphan holds a strong claim to our kindest regard, both as it respects his own salvation, and the bearing of his life upon the kingdom of Christ. While we admit that the demon, once fully entrenched in the heart, is hard to dislodge; that the ground, once overgrown with briars and thorns, is harder to prepare for the seed; that habits of sin, once formed, are not so likely ever to be entirely abandoned, we must feel that the mental and moral culture of the fatherless claims the attention of the thoughtful, and demands the labors of the favored. If the kingdom of our common Master calls for the service of well-trained soldiers to hasten the final victory, the desire to "save souls from death, and to hide a multitude of sins," should prompt every Christian to aid the widow in the proper training of her orphans, and encourage the fatherless, by the tender of that sympathy which lessens the keenness of their loss, and prompts them to rise above the frowns of the world.

4. *The claims of the fatherless are important in the light of their and our connection with a free and enlightened government.* Here the citizen, however cultured, whether well or ill informed, holds in his hands the right of suffrage. It is said by great men, who are warm admirers of our government, that we are a nation of kings! Shall the petty despot, who rules a small principality in Europe, be educated with special reference to the station he is to occupy, and the influence he is expected to exert, and native-born Americans—heirs to the rights and privileges of freemen—be permitted to grow up without mental and moral cultivation? We rejoice that the public mind is becoming so instinct with life, on the subject of education, that colleges rise, in their grandeur, before our eye, and that our own beloved state already presents a sufficient number to meet the growing wants of the people. These institutions are being so permanently founded, that they

promise to swell out to those ample dimensions, and invite by those increasing facilities, which now encourage the hearts of the parents, and will, we hope, fully meet the hopes of the youth. The laboring classes of this land may look with high satisfaction upon the prospect which rises before their offspring, and thank God that *here* there is no *privileged* path to science, to honor, or to wealth. They see the sons of the poor take rank with those of the wealthy, and feel that self-denial is a pleasure when made to elevate their offspring. The old and hackneyed objections, so long urged against the proper cultivation of female mind, are already become obsolete, and the man can scarcely be found who will risk his reputation by denying either their capacity or their right to similar training with those for whom they are designed, by Providence, to be full and equal companions. The duties we owe our common country; the desire we feel to transmit, to distant posterity, all the principles and privileges of a free government; the generous impulses of an enlightened mind toward the multiplied thousands who annually arrive on our shores from the lower classes of the old world; the hope of fortifying the mind of our youth against those influences arising from the unheard-of increase of foreign population, and of foreign attachment, flowing in upon us from the increase of territory, and the rage for gold; and last, though not least, the generous wish of every good man to prepare those now in actual training for the great battle of public sentiment which is to banish the hated curse of slavery, and bid the downtrodden millions, who now groan under the iron heel of oppression, lift up their heads and breathe the air of freedom—all strongly demand that, amid the general education of the people, the widow be not forgotten, to sink under the weight of her charge, nor the claims of the fatherless be left unacknowledged or unmet.

5. *The claims of the widow demand our attention from the peculiarity of their nature.* Hers are the claims of woman, the loveliest of God's creation which is open to our inspection, designed as the perfection of man's joy, and the more than equal sharer in all man's griefs. But now they are the claims of woman in distress; the hours of her affianced affection, once met by the requital of faithful love, all passed by; the voice that fell like music upon her ear no longer heard; the prospect that shone so clearly along her pilgrimage path obscured by clouds, which naught but the light of heaven can pierce! She labors to find some relief, in twining the riven ties of her undying affection, still bleeding from the rudeness of their severance, around the offspring, who bear the impress of a name which can never fade from her memory. She weeps a loss she can not utter. Formed to confide, she sighs the absence of one in whom she safely trusted. She shrinks from the thought of that ruder grapple with this world's commerce and with this world's fraud, for which her gentle nature was never formed, and sinks under the thought of an increase of care and a decrease of means. If a nature capable of gratitude for generous actions; if loveliness withering under the blast of misfortune; if willing powers taxed above their unaided strength, or all that is lovely in that attachment which throws so much of charm around the name of mother, be objects worthy of our regard, then the claims of the widow must be honored by every feeling and generous heart. She loves the image that lingers in her mind, and would carry out the wish which was but *their mutual* expression; but her hopes are crushed by the cruel spoiler. To consent to abandon all she can not. Her children press upon her, and, fainting under her burden, she pours her petition into the ears of the Almighty, and calmly awaits the answer of her heavenly Father.

But the whole claim is not yet before us; for

6. *There are some widows and some fatherless children whose claims appear before us rather in the light of justice, making a clear demand, than of sympathy, based upon the feelings of common humanity.* The widow who has passed the days of her happy union with the companion of her choice amidst the circle of her early friends, and who weeps surrounded by those who long have prized her friendship, is to be pitied, and often does receive a full and honorable expression of those feelings which go far to ennoble human nature. But the woman who, in the joyous days of life's bright spring, bade farewell to the home of her youth, and to the comforts which abound in the place of settled life; who suspended the strong action of those ties which bound her in affection to parents, to brothers, and to sisters, and, for *Christ's sake*, became a wanderer in the earth, and, like her Master, had not where to lay her head, save by temporary lien at the bestowment of others; who has seen the funds given her by her father slowly but steadily wasting away, in supplying the "lack of service" due from circuits and stations faithfully served by her husband; and now the consideration which gained their temporary occupancy of a dwelling removed forever, and her children, who might and would have been heirs of this world's competency, pressing upon the agonized feelings of her heart for a support in childhood and a mental training in youth, while she is left destitute of the means of a comfortable subsistence—*this woman and these children* present a claim which must be respected by every heart but that of a demon. We come now to notice,

II. THAT, IN THE PRESENT CONDITION OF SOCIETY, THESE CLAIMS ARE OFTEN DISREGARDED.

1. The inquiry arises at once, From what cause could neglect of claims so strongly marked and so generally acknowledged as those of the "widow and the fatherless"

arise? We answer, from the ever-grasping and too generally-tolerated spirit of covetousness—a spirit which sold the Lord of life and glory for “thirty pieces of silver,” and gambled for his coat under the drippings of the blood of crucifixion—a spirit classed in Scripture with all that is dark in its aspect and degrading in its influence—which stops not at the *bare neglect* of claims, however feelingly presented by the one who sits “covered with her weeds,” or those who mourn the loss of the guide of their youth, but which, at the clink of “mammon’s box,” can *make* widows with a smile, hush the groans of the fatherless with the scourge, and then insult the blessed Jesus by casting into his treasury the price of blood—the same spirit which, amid the wreck of character and fortune, the tears of the wife, and the visages of children like the “walking ghosts of famine,” unhoused and pitiless, all the legitimate effect of a heaven-accursed traffic, can still defend itself by saying, “I have done them no harm; I did not compel them to drink.”

2. *The neglect of the claims of the widow and her charge is not peculiar to the day in which we live.* The withering and damning nature of covetousness is such, that the Lord saw that, even among his chosen people, the claims of those so worthy of deepest sympathy would likely be forgotten; and, therefore, fenced their interest by the definite language of special enactment: “Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless,” Exodus xxii, 22–24. “The fatherless and the widow which are within thy gates shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied, that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands which thou doest,” Deut. xiv, 29. The Lord provides that the forgotten

sheaves in the field shall not be gathered in, the boughs of the olive-tree shall not be beaten a second time, nor the gleanings be gathered from the vineyard; all these should be left for "the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow." In the book of Job, one of the charges made against the wicked is, "He doeth not good to the widow." It was expressed by Job, as a comfort in the hour of his deepest grief, that he could say, "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to leap for joy;" and, with an unshaken trust, which nothing but the consciousness of correct action could inspire, he exclaimed, "If I have withheld from the poor their desire, or caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless have not eaten thereof; if I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate, let mine arm fall from my shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone." One of the severest rebukes given to Israel by the prophet Isaiah was, "They judge not the fatherless; neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them." In the lapsed condition of Israel, in the days of Jeremiah, when they were earnestly entreated to return to the Lord, from whom they had revolted, the Almighty made this one of the conditions of their acceptance: "If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever." By the mouth of Zechariah, the Lord again thunders in the ear of Israel, "Oppress not the fatherless and the widow," and closes the special provision for their claim in Malachi, by declaring that he will be a "swift witness against all who oppress the fatherless and the widow."

3. *The Scriptures charge the neglect of the fatherless and the widow upon a delinquent Church as a crime of*

*peculiar enormity.* "Ye overwhelm the fatherless," Job vi, 27. "Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken," Job xxii, 19. "They drive away the ass of the fatherless, and take the widow's ox for a pledge," xxiv, 3. "They turn aside the needy from judgment, and take away the right of the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless," Isaiah x, 2. "They have vexed the fatherless and the widow," xxii, 7. And not only under the old dispensation, but in the New Testament Church, the first cause of general murmuring arose, even under the eye of the apostles, from the "neglect of the widows in the daily ministrations." And this evil was immediately guarded against by the Holy Ghost, in the appointment of seven men, who have continued as a distinct order in the Church down to our own day, though the dark picture of human depravity, sketched from the sad realities of prophetic and apostolic days, is still but too faithful a delineation of the world, and even of the Church, in the present age.

4. *The proofs attesting the truth of this charge of disregard may be seen connected with cases but too plain in all their features and too painful in their delineation.* The kind and affectionate father is arrested in his course of industry and usefulness by the call of his God, and "sets his house in order" for his departure to his long-sought rest. The thought of separation from the wife of his youth and the son of their mutual love, is painful to his heart; but in the light of revelation he reads his title to a better inheritance, reminds his companion of the faithfulness of the Almighty and of the comfortable circumstances under which she, as favored above many, will be left, breathes his dying benediction upon his lovely boy, too young to know its heavenly import, and sinks into the arms of his beloved Savior. The executor takes

charge of the estate. The weeping companion soon exchanges the garments of her widowhood for the "robe washed in the blood of the Lamb," and commences the song of redemption with her sainted husband. The child of their love is sent to live with his relatives; and as his mind expands, he hears what gives him pain—that his estate is being squandered by the executor or embezzled by his guardian, and, before he reaches the period of his majority, his heart is sickened by the sad truth, that even his father's watch has passed beyond his grasp forever, and his father's library graces the shelves of another. We have seen also the pensive widow brooding over the peculiarity of her condition, balancing the accounts of her husband, and feeling assurance that, if time were given, the property left by her companion would satisfy the demand of the creditors, and yet leave a comfortable home for herself and her offspring. She hopes for pity. She thinks of that name which ought to shake the nerves of avarice itself, and says to the pressing creditor, "I am a widow;" but hears the cold reply, "I *must have* my due." She ventures, in trembling accents, to respond, "These children are without a father;" but, ere the answer comes, she reads in the expression of his countenance, that the "house of the widow" will be "devoured" and the "heritage of the fatherless" grasped by a hand which knows no release. The case is not altered, if we make the estate of the widow and the heirship of the fatherless to consist in a pledged support, guaranteed by a sense of common justice, and stipulated in the formularies of the Church of God, unless it be to enhance the value of their claim, in proportion as the united pledge of the wide-spread membership exceeds the credibility of the lone individual. Yet in our own Church, with a full acknowledgment of the justice of the claim blazoned to the eye of the world, with full knowledge and cordial

approval of the action of civil government in pensioning the maimed and the widows, and providing for the orphans of those who have sacrificed their lives in the service of their country, we still permit the widows of precious names, martyred to their work, to pine unsupported in their obscurity, and the fatherless children of those noble spirits, who blew the silver trumpet till it fell by their side, to rise in life without that culture to which they are justly entitled, and sometimes to wander away from the God of their father, under a painful sense of the injustice of the Church. In whatever light the action of the Church toward those who are emphatically her own widows and orphans, who hold a right before God and man to lean on her for support in the days of their childhood, is viewed by individual members, all agree in admitting that the amount allowed in our form of Discipline is no larger than it should be to those who truly *need the help of the Church*; that, in these cases, no claim is better settled as to its justice; and, lastly, that even the claims of these, about whose right there is no difference of opinion, are paid off by the Church with an average of *twenty cents on the dollar*.

III. THAT, IN THE DEFENSELESS CONDITION OF THE CLAIMANTS, THE ALMIGHTY PROCLAIMS HIMSELF THE FATHER OF THE ONE AND THE JUDGE OF THE OTHER.

1. The declaration which proclaims the Lord a father of the fatherless, in a special and peculiar sense, is not an empty sound. The word of God is abundantly pledged to the exercise of a care which shall speak the truth of their adoption, and give comfort to the dying father as he reads, "Leave thy fatherless children with me, and let thy widows trust in God." It can not be denied that the hopes inspired by the promise of God are often abundantly realized in the past, that children left without friends, without means, and without much human encour-

agement, have arisen, by the dint of untiring effort, above the clouds of ignorance and poverty, and shone like stars in the firmament of science and of worth. In the halls of national council, on the bench of adjudication, and surrounded by the activities of commerce, we see the sons of the widow holding an honorable station, and often hear them refer to the obscurity of their origin and to the peculiar difficulties over which they triumphed in the providence of God.

2. *Though God, as a father, will not permit those left in destitution to be entire orphans, yet he does not deny the feeble and distressed the right to present before him their entire grievance.* The kind, earthly father who permits the little one to stammer out his complaint, and, by words, and tears, and gestures, to make out fully the recital of his sorrow, is moved by the evident distress of one whose tears find a response in his own breast, and he at once supplies the loss while he promises to examine more fully the cause of complaint. God represents himself as being in his "holy habitation," for the purpose of hearing every just complaint, and of redressing every real want; that, as children turn toward the seat of their father for the removal of doubt, and for the punishment of wrong, so may the fatherless bring their entire case before the holy One. They may come with trembling; they may scarcely think it their privilege to remind their heavenly Father of the defenseless nature of their case; they may not be aware of the extent of their own danger; or yet have felt the depth of their own loss; but their whole being is a tongue to plead with God. The sigh that escapes their heart, as they mark the kindly attentions bestowed upon other children by parents who delight to supply their wants; the sinking they feel within them as they glance at the property to which they should have been the heirs; the deep depression of their spirits at the

sight of better clothing and the sound of higher mental culture than they have the power to attain, all plead with irresistible eloquence before the seat of the Eternal. The heavings of the youthful breast, convulsed with that tempest of emotion arising from the sight of a widowed mother worn by the pressure of care, and yet struggling with an energy which yields only to death, are seen by the eye of God, and fully approved by him who promised his blessing to filial obedience. But when youthful spirits, trained in the fear of God, and nurtured in submission to his law, present themselves before the Almighty under all the pressure peculiar to their condition, and venture to ask, Was our father thy servant? were those long years of toil and sacrifice acceptable to thee? was our father's neglect of the means of family support in accordance with the nature and spirit of the Gospel? were the expressions of former attachment, so often made to the minister and his family, true? if so, why, O, our Father, are we thus neglected? why is our mother left to struggle under a burden she can not bear, and we, once heirs to an estate, now left destitute and unpitied?—here all the feelings of Eternal compassion are roused into action, and God, from his holy place, answers, "I am your Father," and, "The hairs of your head are all numbered." The plea of the fatherless has prevailed, and the case of the widow comes up for adjustment.

3. *The tenderness of God's affection does not disqualify him for the office of a judge.* He is the framer of the law, and has fully explained its bearings to all the parties. He has enforced the duty of becoming fully acquainted with the *rule* after which judgment will be rendered. Standing above the hopes and fears of earth, he can neither be bribed nor forced from the path of truth. Inherently and eternally in love with the truth itself, he can not violate the rules he has laid down for the action of

others. When he takes his seat as a judge, it is in full view of his own declarations: "To execute the judgment of the fatherless and the widow;" "To relieve the fatherless and the widow;" and, "To turn the way of the wicked upside down;" "To judge the fatherless, and to plead for the widow;" "To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may oppress no more." It is into a court so well qualified to render to all their due, that the widow is invited to come and make her plea. She speaks; but not in the language of accusation. She opens her complaint; but it is in the bitterness of her soul. "I left the home of my youth at what I considered to be the call of thy providence, and went out, not knowing whither I went, but willing to share the toil, bear the privation, and live on the fare that might be assigned to my husband. I knew the promises of God, that they who leave 'father and mother, brothers and sisters, houses and lands,' for Christ's sake, 'shall receive a hundred-fold more in this present time, [fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters, with persecutions,] and, in the world to come, life everlasting.' I was encouraged by the declaration so often made, that my husband, by 'sowing to the Church in spiritual things,' should never lack for the necessaries or conveniences of life. I heard the people say they would never forget us, and, in the deep feeling of my attachment to the cause of God, cheerfully entered the old log-cabin, with its open walls and leaking roof, and passed the long and dreary nights of winter with my little children, when I could not keep them from suffering with the cold or easily satisfy the cravings of their hunger. I cheered my husband, when his spirits sunk under the thought of our little estate becoming smaller every year; and when he asked, 'What shall we do when the last is gone?' I replied in faith, 'The Lord will provide.' To his inquiry about myself and children, in case of his decease, I assured him

the Church would not permit us to suffer. I forced a smile of welcome to visitors, when I knew not what to set before them, and denied myself, that they might eat and be satisfied. I cheerfully submitted to the labor and the loss of long removals, and the difficulty and the dread of forming new associations. I stood by the dying pillow of my departing husband, and smoothed his brow, and encouraged his heart, as he fought the last battle. I heard his will, bequeathing his soul to God, and commending his wife and children to the care of the Church. He closed his eyes in death, and 'good men followed him to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.' I was commended by the minister to the care of God, and my children were presented at the throne of grace, and the congregation responded, Amen. I waited for the offer of kindness from some one of the numerous friends of my departed husband. The year closed, and I yielded the house to those to whom it of right belonged. I knew not where to go. I had no means to take me to the home of my youth; and if I had, its inmates are gone to the grave. I ventured to inform some of those most attached to my husband, that I was in distress, and they gave me *words* of kindness and sympathy, but left me to pine away in my want. I thought of friends on other fields of my husband's labor who always received me with a smile, and ventured to solicit aid in getting to that more friendly place. In this I was gratified; and the good wishes of many accompanied me. But here I saw the fearful change. The revival had passed; the spirit of the world had taken hold of many on whom I leaned in hope. I read my doom in the cold neglect with which I was received; and when asked why I did not remain among the friends on our last field of labor, I could make no reply. And now I am here, in a small, rented cottage, toiling for the support and education of my children. I think of the

deficiencies of my husband's support during the years of his arduous toil, and feel a sense of the ingratitude and injustice that withheld from the laborer one-third of his due, and sigh at the thought that the patrimony of the widow has been wasted in paying the debts of the Church. I am without means. My children press heavily upon my heart, and I have no help but in God. Pity, O, pity the widow, and judge the cause of the fatherless children!" The plea of the widow is before God, and it behooves the Church to make an honest defense, where seeming neglect is excusable, and an honest confession for positive injustice. Alas! the defense is but ill prepared, and seems to proceed without proper concert in counsel or union in action. A voice goes up to the Judge, "Our system is a voluntary system, and, therefore, no *debt* is incurred by withholding. The labor was performed and the sacrifices were made, as stated in the complaint; but they were made for God, and not for us, and they should look to heaven for their reward, and not expect to reap it all on earth." Another is heard, "The claim is just, and we fully admit the construction of the law given by the Judge, that we should not 'muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn;' but we are poor. The claim upon us was one dollar a year to the member, and, under our peculiar circumstances, we felt justified in compounding with our conscience at one-half the demand while the minister lived, and when he was dead no *service* was rendered, and justice urged no claim." A third, feeling the lash of conscience, and dissatisfied with the defense as presented, admits the right of the whole claim, but refers to the varied means in the hands of the Church to meet that claim; the Book Concern, with almost one million of dollars invested, and the large amount which such an immense capital ought to produce; the Chartered Fund, with its annual dividend; and then the collections taken up in

every society at the close of the conference year—all, all to be applied to this one purpose. Surely they must receive their full amount, and we ought not to fall under the malediction of Heaven by breaking God's command in "giving to the rich." As the defense proceeds, a general murmur is heard from the whole Church, "Verily we are guilty." We admit the fact, that we are only "stewards of the manifold grace of God," and should have promptly met every draft presented by the great Proprietor. We received our ministers as God's messengers, and rejoiced in the success which attended their labors. We saw the seals of their ministry in our own families, and we own that much of the goods over which we are placed as stewards, is the legitimate result of the Gospel which they preached. The Church is silent, and the Judge pronounces, "I accept the confession of your sin, but 'bring forth fruits meet for repentance.'" "Remove no more the landmark of the widow, nor enter into the fields of the fatherless; for their Redeemer is mighty; he shall surely plead their cause with thee."

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## SERMON II.

BY REV. FREDERICK MERRICK.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," MATTHEW XXII, 37.

CHRIST having delivered several parables, in which the Pharisees perceived he spoke of them, they were greatly enraged; but fearing to lay hands on him, because of the multitude, who took him for a prophet, they took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. They first pro-

posed a political question respecting the propriety of paying tribute to Cæsar. It was artfully put; but when they heard his answer, they marveled and left him, and went their way. The Sadducees then sought to involve him in a theological difficulty, by proposing an objection to the doctrine of the resurrection, founded upon the law of marriage. His answer so completely refuted the objection, and so clearly established the Scriptural authority of the doctrine itself, that when the multitude heard it they were astonished at his teaching. But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, who was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"

In their classification of the precepts of the law, the Jews were accustomed to designate some as "light," others as "weighty;" some as "great," others as "little." The Talmud reckons them all at six hundred and thirteen, of which three hundred and sixty-five are negative, and the remaining two hundred and forty-eight affirmative. Which of them, from its importance, was entitled to the first place in the enumeration, was a question on which there existed a great diversity of opinion, some contending for one, and some for another. Christ, by a philosophy as profound in its conception as simple in its expression, resolves all of them into two: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." The former he declares to be "the first and great commandment."

It may be proper to remark, that though the terms heart, soul, and mind, to which St. Mark adds strength, may, together, convey a somewhat fuller meaning than either would if used alone, are not, probably, so much intended to convey different ideas as to give force to the

precept by a reiteration of words of similar import, a usage by no means uncommon in the sacred writings.

Let us inquire what it is to love God as required in the text; whether a compliance with the command is practicable; and why it should be obeyed.

#### I. THE NATURE OF THE COMMAND.

Love, which consists of a pleasurable emotion and desire, is excited by the contemplation of an agreeable object; while hatred is excited by the contemplation of an object of an opposite character. Objects which are neither agreeable nor disagreeable are regarded with indifference, so far as the affections are concerned; and of those which move the affections, all do not move them in an equal degree. There may exist in the same object qualities both agreeable and disagreeable, exciting love or hatred as the mind is directed to the one class or the other. It is also well known that the same qualities do not affect all alike; what is agreeable to one being disagreeable to another; and, especially does this hold true of objects of a moral and religious character.

To love God, therefore, with all the heart, there must be nothing in his character, as revealed in his word and in his works, which is not to us agreeable in the highest possible degree. Most unqualifiedly must we approve of all that he is, and of all that he does; and while the mind dwells upon the perfections of his character, the heart must pour forth the richest treasures of its love, allowing him to sit enthroned in its affections, "the chiefest among ten thousand."

In order further to elucidate the subject, let us notice briefly some of the states of mind more or less intimately connected with the exercise of the affections required in the text. Of those who love God with all the heart it may be said that,

1. *All their desires center in God.* Every wish which

does not lead to him is cheerfully resigned. There may be other objects of desire, but they stand so related to God as to lead directly to him. And out of him they can not rest. Could they call the universe theirs, it would not satisfy their longings after God. "Whom," they exclaim, in the language of inspiration, "whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee." "As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." "My soul longeth after thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is."

2. *Their joys are all "in the Lord."* There is a delight and satisfaction experienced by those who love God with all the heart, arising from a contemplation of his character and from a mystic union with him, which often rises into a joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. He is the immediate source of all their richest joys; and as from him "cometh down every good and perfect gift," they enjoy the blessings of life as the gifts of his hand; so that they can truly say with the Psalmist, "All my springs are in thee." Of course, they neither find nor seek enjoyment in what God forbids. They are, therefore, no longer guilty of either of the two evils with which God charged his ancient people—that of forsaking him, the fountain of living waters, and of hewing them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

3. *Their obedience is universal and cheerful.* "If ye love me," says the Savior, "keep my commandments." Obedience is the fruit and evidence of love. Those we love we can not but desire to please, and as we know nothing is more pleasing to God than cheerful obedience, those who love him with all the heart, seek, in *all things*, to do his will; and this not of constraint, but willingly. His service is their delight. They rejoice in the opportunity of pleasing him, by keeping his commandments. There may be duties to be performed, from which their nature

shrinks; but they cheerfully make the sacrifice, that so they may please God. There may be crosses to be borne, but these they joyfully embrace as expressions of the Divine will; to do which, under all circumstances, is as their meat and drink. They no longer desire to choose their own ways, but gladly make the will of God their only rule of life. With a sincere heart they can sing:

“Thou seest, at last, I willing am,  
 Where'er thou go'st, to follow thee;  
 Myself in all things to deny;  
 Thine, wholly thine, to live and die.  
 My fond pursuits I all give o'er;  
 Thou, only thou, resolved to obey:  
 My own in all things to resign,  
 And know no other will but thine.”

4. *They are resigned to all God does.* He may afflict them, and afflict them deeply, still from the heart can they say, “Good is the will of the Lord;” “Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.” They would not have it otherwise; not because any affliction can, for the present, be joyous—it must, of necessity, be grievous; but it is the will of God they should suffer; and he who loves God with all the heart, desires, above all things else, that God's will should be done. There are those who submit to the providences of God simply because they can not resist them. They may profess to acquiesce in them, though in their hearts they regret their occurrence; and were it permitted them, most gladly would they lay their hand upon the wheel of providence and reverse its movements. But not so they in whose hearts the love of God reigns supreme. In their deepest afflictions they can say, “Not my will, but thine be done.”

5. *They fear no evil.* “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear.” That which is feared, with a fear that “hath torment,” can not be loved; therefore, “he that feareth is not made perfect in love.” But those who love God with a perfect heart, see nothing in him to

fear; none of his attributes are arrayed against them. It was not till his anger was turned aside, and they assured of his favor, that their love was made perfect. And as to evils from any other source, they rest in equal security. He who is for them is mightier than all their foes, and has not only promised that nothing shall harm them, but that all things shall work together for their good.

6. *Their love of created objects is not opposed to the love of God.* This is not true of the love of forbidden objects, or of any inordinate love. All such love withdraws the heart from God. But they love only what God permits, and in the degree which he allows; and such love in no way limits their love to him, but rather tends to increase it. Every particle of matter in a secondary planet is attracted by the primary around which it revolves; but this does not diminish the force of the attraction by which it is held by the sun; indeed, from the relation which the primary holds to the sun, this serves as another chain to bind still stronger the secondary to the great center around which both, in perfect harmony, revolve. Those who love God with all the heart, love all other objects as the creatures of God; and as they

“Look through nature up to nature’s God,”

so their affections flow through the creature up to the Creator.

7. *They love their neighbor as themselves.* He whose heart is not right toward his neighbor can not have his heart right toward God; “for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? And this commandment we have from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.”

Such is the state of his heart who obeys this first, this great command. Let us next inquire,

## II. IS OBEDIENCE PRACTICABLE?

Can we love God with all the heart? That we are

required to do so, is presumptive evidence that we can. God is not a hard master. He requires impossibilities of none. To command what can not be performed, and then punish for the unavoidable disobedience, would be manifestly unjust.

But the subject demands a fuller investigation. None can doubt but that angels do thus love God, nor that Adam did before he fell, nor yet that the redeemed in heaven do, and will eternally. But can fallen man do it in this present state? It is a well-known law of the affections, that they are not under the immediate control of the will. We can not but love certain objects, when they are present to the mind, and hate others. To reverse the action of the affections, in this respect, by a simple volition, is impossible. As well might we attempt to reverse any other law of the mind. Whether we love or hate an object, depends upon the relation existing between it and our minds—upon its agreeableness or disagreeableness. Now, it is an unquestionable fact, that the unrenewed do not find the contemplation of God in his true character agreeable. They may admire the exhibitions of his wisdom and power, as seen in his works, but they find no pleasure in meditating upon his truthfulness, his holiness, or his justice. To think of God as he is, and as he stands related to them, renders them unhappy. They choose not, therefore, a knowledge of his ways. They banish the idea of him from their minds. "He is not in all their thoughts." That they can not, therefore, love him while in this state is perfectly obvious. Still, that they are without excuse will be seen from what follows.

But can the Christian whose heart has been renewed love God as required in the text? That the heart is not wholly sanctified at conversion, at least as a general thing, is most clearly proved from Scripture and experience. For a full and masterly discussion of this point I refer to

Mr. Wesley's sermon on "Sin in Believers," from which I quote the following passage: "There are, in every person, even after he is justified, two contrary principles—nature and grace—termed by St. Paul the *flesh* and the *spirit*. Hence, although babes in Christ are sanctified, it is only in part." Such surely do not love God with *all the heart*; nor can they, while in this state of grace. So far as the heart is unsanctified, its love to God must of necessity be imperfect. All his nature is radiant with holiness, and between holiness and sin there can be no affinity. The heart, just in proportion to the sin that dwells in it, must feel an aversion to God, and, in the same proportion, withhold its love. Before the Christian can love God with all his heart, his heart must be sanctified *wholly*. The question, therefore, resolves itself into this: May the Christian be thus sanctified in this life? The settlement of this great question must depend upon the teachings of Scripture, though the testimony of reason and experience may be called in as collateral evidence. And "what saith the Scriptures?"

Let it be borne in mind that, while in an unrenewed state, man loves sin and hates holiness. This is the natural movement of the affections; nor can he reverse it. He may be conscious of being bound, by the cords of love, to the foul idols of sin, and, under the influences of the Spirit, he may deplore it. Still, so unavailing are all his efforts to sunder these cords, in his extremity he is heard to cry out, "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Till there is a radical change wrought in his heart, there can be no deliverance. He must be "created anew" before he can love what he now hates, and hate what he now loves. The same holds true of the believer, so far as his heart remains unsanctified, and similar is his experience. Many are the clouds of darkness that often hover over his mind

and fill his soul with fear and doubts. How often, too, in bitterness of spirit, he exclaims:

“’Tis worse than death my God to love,  
And not my God alone!”

His affections are given in part to idols:

“Nor can he call them thence;”

and he finds that this inordinate “love of the world” is incompatible with the “love of the Father.” Two things must, therefore, be accomplished in him before he can keep the “great commandment.” The bias of the heart toward “idols” or forbidden objects must be overcome, and a positive tendency given it toward holiness. This is what he can not do for himself, nor can it be done for him except by God alone. May he expect that God will perform the work? Let him turn and read these encouraging words: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you;” “And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” Can he ask for a larger promise? Can it be enlarged? Here is a cleansing that makes “clean,” not in part only, but from “*ALL filthiness.*” Here is a taking away of the “idols” of the heart; not of a part merely, but the promise is, “*From ALL your idols will I cleanse you.*” And this is not all. The heart thus *cleansed* from sin—its affections withdrawn from forbidden objects—may be *circumcised to love God*—to love him “*with ALL the heart and with ALL the soul.*”

To him, then, who believes the promise, a compliance with the command is possible. For what is the command? “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” And what is the promise? “The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, to love the Lord thy God with all thy

heart and with all thy soul." Most obviously *what is required in the command God here promises to enable us to perform.* But does presumptuous unbelief inquire whether he will fulfill his promise? "This is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us; and if we know he hear us, whatsoever we ask we know we have the petitions that we desire of him;" "For he is faithful that promised;" "Faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and *to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;*" "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he can not deny himself." That we ask in accordance with his will, when we present his own promise with a sincere desire for its fulfillment, there can be no doubt. But upon this point we have an express declaration of his will: "For this is his will, even your sanctification." That the entire work is here embraced, is manifest from the prayer of the apostle which immediately follows: "And the very God of peace sanctify you *wholly.*" And that the work may be accomplished before death, is proved by the petition with which he concludes the prayer: "And I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be *preserved* blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Scriptures do, therefore, teach that man may be sanctified wholly in this life. And why should this be "thought a thing incredible?" "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" And does not this work magnify the riches of his grace? And is not the Christian, whose heart is cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, better prepared to do his will?

To this, also, has agreed the experience of many believers in, perhaps, all ages. There have not been wanting those who could say, from personal experience, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin," and who could, therefore, add, "His love is perfected in us."

## III. WHY SHOULD THE COMMAND BE OBEYED?

1. *Because it is a command of God.* He has a right to command, and we are under the strongest possible obligations to obey. Let none forget this. God *commands* us to love him "with all the heart." We can not withhold any part of our affections, and be guiltless.

2. *He is infinitely worthy of being thus loved.* He is the center of all moral excellency. In him dwells every possible perfection. He is "the chiefest among ten thousand;" yea, "he is altogether lovely."

3. "*Because he first loved us,*" and so loved us, as to give his Son to die for us. If love should beget love, then should his love to us secure our undivided hearts; for who can tell the depths of his love for our sinful race? "For, instead of love, simple, and bending itself, without difficulty, to the happiness of its object, it was a love which, ere it could reach the guilty being it groaned after, had to force the barriers of a necessity which, to all human appearance, was insuperable. The law; the mountain of these iniquities that separated us from God; the high and holy characteristics of that Being who is unchangeable, stood in its way; and the mystery which angels desired to look into was, how the Eternal, who sits on heaven's throne, could at once be a just God and the Savior. The love of God, with such an obstacle, and trying to get over it, is a higher exhibition than all his love which radiates from his throne on all the sinless angels." (Chalmers.)

4. *It will increase our usefulness.* 1. Our *example* will tend to lead others into this highway of holiness—the way of perfect love, which is eminently a way of great peace, and of joy unspeakable. How many, through our example, might be brought into this good and right way? 2. Our personal influence will be greater, because of the consistency of our lives, and the exhibition of our heavenly-mindedness. 3. It will prompt us to greater activity in

the discharge of duty. When "love drives our chariot-wheels," we make good speed. The pure spirits who dwell before the throne, and whose hearts burn with angelic love, "rest not day nor night."

5. *It will promote our present and future good.* 1. Our highest enjoyments spring from love. The emotional element of this passion is always pleasurable. To love is to be happy, though the degree of happiness depends upon the nature of the object and the intensity of the affection. But love consists also of desire; and the gratification of desire is likewise a source of enjoyment. He who loves God desires union with him. As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth his soul after God; and the more ardent his love, the more intense his desire, while, at the same time, the more intimate is the union into which God receives him. 2. God will love us the more, and confer upon us additional favors. Among the disciples there was probably no other one who loved the Savior as ardently as John; and he was "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and whom he permitted to lean upon his bosom at the last supper, and to whom he revealed himself in holy vision on the isle at Patmos. 3. It will greatly aid us in the regulation of the affections with reference to other objects, and exert a most beneficial influence upon the understanding. 4. It will render the performance of duty more easy and pleasant. It will make Christ's yoke easy and his burden light. God's "commandments are not grievous" to those who love him with all their heart; but the doing of them is as their meat and drink. 5. As it will lead us to do more for the glory of God, it will increase our eternal reward.

I have thus endeavored to explain what it is to love God with all the heart; to show that, by availing ourselves of the gracious aids which God is ever ready to vouchsafe, we may thus love him; and to urge, very

briefly, some of the considerations and reasons why we should do it.

In conclusion, let me inquire, who of us are keeping this command? There may be none of my readers who are willing to acknowledge that they have no love to God; but may there not be such? Remember you are liable to be deceived. God himself declares the heart to be deceitful above all things. Examine it carefully. How is it affected by a contemplation of God? When you think of him as a God of infinite holiness and justice, as a sin-avenging God, as well as a God of benevolence and a rewarder of the righteous, is your heart drawn out in love to him? Do you long for union and communion with him? Do you rejoice in the privilege of denying yourself that you may please him? If a stranger to such an experience, then are you a stranger to the love of God. You are living in the constant violation of this first and great commandment; and while you are violating this, you are "guilty of all;" for he who does not love God can not love his neighbor; and these two duties embrace "all the law and the prophets." O, how must your guilt be increasing! How must you be treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath! No longer refuse to love him who has so loved you, lest his wrath be kindled against you, and you perish from the way. O, beware! Remember with whom you have to do. Though God bears long with you and is kind, still his forbearance has its bounds. He will recompense vengeance upon those who continue his enemies. But why must the "terrors of the Lord" be urged to induce you to keep this reasonable command? Can you resist the appeals of his love? "God is love," and he loves you as no other being in the universe can. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" "But God commended his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

Others of my readers may love God, but not with *all the heart*. And why do you withhold a part of your affections? Is God unworthy of being loved as he requires? or do your interests or the interests of others forbid it? Can any good reason be assigned why he should not rule supreme in every heart? I appeal to you, my Christian brother: ought you not to love God with all your heart? Let this question be definitely settled, and settled at once. And surely you can come to no other conclusion than that you ought to do it. Then *will* you do it? Need I wait for a reply? Is it still an unsettled point with you, whether God shall be obeyed or disobeyed? And does he not now command you thus to love him? Can you refuse to do it, and not violate as positive a precept as the Bible contains? Alas! that we should plead for our idols, as if they were necessary to our happiness, and withhold our affections from Him, whom to love is "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

But, perhaps I address some who are anxious to renounce the last idol, and give to God their undivided heart; but while to will is present with them, how to perform they find not. You may be trying to love God with all your heart, while it is sanctified but in part. That can not be. It must first be cleansed. And this is God's work. True, *you must give it up* to him; but he alone can make it clean. And he will be inquired of to do this thing for you. Wilt thou, then, be made whole? If so, approach the mercy-seat and plead the promise, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you." Do you believe this promise? Let this point be settled in your mind. Is God true and faithful? Or will he deny himself? Dare not to doubt, for to doubt is to sin. Believe! God can not lie. What he has promised he will perform. Take hold of his promise.

Plead the merits of your adorable Redeemer. Dictate not *how* the work shall be wrought; only ask that it may be done. Let patience have its perfect work while still you plead. Lay all upon the altar, and as you agonize before the throne, *believe*, and it shall "be unto thee even as thou wilt."

And now unto Him who hath washed us in his own blood, be honor, dominion, and power, world without end!

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### SERMON III.

BY REV. JAMES L. GROVER.

PRESENT SUFFERINGS AND FUTURE GLORY.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us," Rom. VIII, 18.

THE first point of illustration suggested in the text, is the "*sufferings of this present time.*" By this expression must be understood the various afflictions, and sorrows, and trials of the present life. These tribulations and sufferings have been entailed upon us in consequence of original sin. They are portions of the original curse from which we shall never be released in the present world. Whether we are righteous or wicked, we must still feel the effects of that act of disobedience, on the part of our first parents, which "brought death into our world with all our woes." "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;" "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble;" "His flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn." Where is the heart that has not been riven with anguish? Where is the home that has not been rendered desolate by death? Where is the

eye that has not been filled with the tears of sadness? Look out upon the world in all directions; survey the varied scenes of human life, and you will find the history of earth, like the prophet's roll, "written within and without with lamentation, and mourning, and woe." In addition to those common afflictions, of which all are partakers, the follower of Christ has some peculiar trials to which the man of the world is a stranger. That there are trials peculiar to the Christian, in this life, is plainly asserted in the Bible. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous." Moses, it is said, chose rather to *suffer affliction with the people of God*, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. The offense of the cross has not yet ceased, and, indeed, it will not cease, till the world shall be renovated by divine grace. The storm of bloody persecution, with its fires, and racks, and tortures, may long since have passed away; but it is still a standing truth, that those who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. The finger of scorn will be pointed at them, and they will become the jest of the foolish and wicked. That this is the case, is not only confirmed by observation, and the word of God, but the reason of its being so is explained by Jesus Christ. "Ye are not of the world," says he, "for then the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore, the world hateth you."

With reference to the sufferings of the present time, so far as the Christian is concerned, I make the three following remarks:

In the *first* place, *the follower of Christ has the promise of grace to sustain him in all the afflictions and trials of life*. While the man of the world is left single-handed and alone to contend with the buffetings of Satan and the infirmities and afflictions that surround him, the promise to the Christian is, "My grace shall be sufficient." He

will temper the wind to the shorn lamb. You have a merciful and faithful High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of your infirmities. He is no stranger to the sorrows and afflictions of life; for in the days of his incarnation he leaned upon the staff of suffering till it pierced his hands, his feet, his side. He will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able to bear. The furnace of affliction will never be heated beyond your power of endurance. In the darkest hours of conflict and suffering the Christian will hear the voice of the good Shepherd, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." While he is thus comforted and sustained, he will realize that

"Labor is rest, and pain is sweet,  
If thou, my God, art near."

In the *second* place, when suffering the afflictions of the present time, the Christian is assured that *they will all be sanctified to his good*. They are intended to bring him nearer the Savior in this life, and to work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the world to come. That these results will be produced by the "sufferings of this present time," we learn from the positive teachings of the word of God. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." Here you perceive that the virtues and graces of the Christian are matured and perfected in consequence of the tribulations of the present life. And with reference to their influence upon the Christian in the future world, it is said by the apostle "that the trial of your faith being much more precious than that of gold, which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and glory, and honor, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." If, then, the afflictions of this life are intended to strengthen and mature the graces of the Christian, to purify his heart, and elevate his affections, and secure to him everlasting

life in heaven, surely, when pressed beneath the weight of care and affliction, as the cart beneath the weighty sheaves, he should glory in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon him.

In the *third* place, the afflictions of the Christian *are confined to the present life*, and, of course, will soon terminate. This fact is suggested in the language of the text. The apostle speaks of them as the "*sufferings of this present time*;" that is, the present mode of existence. Death will soon wind up for you and for me the history of our joys and sorrows, so far as the present life is concerned. How rapid is the journey from the cradle to the grave! Time, in its noiseless flight, is rapidly bearing us away! While it is a solemn truth, on the one hand, that death will soon put an end to all the good that the wicked will ever enjoy, it is equally true, on the other hand, that death will put an end to all the evil that the righteous will ever suffer. The afflictions of the righteous are of but momentary duration; they will continue but for a season. What, then, are threescore years and ten of suffering and conflict, compared with an eternity of joy in the world to come? The sufferings of this present time, it must not be forgotten, are always attended with mitigating circumstances. You never saw an example of suffering so extreme but might have been augmented. Indeed, to the Christian there is far more of pleasure than pain, of joy than of sorrow, in the present world. But however mixed the cup of happiness may be, in this life, there will be no admixture of evil in the cup of the believer's happiness in heaven. No sigh of sorrow will ever be wafted on the breezes of glory; no tear of sadness will ever be seen in heaven; there, no bosom will ever swell with anguish; no wave of trouble will ever roll across our peaceful breast. Surely, then, we need no further illustration of the fact, that the "*sufferings of this present time* are

not worthy to be compared with the joys of heaven." There is no proportion between them. The proportion is less than between the smallest particle of sand on the ocean shore and the mighty globe we inhabit. "The sufferings of the present time" are momentary, while, on the other hand, the joys of heaven are unending. "The sufferings of the present time" are always attended with mitigating circumstances; in every case they might be increased; while, on the other hand, the joys of heaven will be pure, unalloyed, perfect; joy without sorrow; pleasure without pain; health without sickness; life without death. Such, then, are some of the "sufferings of the present time," and such the sources of consolation to the Christian, when called to endure those sufferings and trials.

In the *second* place, our attention is directed in the text to the "*glory that shall be revealed in us.*" And, *first, a glorious change will take place in these bodies of ours.* Our bodies have undergone a great change since they came from the Creator's hand. The body was not originally subject to disease, or infirmity, or death. If the body did not originally contain in itself the elements of immortality, yet, by having uninterrupted access to the "tree of life," its existence would have been perpetuated forever. But in consequence of original sin, our bodies have been made subject to disease, and suffering, and death. The decree has gone forth, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." But at the last day, in the morning of the resurrection, our bodies will be raised in incorruption, and beauty, and glory. With reference to the resurrected body the apostle says, "It is sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it shall be raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body." It is here

claimed, I am aware, that the apostle denies the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. It is insisted that he teaches that our bodies will be *spirits*, and that being the case, the material body will be forever lost in the grave. It is worthy of especial remark, that the apostle does not say that our bodies will become *spirits*, but *spiritual*. When, then, may a body be said to be spiritual? A body may be said to be spiritual, when it resembles a spirit in some important particulars. In what important particulars will our bodies be made to resemble spirits? They will resemble spirits in this, that they will no more be subject to infirmity, or corruption, or death. They will be so refined and purified by the power of God, that, like spirits, they will never need rest, or food, or sleep to restore and preserve their powers and energies. The gross materials entering into the composition of these bodies will be thrown off, for "flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of heaven." In every congregation in this world, you see the marks of infirmity and age. With some the silver cord is loosening, and the golden bowl is breaking; the almond-tree begins to flourish; those that look out of the windows are darkened; the grinders cease because they are few; the strong men bow themselves, and the daughters of music are brought low. But in heaven it will not be so. Among all the countless multitudes who will stand redeemed and blood-washed upon the mount of God, and through all the endless ages of eternity, there will be no trembling limbs, nor furrowed cheeks, nor palpitating hearts, nor heads blossoming to the grave; but in health, and youth, and beauty, our bodies shall live forever, the fit companions of glorified spirits, and with the velocity of thought may move and fly over the hills and plains of immortality, while above, and beneath, and around, and afar, and within, and without, all shall be heaven—pure, holy, and happy; "where,

day without night, we shall feast in his sight, and all eternity employ in songs around the throne."

In the *second* place, the glory of God will be revealed *in the place prepared for the residence of his people*. This is a beautiful world that we now inhabit. We can not look upon it, in its continents and islands; its hills, and valleys, and plains, and fields, and forests; its oceans, and rivers, and fountains, and streams; its minerals, and fruits, and flowers; the varied productions of air, and earth, and seas, without being led to admire the Hand that has spread these blessings around us in such rich profusion. But this earth is not to be the final abode of man. The curse of God rests upon it in consequence of sin. Much of its original beauty has faded away. Though well adapted to the wants and condition of man, in this life, it would not be adapted to his wants and condition in the future world. Hence, Jesus Christ has gone to "*prepare a place*" for us. He has fitted up for his people a glorious home, where there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy. And with the idea of heaven we associate every thing beautiful and brilliant, every thing sweet and melodious—where there are trees of life, and pastures green, and peaceful bowers, and crystal fountains—every thing to meet our wants, and satisfy our desires forever and ever. There all tears shall be wiped from all faces. Sickness and sorrow, pain and death, will be felt and feared no more. There friends shall meet again who have loved; and when we have been there as many millions of ages as there are stars in the firmament, or spears of grass on the green earth, multiplied by millions and millions more, heaven, with all its swelling joys, will spread out before us with infinite beauty and glory.

"Our days of praise shall ne'er be past,  
While life, or thought, or being lasts,  
Or immortality endures."

In the *third* place, the glory of God will be revealed in us in the *enlargement of our intellectual powers and faculties*. Here knowledge is acquired with care, and labor, and toil. The mind, with all its powers, the memory, and judgment, and will, have suffered greatly from the fall. We are liable to a thousand mistakes and errors; and, after the closest study and the most careful and diligent research, how little do we know of God, or of ourselves, or the world around us! We find ourselves surrounded with mystery on every hand. We can not comprehend the most familiar truths of nature. "I have," said Isaac Newton, the great philosopher, "gathered a few diamonds from the shore of truth; but the great ocean is still before me." Many are compelled to remain in comparative ignorance, for the want of means or opportunity of acquiring useful knowledge. This will not be the case with the redeemed and glorified in heaven. There the energies of the mind will not be enfeebled by a body full of infirmity, and tending to corruption. There, in one hour, you will learn more of God and the realities of the future state, of things present and things to come, than could be learned in a lifetime in the present world. "Here we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Here we see through a glass darkly; there we shall see face to face. With angel, and seraphim, and cherubim, and all the spirits of the just made perfect, we shall gaze with unclouded vision and with transports of delight upon the glorious perfections of the Godhead, as they are forever unfolding in the person of Jesus Christ. In heaven, the mind will be making endless progress in knowledge. The powers of the soul will be forever expanding and enlarging—taking in wider ranges of thought, and comprehending the most astonishing developments of truth; so that in heaven we will be ready to say, with

reference to the grandest discoveries of the human intellect in this world, “‘Once I thought as a child; I spake as a child; I understood as a child;’ but now I see as I am seen; I know as I am known; I now behold things in the light of eternity, where truth, without any admixture of error, is reflected from the great Source of light and joy, in whom are the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

*Lastly:* the glory that is to be revealed in us will be manifested in the *perfection of our moral nature*. Without moral purity there would be no enjoyment in heaven. Never do I desire to “see the king in his beauty, or behold the land that is afar off,” without holiness of heart. Without moral purity, I would sigh for repose though surrounded with joys of the upper world; I would hunt in vain for heaven amid the bowers of paradise. There must be an adaptation in our moral nature to the condition and the society of the pure and holy, or otherwise we would be utterly miserable in the kingdom of heaven.

In this world how much of imperfection is mingled with our very best performances, our songs of praise, and acts of religious devotion! How many improper and sinful thoughts will be suggested by surrounding circumstances or the devices of Satan! What a constant effort does it require to keep our minds staid upon God! But in heaven all traces of impurity will be forever removed. There will be nothing to divert our attention, or lead our affections away from God. He will be the great center of every thought, and wish, and desire. With bodies renewed by power divine, and souls refined and purified by the precious blood of Christ, “far from a world of grief and sin,” where God himself will dwell with his people, and lead them forth to fountains of living water, we will live, and reign, and triumph forever.

If such is to be the glorious position of those who suffer with Christ and for Christ, well may we adopt the lan-

guage of the text, and say, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

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## SERMON IV.

BY REV. JOHN W. WEAKLEY.

THE SECURITY OF THE CHURCH.\*

"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," MATTHEW XVI, 18.

THE erection of every new Christian temple is a cause for rejoicing, and can never be regarded with indifference by the true friends of Christ. In it we see the expansion of benevolence, the outgoings of Divine love, the march of truth, the power of grace, and the victories of the Son of God. This gift, prepared and presented to the great Head of the Church to-day, teaches us this impressive and encouraging lesson: In it we learn that the vital principle of Christianity here is still alive, fresh, and vigorous, and that its *watchword is onward*.

As a profitable subject, on the present occasion, for meditation and improvement, we have selected the Scripture we have just read. It will lead us to speak of the *Church*, its *foundation* and *security*.

I. Then, we notice the fact that Christ has established a Church in the world. It does not enter into our present arrangements to detain you with a learned criticism upon the term Church. For our present purpose, it is sufficient to state that the Church of Christ is an assembly of true believers, united in affection, and pledged to walk and live

\* Preached at the dedication of Park-street Chapel, Cincinnati, December 30, 1849.

by the rules of their divine Master. Every society of true Christians is a Church, and is so denominated in the New Testament, while the whole body of the faithful throughout the world constitutes the general Church of Christ; and it is in this enlarged sense the term is employed in the text.

God has always had a Church; the world has never been without one; and whenever there ceases to be a Church, this must cease to be a world. True, the Church did not always have a "local habitation;" but whether it suffered with Abel, the first martyr, or journeyed with such men as Enoch, who walked with God and was not, or floated with Noah upon the waters of a deluge, or, with Abraham, erected an altar upon Mount Moriah, or, with the Hebrews, groaned in Egyptian bondage, or for forty years wandered in the wilderness, still there was a Church as really as when Solomon prayed in the Temple, "Arise, O, Lord God, into thy resting-place, thou and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests, O, Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness;" or, as when the sons of Korah sung, "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generations following; for this God is our God forever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death."

But this Church, with all its glory, was but the type of a better; the shadow of good things to come; a preparation day; the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Hence, during the whole history of the Old Testament Christ was shadowed forth and predicted as the founder of the Church on better principles and under a new covenant.

*He came into the world,* as foretold, and the long night of promise closed; the clouds dispersed; the morning dawned; the moral sky cleared up; the day-spring from

on high visited us; the light broke out; the Sun of righteousness arose; a bow of mercy arched the heavens, and, from it, heralding angels cried out, "On earth peace, and good-will toward men;" and the voice of the prophet's harp, coming down over the waste of ages, proclaimed, "He is the light of the Gentiles and the glory of Israel. Arise and shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

*He came into the world.* The substance of the shadows of four thousand years, and the realization of all former dispensations, and the Jewish ritual, the law of ceremonies, with its altars and fires, bleeding victims, smoking incense, and sin-offerings, terminated in him forever, who, now once in the end of the world, appeared, to put away sin, not by the blood of bulls, and goats, and calves, and the ashes of a heifer, but by his own blood, and, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself, without spot, to God as a sacrifice; and thus, by one offering, he has perfected forever them that are sanctified.

*He came into the world,* and the sound of trumpets ceased; devouring fire issued no longer out of smoking Sinai; justice thundered terribly and hopelessly no more; the voice of the insulted law was hushed in the streaming blood of our Immanuel, God, who thus opened up a new and living way, so that, without altars, and sacrificial victims, and sprinkling priests, we may draw nigh to God through him, the great propitiation, the world's sin-offering, and, by faith in his name, obtain remission of sin, sanctification, and heaven; for he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Thus, on better principles, he organized the Church, revealed God as occupying terms of mercy, as in him reconciling the world unto himself, and proclaiming that he who, under the Christian dispensation, believeth, shall be saved; and that now "the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let

him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely;" that is, avail himself of the great Gospel provisions, namely, pardon, sanctification, and eternal redemption. Here, then, a door of mercy—a door wide as the world—is opened up, not on Sinai, but on Calvary, to which we are invited to come, without money and without price, poor bankrupts as we are, and enter and seek supplies, and drive our wants away. But the text suggests for our consideration,

II. The foundation of the Church. "Upon this rock I will build my Church." This has long been a vexed question between Romanists and Protestants; and, without any intention to enter into the discussion which this passage has provoked, which, on the present occasion, would neither be profitable to you nor pleasant to me, I will be permitted to remark, as I pass,

1. If it be contended, as it is by Romanists, by the rock here, Christ meant Peter—not that they believe he is the real foundation of the Church, but that he is the foundation in this sense, as being exalted to supreme authority above all the other apostles; that he was Christ's vicar-general on earth, absolute and infallible, and so his successors forever in the Romish hierarchy—if this be the sense contended for, we beg leave to enter our solemn protest; because, as the Scriptures elsewhere teach, he never had any such absolute authority above the other apostles; nor did he ever claim it; and as to his boasted infallibility, if ever conferred, it was but the creature of a day; for, in a very short time afterward, he denied his Lord and Master with cursings and bitterness; and subsequently St. Paul, who says he was born out of due time, and one of the least of the apostles, informs us that he withstood Peter to the face, because he was to blame, reproving him publicly, to which he submitted. If this be

the supremacy and infallibility of the successors of Peter, they are welcome to it; for we shall never enter the arena of strife to contend for so empty a thing.

2. But once more: if it be contended, as it is by some Protestants, that by the rock Peter is meant in this modified sense, namely, as a suitable person to whom Christ committed the keys of the Gospel kingdom, and thus conferred upon him special honor to open its doors both to Jews and Gentiles, to this we are not disposed to take any very serious exceptions; for such is the fact. He did open the doors of the Church to the Jews and Gentiles: to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand were converted under one sermon; then to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. Thus it might possibly refer to him, as he laid the foundation of the Christian Church among the different nations, by first publishing the Gospel; a foundation on which millions have built, and built safely, who have gone home and taken possession of that glorious inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, which he told the strangers, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, was reserved in heaven for them and all who were kept by the power of God, ready to be revealed at the last time.

3. But again: if it be contended, as it is by others, that by the rock is meant the confession of faith which Peter had just made of the Messiahship and divinity of the Son of God—for it will be remembered that Jesus had just asked the disciples, “Whom do men say that I am? They reply, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Then he said to them, But whom say ye that I am? To which Peter replied, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”—now, if the meaning is, upon this rock, this great truth which he had just confessed, namely, that Jesus was the Messiah; that upon such faith in all men

he would build his Church; that such faith should be the test of piety, and that by such faith his Church should stand amid the flames of persecution and the fury of hell, we shall not demur much; for faith in Christianity is a *sine qua non*. It is the foundation of every man's religion. It is the first essential element in every man's personal salvation. Without it, every thing else will avail us nothing, and we are lost; but with it, destitute of every thing else, our salvation is certain. Thus Peter considered it, and hence placed it at the foundation of Christian character when he said, "Add to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge," etc. In the days of the apostles a confession of the Messiahship of Christ was the great, distinguishing mark between Christians and the world. The Jews, in their infidelity, stumbled at Christ, considered him an impostor, and put him to death, while the Greeks, in their vaunted wisdom, esteemed the preaching of Christ crucified foolishness, and, with the heathen world, still clung to their altars and their gods. Thus faith, in this sense, is a sure foundation, on which the individual and collective salvation of the Church stands, so that, as this faith obtains, the foundation of the Church consolidates, settles deeper, grows stronger, and spreads out wider, till the hopes of a perishing world, lighted up with immortal fires, shall rest upon it in perfect safety.

4. Or if, in conclusion on this point, as many say, by the rock Christ himself is meant; that he is the rock, the foundation of the Church here spoken of, we shall certainly interpose no objection; for this will suit us very much; especially as your speaker has always understood that upon this foundation rock, Christ Jesus, he has built his hopes of eternal life; and because this view of the subject is supported by the Scriptures: "Behold I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner, a sure foundation, disallowed, indeed, of men, but

chosen of God and precious. This stone the builders rejected; but it is become the head-stone of the corner." On this the Church is founded. Hence, says St. Paul, "We are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." Then whoever first opened the doors of the Gospel kingdom, whoever first confessed the Messiahship of Jesus, and whatever relation such faith may bear to salvation, and whatever agency the prophets and apostles may have had in founding the Church, so as to claim to be the foundation thereof, we ought not, we never will forget, that Jesus Christ himself is the chief corner-stone on which the massive structure of patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, martyrs, confessors, and the saints of all ages, has rested, does now, and will forever, rest, till the top-stone shall be added with shoutings of grace; grace unto it, and on, forever on, while Deity lives and eternity shall endure.

(1.) But whatever this rock may mean, it does denote a firm and immovable foundation. The rocks from which the sacred writers drew their metaphors were immense masses, towering mountains of solid rock, which no power could ever move or dislodge. The custom of taking refuge therein or building thereon was very common, and, in most cases, safe. Hence, Christ likens the wise man to one who built his house upon a rock, which, when the floods came, the winds blew, and the rain descended, fell not, because it was founded upon a rock, while the tempest and the desolating flood carried away the habitation of his neighbor, which was built upon the sand. Like the fastnesses of these everlasting rocks, which stand the fury of the wildest storms, and are still immovable, lifting up their rocky frameworks to the clouds, so the foundation of the Church here spoken of is solid, firm, and immovable,

defying the engines of earth and the battering-rams of hell to unsettle or dislodge it.

(2.) But again: whatever this rock may mean, it does denote strength—great power of resistance; for rocks were resorted to as places of defense. When the Benjaminites were overcome, and almost exterminated by the other tribes, they secured themselves in the rock Rimmon. Sampson took refuge in the rock Etam, where he permitted himself to be dislodged by the persuasion of his friends, and not by the power of his enemies. There are no fortifications like rocks. Before the invention of gunpowder they were absolutely impregnable. What an immense idea of the strength and power of the Church is here presented! As the habitation of a rock yielded to no resistance, so the refugees could scarcely or ever be taken from their strongholds; so the habitation of the Church shall never yield to the attacks of men or the assaults of devils, while those who have taken refuge therein may in triumph cry out, “None are able to pluck us out of his hands,” and that “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heights, nor depths, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.”

(3.) But once more: whatever this rock may mean, it does denote durability. Rocks are permanent and lasting. They grow not weak with age, nor decay with time, but continue the same from one generation to another. The tooth of Time has gnawed down ten thousand monuments of art; his rude hand has laid the pride and glory of a thousand kingdoms in the dust; his steeds and chariot he has driven over the ruins of once populous cities, whose very location he has blotted out; before his desolating march youth grows old, vigor enervates, beauty fades, empires decay and die; but Mounts Hor and Horeb still stand;

and Sinai, rock-built, rock-ribbed, rock-capt, thunder-riven, storm-beaten Sinai, still lifts up its solitary form with the same awful grandeur that it did when God in majesty came down upon its quaking summit, and gave each ragged rock a mouth to speak his majesty in thunder-tones, or to flash upon awe-struck Israel the consuming fires of his justice. So the foundation of the Church is lasting. On its granite Time shall write no changes. His gnawing tooth and wasting hand shall work in vain. He shall never drive his steeds and chariot over its ruins. And when at last he shall have upheaved Sinai, melted the Alps and Appenines, still our *foundation stone* will remain; for it is the rock of ages, without beginning of days or end of years; and on it, the Church, lifting itself up, shall arise, till it reposes its broad capital amid the daylight of heaven. Here, then, we may build our hopes; here we may build them in confidence; here we may build them in safety; and no where else; for other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Christ Jesus.

“Here is firm footing; here is solid rock;  
This can sustain us; all is sea beside.”

This brings us to notice,

III. The security of the Church, which Christ guarantees to us in the promise, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” This promise, that the *gates of hell, or hades, shall not prevail* against the Church, has been differently understood by commentators. As hades is the place of departed spirits, the gates of hell, or hades, has been understood to mean death. The promise is, then, understood to mean that the Church of Christ shall endure forever, from one generation to another, to the end of time—that death shall not so prevail against it that it shall ever cease to be. While we grant that this is a most cheering and important truth, that the Church will survive the ravages of death upon her membership, and that,

while millions shall be taken from the fellowship of the saints below to the sanctuary on high, millions more will still remain in the Church militant, while the world shall stand. Important as this sense is, it does not well comport with the imagery of the text. The idea suggested by the Church being built upon massive foundation stones indicates its power to resist the assaults of war, like the strong fortresses of antiquity, built amid imperishable rocks, while the word to prevail indicates the application of violent force, as an assault of an enemy, to vanquish and subdue—a metaphor which can not well apply to express the slow and silent wastes of death. By hades, then, we may understand the region which is not only the receptacle of the wicked dead, but the abode of the devil and his angels, who are represented as having dominion there, and who issue out from this abyss to carry on their ravages among men, to oppose the doctrines of Christ, and disturb and harass the Church. The gates, here, is an allusion to a custom which prevailed in ancient cities. In the gates of these cities the sovereign and his chief men held their councils, and arranged the plans for peace or war. Gates, then, may mean councils, designs, machinations, evil purposes, while the obvious meaning of the whole passage is, that all the plots, stratagems, and machinations of all the enemies of the Church on earth or in hell, shall never triumph over it.

The text clearly implies that the Church should meet with the most powerful and violent opposition, and its subsequent history confirms its truth. The infant Jesus was scarcely born till a council was held in the gates of hell, and an emissary, in the person of Herod, was dispatched on earth to put him to death. Defeated here, hell did not grow weary; that council did not adjourn its sessions; plot after plot was laid; one stratagem after another was tried; infernal ingenuity was put to the rack to thwart

the purposes of God, and crush the hope of the world. The Jews, leagued with the devil, failed too. Then his Satanic majesty came on an express to earth himself, in the form of an angel of light, to seduce the Son of God; but he failed. At last, however, they supposed they had succeeded. A mob seized him, tried him, condemned him. They hang him on the cross. Dogs gather round him. The assembly of the wicked encompass him. The bulls of Bashan roar upon him. He bowed his head, and died. The heavens were black. The earth was crazy. Hell shouted. They carried him to the sepulcher. *All seemed lost!* But hark! on the morning of the third day, in that lone sepulcher, sealed with a Roman seal, and surrounded with a Roman guard, I hear the conflict of elements, the prancing of steeds, the rushing of armies, the sound of war. A battle is fought there, on the cold pavement of death; and death, hell, and the grave are vanquished, and the Son of God, having spoiled principalities and powers, comes forth and makes a show of them openly. He died like a man, but arose like a God, triumphed, and went up with a shout, "*All is well!*" A cloud of angels received him, escorting him home, crying, as they neared the eternal city, "Lift up your heads, O, ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in!" He entered, took his regal seat, while the voice of paternal Divinity proclaimed aloud, amid the prostrate hosts of heaven, "Thy throne, O, God, is forever and ever; sit thou here, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Defeated here, in the gates of hell that council met again, and resolved that the Church He had thus purchased and planted in his blood and death-groans must be exterminated; but as they did not prevail against its glorious founder, so neither shall they prevail against it.

1. They shall not prevail against its safety. This is

secured. If ever it was in peril, it was in her infancy, when all her members could meet in an upper room, and they poor, unlearned, and without power. But she passed through the rack, the gibbet, prisons, and fires; and while, by their infernal tortures, many were transferred from earth to heaven, yet the foundation stood unhurt, and the living principle of Christianity was still instinct with life. Thus, safe amid the warring of elements, the tumultuous rolling of the sea, the upheaving of the foundations of society, the revolutions of states, the rage of men, and the malice of devils, she is still alive and safe, at high noon of the nineteenth century. If, when the world was filled with her defamation, her property confiscated, prisons glutted with her membership, racks and tortures invented, and fires kindled to exterminate her, it was found that confiscations could not scatter her, prisons could not hold her, fires could not burn her up, what shall we fear now? for her security still is, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against her."

2. But again: they shall not prevail against her progress. The Church was not only to continue, but to continue to accomplish her great designs on earth, in disseminating light, in reforming mankind, and revolutionizing society, till the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. In preventing the accomplishment of this stupendous work, neither the stratagems of men nor the machinations of devils should succeed. These were tried; for as the word of the Lord went forth from Jerusalem, and, as it went, startled the world by its wonder-working power, breaking down Judaism, converting thousands in a day, annihilating superstitions which had been consecrated by the petrifications of ages, grinding into powder altars and idols, silencing oracles, and leading captive their deluded worshipers, the fiercest malignity of earth and hell was waked up to arrest

this preaching of the cross, which was turning the world upside down. Jew and Greek, priest and magistrate, combined, and commenced a war of extermination. The Jew tried the Church by Moses and the prophets, and condemned her. The Greek put her into the crucible of philosophy, and pronounced her foolishness. The magistrate, by the law, threw her into the wild beasts of Pagan Rome, and into the furnace heated seven times hotter than it is wont to be. But, blessed be God! despite the Jew, she was still the Church, and God owned her; despite the Greek, the foolishness of preaching still saved them that believed; and, despite the magistrate, she came forth from the lion's mouth, and no rent was made in her majestic drapery; from the furnace, and the smell of fire was not found upon her robes. The storm beat her; the tempest rocked her; the lightning scathed her; but she made the storm her chariot, rode upon the tempest, and spread like the lightning. The statesman came with the law to shield her, poetry with its muse to sound her praise, philosophy with its intellect to exhibit her truth, and oratory with its eloquence to plead her cause. She put on the ermine of authority, walked in the palaces of kings, rode in the chariot of state, sat upon the throne of power, and gave laws to the world, so mightily grew the word of the Lord, and prevailed.

But here she seemed to lose her power. Intoxicated with pleasure, made giddy with elevation, and forgetting her glorious calling, she gave herself up to luxury. Her light was obscured; her piety waned; she was shorn of her strength, and all seemed lost. A long, dark night came on. Amid this apostasy the Roman hierarchy arose; the mystery of iniquity worked; the man of sin exalted himself above all that was called God, and sat in the temple of God; but He who planted the Church in his own blood, and declared that the gates of hell should not

prevail against it, in this midnight of gloom, when the wild cry of rebellion was coming up from one end of the earth to the other, and the exhalations of vice and idolatry were ascending, like the smoke of the bottomless pit, and a world-wide groan of misery was going up from our wretched race, downtrodden by the beast, he said, as he did on the morning of creation, when darkness was on the face of the deep, "*Let there be light; and there was light.*" The Church arose, like a new-made sun breaking upon the world, and the mystery of iniquity was made manifest. Luther and Melancthon, and their intrepid co-laborers, sounded the Gospel trumpet, and preached Jesus Christ and him crucified, the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation. The man of sin trembled upon his thunder-riven throne; the thunders of the Vatican were hushed, and the power of the beast was broken; and, if we are not mistaken, the period then came to which prophecy refers when it says, "Thy sun shall go down no more; neither shall thy moon withdraw herself; for the Lord God shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended;" for since then the Church has never stood still. Since the dawn of the Reformation, when the Sun of righteousness broke through the rent clouds upon our world, the light has been increasing, the waters have been rising, and our gallant ship Zion, with spread pennants, and sails swelled, has been coursing her way round the globe. Revival has succeeded revival, truth advanced step by step, surprising one stronghold after another, and storming new citadels in the enemy's territory, till Wesleyan Methodism arose, a little more than a century ago, since when the Church—without a figure—has been on fire—a magazine, a mighty battery, charged with heaven's own electricity, scattering more than earthquake power, while her legates, like mighty angels standing in the sun, having the everlasting Gospel

to preach, have been crying to every nation, "Unto you is the word of this salvation sent." With these facts before them, who dare say that the gates of hell have prevailed against the Church in her progress? and as they have not against her progress, so

3. Neither shall they prevail against her final and universal conquest of the world. O, if, when in her infancy, she was thrown upon the world a stranger, naked, hungry, and they would not help her, take her in, clothe or feed her, but, clamoring for her blood, pursued her with racks and gibbets, torches and crosses, prisons and death, still lived, though in tears, in caves and dens of the earth, and clefts of the rocks; and not only lived, but grew and flourished, and has come down to us like a bride adorned for her husband, her cheeks mantled with the glow of health and youth, and her eye radiant with immortal life—O, if thus, in infancy, lonely, poor, without letters and powerless, she triumphed, fought these her hardest battles, obtained these victories, has come up out of the wilderness, and now occupies the high places of the earth, looking out upon the world already engarrisoned by her fortifications; now that the arts and sciences are consecrated at her shrines; now that nature's noblemen, its most gifted sons and daughters, minister at her altars; now that the power of the press is scattering her Bibles, like leaves of autumn, among the nations of the earth; now that her armies of light encompass the globe, and her cohorts shout victory from the plains of Hindostan to the valley of the Mississippi, and from the sepulchers of the patriarchs to the dwellers upon the coast of the Pacific; now that the sun never goes down upon her tented hosts; now that she moves with steam-power, and talks with the lightning, shall she not triumph?—take the world and hang it up in the temple of God, on high, as a trophy of the cross?

Even while I speak, what is the aspect of things? Not only is a continent but a world in motion, wading in blood after the rights of conscience and the light of salvation; and while thrones are crumbling, monarchs falling, and all human things, like mighty ocean tossed, are in fearful commotion, the Church, too, is moving. On this glad morning, when the sun arose upon the palmy east, he heard a song of praise in honor of the great Creator. As he rolled onward, in his course, he heard that song repeated from Ceylon, Bombay, Turkey, and Greece; the African joined his voice, the European swelled the deep-toned anthem; and, as he crossed the Atlantic wave, America uttered forth, in all her length and breadth, the honors of Jehovah; and when his last rays shall gild the lofty peaks of the Hawaii, the islands of the sea will clap their hands for joy, and the heavenly hosts join exultingly in the chorus, "Halleluiah! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" He shall reign. Satan may be let loose for a little season, and shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, and Gog and Magog shall gather themselves to battle, and their number be as the sand of the sea; and they shall go up on the breadth of the earth, and encompass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; yet fear not, all is safe. The gates of *hell shall not prevail*. Fire shall come down from God, out of heaven, and devour them. Then the field of battle shall be clear, the enemy routed, not a hoof shall be left, the world redeemed and saved, and St. John's vision, with all its glory, opened. The holy city—the new Jerusalem—shall come down from God out of heaven, and a great voice proclaim the tabernacle of God is with men; and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and he shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

## SERMON V.

BY REV. HENRY BAKER.

LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY.

"If a man die, shall he live again?" JOB XIV, 14.

JOB lived in Arabia, in an early age of the world, perhaps prior to the days of Abraham. Little was known, in his day, of divine things; yet God was pleased to reveal himself to individuals in various ways, and make known his mind and will. Among those thus highly favored, we may reckon Job, as one of the most eminent of his day for both piety and wisdom, being recognized by the Almighty as among the most eminently good, as Noah and Daniel, who were distinguished for their influence with him in prayer. Also, God accepted Job's intercession in behalf of his mistaken friends, who, through ignorance, had sinned in charging him falsely with secret crime, as the procuring cause of his extraordinary afflictions. By experience and observation, Job had learned much of human life; by meditation he had familiarized himself with death; and by inspiration was permitted to look into the future.

I. WE HAVE, IN THE CONTEXT, HUMAN LIFE VIVIDLY AND IMPRESSIVELY PRESENTED.

II. IN THE TEXT, THE RECOGNITION OF DEATH AS AN EVENT CERTAIN TO ALL; AND

III. AN INQUIRY IN RELATION TO THE FUTURE.

I. Let us contemplate briefly this picture of human life, as drawn by the pen of inspiration. It "is of few days," and those not only "days of trouble," but "full of trouble"—care, solicitude, disappointment, toil, fear, and suffering, constitute a large share of the history of the life

of man, and demonstrate that disappointment in pursuit dissatisfaction in enjoyment, and uncertainty in possession are characteristic of all earthly things. Life may be flattering in its commencement, "cometh forth as the flower," full of health, beauty, and promise, but mortality dates from birth. It is "cut down," perhaps in the cradle, and its beauties fade—"fleeth, also, as the shadow" upon the dial-plate, continually moving, and the fashion of it soon passeth away, and is lost in the shades of night. His days and months are numbered—"bounds" limited to "a hand-breadth" are appointed him, that he can not pass. Death, with all, will soon close this scene of commotion and strife. In view of this, Job prays that God would "turn from him" those fearful calamities, till he should "accomplish, as a hireling, his day" of ordinary labor and care. "There is hope of a tree;" but man, when "cut down," is not like the vegetable, subject to the influence of rain and sun; he will not be revived by any natural agents or process. The roots of the tree, when cut down, may "sprout again," and reproduce its kind. The waters may fall, the floods come, subside, evaporate, condense, and return again; but "man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he" to be found? When this ephemeral life expires, "man lieth down, as the weary laborer, when the toils of the day are over, and from the night of the grave," the profound slumber of that dreamless bed, he shall not awake nor arise till the aerial and starry "heavens be no more." The sun, in all its effulgence, may shine upon his tomb, or the storms that wreck the wintery sky may beat upon it, but the unconscious dust shall sweetly repose, secure from all the mutations of a changeful world, its storms and its calms, its pleasures and its pains. "O, that thou wouldst hide me in the grave!" Although the dark and lonely grave be the earthly destiny of the good,

it is a place of both rest and secrecy. And He who conceals will not only watch over and safely guard the sacred deposit, but will find and restore it again to renewed life, immortal beauty, and vigor. There is an appointed time, yea, a "set time," when he that remembered Noah will remember the pious dead. He will "call," and the call shall be responded to by all. He has, and forever will have a desire to the work of his own hands. He has the "keys of death and of hell," and in the end of time, when the heavens shall have passed away, He who is "the resurrection and the life," will awake and bring them forth; "yea, all that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake and come forth."

II. What is implied in dying? "If a man die, shall he live again?" Two changes, in the mode of man's existence, are here contemplated: First. The material man returning to his parent element, dust; Secondly. Its resurrection to conscious existence. Inquire we, then, what is implied in dying? Death is a privation: consider it

1. As it affects the body: it implies the loss,

(1.) Of the *vital* principle. Death sometimes does his work in a very summary manner, as in apoplexy, diseases of the heart, by electricity, and other fatal agents and casualties. In such cases, all the functions of life are so suddenly and profoundly impressed, as to be broken down at once. But, generally, it is a more gradual work; the heart ceases to beat, the blood to circulate, the lungs to respire, and the brain to receive impressions; the body loses its animal heat—is deprived of sensation and the power of motion; he "giveth up the ghost; the body without the spirit is dead."

(2.) The *conservative* principle. When the silver cord is loosed, and the golden bowl broken, the vital principle is extinguished, the physical organization is dissolved, and conservative power is lost. Hence, there is an immediate

and necessary tendency to decomposition and putrefaction. Such is the end of all flesh. It is corruptible, and must put on incorruption. The house of this tabernacle is earthly in its composition, earthly in its support, and earthly in its destination. Man is not only mortal in his earthly destiny, but from birth. We decay while we receive support; while we nourish the body we cherish the seeds of death. "Our strength is weakened in the way." We die daily. "The cradle rocks us to the tomb."

The old, the middle-aged, and the young; the decrepit, the deformed, and the beautiful; the feeble, the active, and the strong; all, all must fall as the trees of the forest, the herbage of the mountains, and the flowers of the field. God hath declared it, and all flesh shall fail before him. No strength can resist, no art can elude, no beauty can captivate, no wealth can bribe the "last enemy." Yes, my young friends, whatever of symmetry, beauty, agility, or strength you may now possess, a blight will fall upon it. Your strength is a thing of naught; your "beauty will consume away like the moth;" blasting and mildew will tarnish, and all your glory will "fade as a leaf." Thy body will soon become a mass of putrefaction, and emit the odor of rottenness and death. Idolize not mortality, it will soon be cut down; worship not beauty, it will fade as a flower. The coral is passing from thy lips, and the tints are fading from thy cheeks. Insult not the poor carcass by decorating it in vain and gaudy attire; pamper it not, as it is falling into the tomb. Rather say to corruption, "Thou art my father; and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister." O, consider and be wise. "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live."

2. As it affects his relation to earthly things—his interests, business concerns, social and kindred ties.

(1.) Death will close up the concern with him forever,

and sever all the ligaments that may have bound him to earth and time. He will cease to participate in the busy scenes of life, and share no longer in the things that are done under the sun. All his calculations and plans of operation to attain honor, wealth, or fame, in a moment are scattered to the winds. His interest in life ceases with his last expiration. His earthly wisdom and prudence, or his folly and improvidence, while here, may affect others, when he is gone, but not him. To him it will be the same, whether he died rich or poor, famed or "unknown to fame."

(2.) It will be the disruption of all social and kindred ties that have allied him to earthly society and friends. It will be his farewell to earth, with all its possessions, associations, and attractions. "His eye shall no more see good." Whether he be buried in obscurity, or with pomp and show; whether "lamented or unsung;" whether his mortal remains be deposited in a solitary grave, unadorned and unknown, or repose beneath the sculptured marble, it is naught to him. The eloquent orator may pronounce his eulogy, and a train of "mourners go about the streets," and lament the "illustrious dead;" or a solitary mourner, in penury and rags, weep over his lonely grave; fame may blow his silver trumpet, or the pestiferous tongue of slander asperse his reputation; all, all will pass unheeded by the unconscious clay. "His sons come to honor, and he knoweth it not: they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them."

### III. What is implied in living again?

1. The soul surviving the death of the body and continuing in a state of conscious existence. Is the soul indeed deathless? Shall it escape unscathed from its dissolving tabernacle, and live in a state of conscious bliss or woe till the resurrection of the dead at the last day? It can, it will. It is immortal, and can never cease to be.

It will live coexistent with God, its author and preserver. This is proven

(1.) From its essential nature—spiritual, immaterial. It partakes of the nature of angels, yea, of Deity himself. Death hath no dominion over it. It can not see corruption. Although the operations or exercise of its powers and faculties may be embarrassed or obstructed by disease of the body, which is its medium of contact with external things, yet its essential nature and attributes can bid defiance to disease, and often shine most brilliantly in the agonies of dissolving mortality. The attributes of the soul, understanding, reason, judgment, and conscience, by which it apprehends itself, its relations, its character and condition, are too exalted and celestial for the limited range of earth and time. How vast its powers! and they are ever active, whether the body be weary or at rest, sleeping or waking, living or dying.

(2.) From its capability of enjoyment or suffering, independent of the body. A sense of guilt, mental anguish or agony, or a consciousness of rectitude, peace and joy, realized in an intense degree, either by depressing or elating the mind, often causes suffering mortality to forget its pains, and brings the soul into contact with the realities of the future. If such be the sensibilities of our spiritual nature, while clogged with the weight and stupidity of this mortal organization, how acute will they become when dislodged from this earthly prison!

(3.) From its capacity for improvement; commensurate with the highest finite intelligence, the purest pleasures, and endless duration. Contemplate those great lights of the intellectual and moral world—Bacon, Newton, Locke, and Milton; a Luther, Wesley, Chalmers, Dick, and others. See them in their infancy, ignorant and imbecile; but mark the development of intellect in their progressive career through life! They rise and soar, shining like stars

of the first magnitude, shedding abroad a luminous radiance upon earth's dark mass of matter and mind; and yet, we suppose, an infant in immortality possesses more knowledge than they all, while their views were bounded by terrestrial things. Such is the progressive character of intellectual and moral natures.

(4.) From its instinctive impressions and innate desires of immortality. Man lives in the future, ever looking and hoping for something he has not; his desires never reach a climax: Even in the enjoyment of his God, he presses onward and says, "I *shall* be satisfied *when* I awake in thy likeness." However dark and confused be the impressions of immortality upon the minds of benighted Pagans and hardened skeptics, they are universal in all ages and nations.

(5.) From the manifest want of wisdom in the design of man's being, if he be not immortal. Why those vast powers, those desires and longings after immortality, if he be not designed to live in a future state? The instincts of the brute animal enable him to eat, to drink, and to sleep; to enjoy all the pleasures of sense; but man's nature claims and demands higher, nobler enjoyments, such as the corporeal senses can not apprehend, nor animal instincts realize.

(6.) Revelation demonstrates it. Here "life and immortality are brought to light." The rich man and Lazarus were declared by the Son of God to exist in the spirit-world, after leaving their bodies on earth—one comforted and the other tormented. Jehovah said, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," when they had been long dead. "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Paul and his companions believed there was an intermediate state, in which the soul existed independent of the body—"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present

with the Lord." This he esteemed as "far better." The translation of Enoch and Elijah, body and soul, and the changing of those who remain and are alive at the coming of the Lord, prove that the existence of neither soul nor body is limited to the present state; but that, in accordance with his impressions and desires, man will realize an immortal destiny, whether of weal or of woe.

2. And what we presume Job had especial reference to in the text, the resuscitation of the same body that died to renewed life. Can this be? "Can these dry bones live?" Can this corruption, rottenness, and death, resume form, vitality, and beauty? Can it live to act, realize, enjoy, or suffer? "Shall he live again?" Yes, he can, he will, he shall—because

(1.) God is able to raise him up. He that created can raise the dead; he that gave life can restore it when lost. His power is commensurate with any work that does not contravene his purposes or designs, or conflict with his goodness, his wisdom, his justice, or his truth.

(2.) The goodness of God requires it. The body, in connection with the soul, has capabilities of enjoyment—is allied to it by strong affinities and tender sympathies; and to indulge these capabilities, and perpetuate those affinities and sympathies, would be the dictate of infinite goodness.

(3.) The wisdom of God requires it. Were those bodies, which are the "temples of the Holy Ghost, fearfully and wonderfully made," to perish forever, it would argue folly in the design, or weakness in the execution of God's plan of securing the greatest possible good to man.

(4.) The justice of God requires it. 1. Justice to himself. The human body is his own, his own work, and, as well as the soul, was created in his own image, and for his own glory. It should be preserved as a monument of his handiwork, and employed in his service, to show forth his praise. 2. Justice to the good. Their bodies participated

with their souls in the sufferings of the present life, and in the services here offered to God, and are entitled to a participation in its rewards. 3. Justice to the wicked. Their bodies, also, participated with their souls in sin, and, by their passions, appetites, and propensions, were often the occasions and instruments of crime, and should be partakers of its plagues.

(5.) The truth of God requires it. "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. For the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation. Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep; but we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed; for this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

In these and other Scriptures we have both the fact and the object of the resurrection positively and plainly stated. 1. The fact: the dead body shall be raised and made immortal. 2. The object: that, in connection with the soul, it may be judged, and rewarded or punished; and those who shall not "see death," but remain and are alive at his coming, shall, like Enoch and Elijah, undergo a change equivalent with death and the resurrection; for this plain reason, that "flesh and blood," in its present gross and mortal state, "can not inherit the kingdom of God." These vile bodies of ours must be changed, and fashioned like unto the glorious resurrected body of the Son of God. "Then shall mortality be swallowed up of life."

Reader, "thou shalt surely die!" Let us "stand still," and consider what awful and important thoughts are suggested by this solemn sentence. The last hours of this

ephemeral life must come to all. We came into this world fallen beings, children of iniquity, and heirs of death. The moment is hastening when the untiring angel of death will summon us to our final account, to answer to the Judge of all for our conduct on earth. Do we observe the declining, the setting sun, sinking in darkness? So passes and declines the day of life with all; morning, noon, and night, and it is gone. Do we observe the shadow upon the dial-plate? It is slow, but steady. By an imperceptible progress it passes over the fixed lines upon its shining disk. Soon will the last, lengthened, oblique rays of the setting sun pass the last line—the boundary-line of this brief existence—the terminus of our earthly journey. Our wasting periods move on with a silent pace, and, whether we are heedless of their motion or observant of their flight, will soon reach, with unerring certainty, their utmost limit. The revolving wheel of time, the ceaseless revolutions of the sun, moon, and planets, as they revolve in the sunlit or the dusky sky, are measuring out and bringing to a close the number of the months, the days, the hours of this “span of life.” Do new periods of time and seasons regularly recur, as, the new year, month, week, or day? Remember! the birth of each new period is the death-knell of its predecessor. Thus, however joyous may be the approach of each new epoch in our history, it is saddened by the thought that its birth is but the funeral dirge of buried time. The annual return of our natal day is hailed with joy, and often observed with birthday festivities; but, let us remember, its first office is to celebrate the obsequies of another finished year of expired time. Thus stealthily pass the days, the months, the years of our appointed time on earth. “Time is short.” Be wise; catch the fitting moments as they pass; husband them well; improve them and live. O, the confident language of faith

in the future! "Thou shalt call, and I will answer." That call will be, to the righteous, a call to renewed life and eternal rest. There is hope for the pious dead. It is this hope, the sheet-anchor of the soul, that sustains the Christian amid the conflicts and turmoils of life and its cares. Bathed in sweat and dust, he "bears the burden and heat of the day," awaiting the rest of the tomb, as the dawn of eternal bliss.

This hope sustains the herald of the cross, and sustained a Paul, "more abundant in labors," in daily and nightly sowing the seed of the kingdom, knowing that *not* in this world only he has hope, but that in due time he shall reap if he faint not; that his work is with the Lord, and his judgment with his God; and that, hereafter, he "shall return with joy, bringing his sheaves with him."

It is this "assurance of hope" that enables the bereaved widow in her weeds, and the orphan in his tears, to look upon the humble monuments that perpetuate memories sacredly cherished in their heart, and read in radiant characters engraven there, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Conclusion: Reader, do you find yourself in a world of trouble, the subject of affliction, disappointment, and sorrow? Labor to improve all.

1. By suffering, learn to exercise patience; from disappointment, learn wisdom; and thus endeavor to realize a revenue from the "varied ills of life." Remember this is not your home. You are but a stranger and pilgrim upon earth. Here you have no continuing city. Let the scenes that daily surround you, in this life of vicissitudes and world of death, but prompt you to efforts in the great enterprise of securing a better and more enduring inheritance.

2. Whether old or young, you are but in the infancy of

your existence, destined to an eternal world and a changeless mode of being. But, in passing to that world, you must die. Death's dark domain lies between you and it; and though death to the wicked be terrible, it need not be so to you. To the righteous, it is but passing from a state of suffering and conflict to a state of peace and rest. Through death the Christian traveler passes to his long-sought home. Here the weary find repose, the warrior a triumph, and the victor a crown.

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## SERMON VI.

BY REV. DAVID WARNOCK.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

"What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," Acts xvi, 30, 31.

THERE is nothing more capable of an experimental knowledge of its truthfulness than Christianity. Men are invited to test its virtue and its power; and if, after testing it according to the conditions laid down in the Gospel, they find it answers not their expectations and their wants, it will be time enough to condemn and disavow it. Who ever complied with those conditions and was not enabled to set to his seal that God was true? "If any man do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." The text is one of the most important questions ever propounded by man—one proposed by a sinner under deep and sudden alarm of conscience. There is nothing more reasonable to suppose than that the emotions of this man and the question extorted were from a sense of his sin and danger. To suppose that the apostle Paul was not better acquainted with the real cause of the alarm of this

man than any other, living or dead, would be to judge of his capacity to fill the important office and elevated position which he occupied as very defective, if not an impeachment of the wisdom of Him who called him to "open the eyes of the blind, and to turn man from darkness to light." Or, if we consider the person asking the question, "What must I do to be saved?" what ground had he to look for deliverance, in a temporal point of view, from men who were scourged and imprisoned for preaching "Christ and him crucified?" None at all. Furthermore, there was no danger to be apprehended by him from the civil law after the apostle said unto him, "Do thyself no harm; we are all here." If the question of the jailer was not with reference to his spiritual and eternal interest, the apostle's answer is entirely out of place: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," etc. What more likely to endanger him temporally than so doing, when before him was the fact that, for preaching Christ, two eminent ambassadors were then in suffering and in bonds. The apostle was too well versed in the knowledge of the human heart, and too infallibly instructed to err in the application of the Gospel promise in the text to a man whose alarm was not that of a true penitent; and the sequel confirms this belief. We shall, therefore, consider the text as setting forth two most important points: first, the question, "What must I do to be saved?" and secondly, the answer to the question proposed, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," etc.

I. "WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?"

1. This question is the most important ever uttered by man, taken in the light in which it is used by the passage under consideration—a deep conviction of danger growing out of his sinful heart and life. There is manifest danger to every truly-awakened conscience, known only to those "who have been brought from darkness to light, and from

the power of Satan unto God." How terrible the anguish of the royal Psalmist when he said he felt trouble and sorrow, and that "the pains of hell got hold upon him!" and that to sin is to offend the majesty of God, and that its wages is death eternal! Surely there is danger, if, to atone for the sins of the world, no less victim was requisite than the humiliation, sufferings, and death of Him who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Let every one who contemplates the sins of man as inferior and in no way endangering man's relation to God and heaven, contemplate sin, and especially his own personal offenses, as calling out, from the bosom of the Father, his "well-beloved Son," to humiliation, sorrow, and poverty, the anguish in the garden, the torture on the cross; and while he views all this, let him remember, sin did all this; and, if so, how fearful in its consequences is sin that required such a sacrifice. Show me one who has never viewed his sin as endangering his interests, and I will show you one who never has received Jesus Christ so as to properly appreciate his character and office.

2. The question in the text implies a conviction of ignorance of the plan of salvation. Man is naturally ignorant of the plan by which God will save him. Hence, the question in the text, and the various differences of men as to the plan, show conclusively that a revelation was needed by which guilty man might be pardoned. And certainly God alone is able to direct and lay down the principle upon which erring men may be saved; and no being in the universe but God can know infallibly. No wonder, then, that man, wherever he has not been instructed out of the oracles of God, should be ignorant. Hence the vast importance of constant instruction from youth to manhood in the law of our God.

3. True conviction implies a sense of the necessity of doing something in order to be saved. "What must I

do?" is the language of true penitence. When the apostle was awakened on his way to Damascus, what did he say to Jesus Christ as an anxious sinner? "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He felt, as all do, that effort is necessary; and it is said of him, "Behold he prayeth!" And who, of all the sinners that mercy has saved, did not engage in works evangelical in their character, namely, repentance, prayer, and other performances, as works meet for repentance, as they had opportunity? We answer, None. Not works of merit; for such no man can perform as the reason why he is saved. That reason for the pardon of sin is found in something else. And this leads us to consider the second part of our subject.

II. "BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED."

1. What is it to believe in him? I answer, it is to trust in him as having died for us as a sacrifice for our sins. That his death was sacrificial in its character is a doctrine the most important in the Bible: "Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood;" and in heaven there is no song, amid its ransomed myriads of earth, but "to Him that loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood." "He loved me," says the apostle, "and gave himself for me." This great truth is to be received into the heart, and laid hold of as the last, the only hope of man; for there is no other.

2. Now the results of such a belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is said in the text, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved." The salvation promised in the text is precisely what man's necessities call for. I say, pardon of the sins of thy life. It is the order of God that to the penitent that believeth in Jesus Christ his faith is accepted, and he counted righteous, for the sake of the Redeemer; so that now he who was afar off is brought nigh by the blood of Jesus; and, because he is a child of God by regeneration,

God sends into his heart the spirit of his Son, saying, "Abba, Father." Not only is man saved by being justified and adopted into the family of God, but he is enabled to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Delightful prospects of his inheritance in heaven open up to the eye of his faith, and pushing toward the mark in all holy conformity to the Divine will, he grows up into Christ, his living head.

3. And whatever God has graciously promised in the way of personal and inward holiness of heart in this life, is attained unto, in all its glorious results here, by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ "with all the heart." Not only pardon, but purity is effected by the same method. Are we pardoned by faith in Jesus, so are we purified by "faith in the blood of the Lamb." "God," says St. Peter, "put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith, as he did ours." Here, then, is the world's remedy, and shows itself to be of God, from the fact that it takes hold of the very fountain of corruption in man, and makes him a new creature in Christ Jesus. The tree is made good, and the fruits will be good also. This is a great salvation, and every way worthy of the Father of mercies. But this is not all; for,

4. It saves man from the results of past sin. Man dying in sin is hopelessly lost. O, how great is that salvation which rescues man from all the consequences of transgression in the world to come! "The wages of sin is death;" the second death; a separation of the mercy of God from the sinner forever; one dark night of perpetual sorrow, without one star to shine upon the doleful state. To believe in Jesus saves from this; for the acceptance of Jesus, the sacrifice of Calvary, upon the part of man, opens up the way from ruin to happiness. "He that believeth in the Son of God hath life;" he that believeth not the Son hath not life, "but the wrath of God abideth upon him."

5. It positively saves hereafter in heaven. To him that savingly believeth in Christ, it is in him, by the Spirit, as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The Christian begins a life by faith that is to be perpetuated in glory to all eternity. And who can estimate this? to be a "child of God," an "heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ?" to be redeemed, body and spirit, and made like the glorious, risen, exalted Savior? "It doth not yet appear what we shall be;" "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." This is enough. Blessed Savior, let our hearts be thine in time, that we may dwell with thee forever.

Application. 1. Hast thou felt thy sins and beheld thy danger, be careful that you turn not away to seek relief in dissipation and forgetfulness. The mercy of God has opened thy spiritual sight. "Believe in Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." 2. No good is gained by attempted forgetfulness, but positive evil. You will think again, and in fearful array will come up the past with fearful aggravation, when thou shalt look upon the picture of thy moral deformity forever, and never to be purged. 3. Now Jesus stands to save; slight not his love. Come now; live for him; feel his power to save; live forever!

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## SERMON VII.

BY REV. ANDREW CARROLL.

PROPER USE OF THE MAMMON OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

"And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations," LUKE XVI, 9.

ACCORDING to Jerome, the word for riches in the Syriac was mammon, and, likely, this word was thus introduced into the language of Palestine, which was a mixed dialect,

for the term *riches*, and thus used by our Lord. "Plato, in his 'Republic,' says, that in proportion to the degree in which riches are honored and admired, *virtue* will be slighted and disregarded." Thus writes a heathen in confirmation of Divine revelation, on the subject of virtue and vice.

The *mammon of unrighteousness*. This can not mean, in the Scripture, ill-gotten, or unjustly-obtained wealth; for it would be preposterous to think, that by such riches a person could earn an eternal inheritance in glory; but rather should he make restoration. Dr. Bloomfield prefers to apply *adikia* to unfair advantages being used to amass riches; hence *unrighteous*; but this we deem rather foreign to the obvious sense of the text, as it plainly means the riches of this life obtained ever so honestly; at best they are uncertain riches—they are deceitful. (Matthew xiii, 22; Mark iv, 19; Luke viii, 14.) The terms may be rendered the *false riches*, in opposition to the *true riches* mentioned in verse eleventh. They are false, for they promise much, and in the hour of man's greatest extremity can give no relief. What are they in sickness or death, but comparative unrighteous mammon?

Still we are to make *friends* of these riches; but where, on earth, or in heaven? Touching this point the learned differ. Some say, make friends of the angels in heaven; others say, make friends of the poor and needy, by relieving them in this life, that by their prayers, etc., they may be means of our reception into heaven. This Scott and Le Bas suppose; but it is better, with Dr. A. Clarke, to apply it to the Lord himself, at least in the main sense, as the poor may live longer than the donors, and the latter enter into heaven before the former; and some of those poor thus relieved, may die wicked and never enter heaven; hence, they could not receive us. The expression seems to be a mere *Hebraism*—"They may receive you,

for ye shall be received." The Jehovah bestows all gifts, "every good and perfect gift," and to him are ye amenable for those gifts. Hence, none but those who make a proper use of every dollar they possess have reason to expect eternal life. (See Matthew xxv, 33.) So that "he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."

*When ye fail*; that is, when ye die. The Greek term is used in this sense in the Septuagint and by Josephus. Notice,

I. SOME REASONS WHEREFORE WE SHOULD MAKE FRIENDS OF OUR EARTHLY RICHES, AND THE WAY TO EFFECT IT.

1. *The chief reason originates in our moral nature, and in the character of the Divine government.* We suppose it to be implied, that the characters addressed, "*yourselves*," in the text, are those saved by grace—converted to God—the business of whom is to befriend themselves in the future by their present earthly treasures or riches, whether much or little. It will be taken for granted that the Lord, the true owner of universal treasures, has, in reality, no need of our pittance of contributions; hence, he is not dependent on us for the support of his poor, as he might clothe them as he does the lilies of the field, or support them as he did the Israelites in the desert. The Lord says, "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills; the world is mine, and the fullness thereof." Then why does he entreat us for merciful acts, or deeds of benevolence? The answer is,

The principles of the Divine government, and the nature of our moral character, are such, that the one can not be honored, and the other made happy, without cultivating benevolent affections; hence originates the necessity of our making *friends of the mammon of unrighteousness*. If, therefore, the main reasons for benevolent acts are traceable to the moral nature of things, and these things

so constituted by God himself, the prime reason rests in God. Then the plain inference is, that Jehovah can not constitute us happy, unless he change the laws of his moral government, and our moral nature, apart from the exercise of beneficent actions. This being the Divine ordination, accordingly, we have the *poor always* with us. We have the poor to help, as an abiding rule, by which God will enrich us. This is the chief reason for benevolent action. By beneficent acts, we mean those which administer to the souls and bodies of the needy; to send the Bible and the missionary to those that have them not, and to feed the poor and clothe the naked, etc.

2. *Acts of mercy are divinely authorized, and carry with them immediate as well as anticipated rewards.* The sensation of a virtuous act is pleasant to the soul; every beneficent act carries with it a precious enjoyment. The reflection, or the moral of the act, casts a pleasing light around the mind, and receives the approval of a good conscience. Moreover, such acts being authorized by God, are well-pleasing to him, if offered in the proper spirit. They must be spontaneously given. "Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give: not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." Mark, here the appeal, for the reason of the gift, is made to God, and not to the bleak and distressed state of the poor and needy. Mark, again, "do good and communicate, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." By beneficence God is glorified, and the destitute relieved, and the donor sanctified; add to these the final recompense of reward. In the Bible, we are called upon, not only for occasional acts of benevolence, but for a *series of beneficent acts for the good of others*. In whatever points the Old and New Testament may differ, they perfectly harmonize, by express precept, requiring habits of periodical appropriation from our capital, great or small, to sus-

tain religion and foster the poor. No other doctrine is more explicitly taught.

3. *The doctrine of beneficence is taught in the Scriptures. Alms-giving did not originate with the Mosaic economy.* Long before, Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. Jacob, at Bethel, vowed to give a tenth. The same principles are interwoven in the Mosaic ritual, and agree with the law of charity inculcated in the New Testament. Though the law of both Testaments sets general bounds to the acts of charity, still it leaves us indefinite room for acts of love over and above those prescribed.

In the old dispensation the first-fruits of the harvest, by custom, a sixtieth part of the whole, were given, and the ransom of the first-born male child. In reaping, the corners of the field were left for the poor. Here, it is said, custom defined this to be a sixtieth part of the whole; in addition, whatever fell from the reaper's hand belonged to the poor. Then every seventh year all the land was left untilled, and the spontaneous produce was for the poor. Then a tenth of all the product of the fields was to be given to the Levites. Then there were trespass-offerings, sin-offerings, and specified portions of the sacrificed animals were given to the priests and Levites. Then every seventh year all debts were remitted, and the three yearly journeys of the male Israelites to Jerusalem, at the festivals, was no small tax. So the offerings of the Hebrews, annually, were about one-third of their income. These gifts were *religious* and *charitable*, and if offered in the proper spirit, had a happy effect. In the New Testament era, the same spirit of beneficence is carried out by an intenser feeling of general love. It is a mistaken idea, that the primitive Christians had a *community system*. Nothing like this resulted from the great Pentecostal revival; though some followed the wholesale plan of benev-

olence, and others wished to follow it, yet some of them grudgingly, as Ananias and Sapphira; still, Christians in general held their own property, as Mary, the mother of John, Tabitha, Simon the tanner, and Lydia. St. Paul never thought of the common-stock system when he said, "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." St. Peter recognizes each one's right of property in his words to Ananias: "While it remained, was it not thine own; and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" Nevertheless, the Christians held their property "as though they possessed not."

Brethren, while some among us hide our treasures in the purchase of farms and other matters, and hereby deem ourselves excused from contributing, by saying we are in debt, and, therefore, we can not contribute, very certain is it, we act unlike the primitive Christians, for they "sold their possessions," to send forward the Gospel and relieve the poor. Finally, it is worthy of remark, that all the gifts were *free-will offerings*. The best and purest system in the world, is that of voluntary contributions.

4. *We come to notice, in the final instance, by way of explaining our first general topic, the way of securing heavenly friendship by our earthly riches, or property.* The best possible manner to effect this, is given by the apostle St. Paul, in 1 Corinthians xvi, 1, 2: "Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

The law of the Sabbath yields to the law of beneficence, by apostolic authority; and this teaches that acts of beneficence are worthy of the Sabbath. But one object

of the injunction was to establish *periodical benevolence*; without this, it appears impossible to have systematic and efficient action. Let every good man or woman keep a small treasury dedicated to the Lord, and, at the hour of family or private prayer, lay aside the sum, according to his prosperity for the past week, for charitable purposes. In the apostle's arrangement we have the following: First. The *order* of a benevolent arrangement not an *advice* but a *command*; Secondly. The stated work of alms-giving for every Sabbath. This meets the penurious cavil of desecrating the Sabbath with filthy lucre, as some are wont to reason. Again: another miserly pretense is set aside; namely, the too frequent calls for money, etc. We are taught again, that "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." And again: that it is a religious duty to pay money for benevolent objects on the Sabbath; and thus paying every Sabbath, will effectually "secure a large amount" in the end. It is the *religious nature* of the alms-giving, which makes the Sabbath a peculiarly proper day for doing it. So the reader will mark, that the Sabbath is the proper time for giving and collecting alms.

Again: the duty is laid on every one, "Let *every one of you* lay by him in store." But this duty is commuted into a privilege, when we understand that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." And hence it is made a general law of Christ's kingdom to give willingly according to what we possess. Every one is required to give according to *his means, and according to his own judgment*. The poor is expected to "labor, working with his hands, that he may have to give to him that needeth." The flexibility of the apostolic rule makes it beautiful; "*it bends in perfect adjustment to each one's circumstances.*"

Another feature in the apostolic order is, "*that there be no gatherings when I come.*" How unlike to the plans of the present day! The apostle was gathering funds for the

poor Christians at Jerusalem; but he does not say to the Corinthian brethren, "Wait and prepare yourselves till I arrive and lay before you the necessitous cases of the Jerusalem Christians;" no, but "lay by you weekly," etc. Our present system of popular agents, sooner or later, will be abolished. We have diverged from the Divine plan. The apostle's argument was purely evangelical, not setting forth subjects of sufferings, in all their tender and afflicted relations, till, for the time being, our sympathies are roused to give; but the true principles of religion still lie dormant, and our ideas of duty remain vague, and the heart but little benefited after all. O, that we would return as soon as possible to the old evangelical path, *that there be no gatherings when I come!* Let this work be done because it is right in itself, and glorious in its effects. Let the poor be moved to benevolence by such examples as Louisa Osborn, the colored domestic, who, from the wages of one dollar a week, paid twenty dollars a year to educate a youth in Ceylon, which has produced such fine results. Let us never forget the widow's two mites. Let the more wealthy adopt some rule like Mr. N. R. Cobb, a merchant of Boston, to give from the outset one-quarter of the net profits of his business. Should he ever be worth \$20,000, to give one-half of the net profits; if worth \$30,000, to give three-quarters; and if ever worth \$50,000, to give all the profits. This resolution he kept till his death, at the age of thirty-six, when he had already acquired \$50,000, and was giving all his profits. Zaccheus, on his conversion, determined to give the one-half and restore fourfold. The Rev. John Wesley is another example. "When his income was £30 a year, he lived on £28, and gave away £2. The next year his income was £60, and still living on £28, he had £32 to give. The fourth year his income was raised to £120, and steadfast to his plan the poor got £92." Others

have given the tenth of the gross amount of their receipts, and thus, by earthly mammon, have secured *friends* to welcome them into "everlasting habitations." Let us now notice, more particularly,

II. THE MOTIVE CONTEMPLATED IN THE TEXT, "THAT THEY MAY RECEIVE YOU INTO EVERLASTING HABITATIONS."

In the introduction of this subject we stated that this expression meant, in particular, the Lord of life himself; but it may embrace the holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, already in glory, who have watched our benevolence on earth, and hereby they have become our zealous friends in heaven, to receive and greet us on our entrance into final glory.

1. *The proper use of the mammon of this life will help to qualify us for the life to come.* A sinful heart is always covetous. A consecrated heart is in communion with God, and in possession of the love of Christ. This love constraineth to deeds of benevolence, and these deeds strengthen this love. This love is antagonistic to the love of money, which is the root of all evil.

It has sometimes been the case that those who were comparatively poor were benevolent accordingly; but when they became wealthy, they likewise became penurious and covetous, forgetting the precept, "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them;" thus hinting that their increase is likely to attract our hearts to them. Let us guard this point well.

"Out of the gifts of God to us we bestow our gifts, and out of our gifts he brings the elements of our increase." "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Reader, do you, in truth, believe the word of God? If so, in God's name, bestir yourself from this moment. Remember, "none of us liveth to himself." True habits of benevolence embrace a "practical acknowl-

edgment of God." His blessing will be showered forth upon the industrious, who live and act to glorify him by his thrift. So a liberal beneficence will help to qualify us to live happy here, as well as to secure us future felicity; and the more beneficent, the greater amount of glory shall we receive hereafter; for, if we sow plentifully, we shall reap abundantly. But, in connection with this, we shall thrive better in this present life. No man, who fears God and loves his fellow-beings, will be an idle spectator in this world. The glory of God and the multiform distresses of mankind will so prompt him to action and economy that, in view of which, idleness and prodigality will be out of the question; and the blessings of heaven will be poured upon him, and these will prompt him to renewed acts of beneficence. So, in those labors of love, he shall have the smiles of the Savior, and glide along sweetly to the great harvest and full rewards of eternal fruition; and so a proper use of the *mammon of unrighteousness* will qualify us, through the atonement of Jesus, for a welcome reception, by the Lamb of God and the friends of his love, into the joy of their Lord. Heaven and earth are united by strong ties. Jesus draws; heaven attracts; angels invite, and saints beckon us homeward.

Every truly-religious man is a beneficent man; and the purer our views of divine things, and the more our hearts are affected with these things, the more beneficent are we.

2. *Apart from faithful, beneficent acts, neither God, angels, nor happy spirits will receive us into everlasting habitations.* The reasons are obvious. "God is love;" angels love; happy spirits love. This love is ever active, wherever found, particularly where misery abounds. We live in a world of misery; because this is a wicked world. Vanity spurs us to talk of the *dignity* of man; but, alas! where is it? Is it in the swarming hordes of Hottentots? If not, so far as our nature is concerned, the same may be

fairly affirmed of Americans or Britons. Where is the dignity of thousands of sunburnt animals, or tenderly-decorated ones, with appetites ungoverned and minds unprincipled, ever prompted to deeds of selfishness and tyranny, brutality and filthiness—strangers to every art but that of slaughter, to honor, but selfish daring? See the balmy southern states of united America, slumbering in the arms of the goddess of liberty, filled with the luxuries of the earth, and crowned with the dews and smiles of heaven; yet, at the same time, see them, both saint and sinner, feasting and fattening on the sweat, and dust, and bloody toil of the souls and bodies of their three million slaves, driving them to market as so many stupid mules, handcuffing the male parent, and selling under the hammer, to the highest bidder, the bosom-rent and tearful mother, from the husband and weeping children; while the master, and driver, and auctioneer pray to the Lamb and chant halleluiah! Gracious heavens! if these things are found in the very bosom of Christendom, what may we expect of the world, or the native *dignity* of man? Then, as there are sins and miseries in our world, which must ever remain till the end of time, unless relieved by the Gospel of Christ, which breathes the spirit of benevolence or “good will to men,” the sufferings of our sin-stricken world extort the cry and tear from Jew, Greek, bond and free, Roman and barbarian, for beneficence.

God, by his prophet, cries to every follower of Jesus, “Strip ye; make ye bare; tremble; be troubled; lament for the pleasant fields;” they have been, by sin, turned into mildew and blasting; and, instead of native dignity, the human heart is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,” weltering in blood, and moaning in distress. It is, therefore, rational, and ever must be so, to exercise benevolence. In truth, there is no evangelical religion where there is no beneficence.

The history of primitive Christians confirms the foregoing. The ministers of Jesus periled their lives, and suffered the loss of all things, in rescuing men from the miseries of vice. "It is recorded of one man that he sold himself as a slave to a heathen family to get access to them for their conversion, and for years cheerfully endured the labor and condition of a slave, till he succeeded with the whole family, and took his liberty from the gratitude of the converts. The same person, on a visit to Sparta, again entered himself as a slave in the family of the governor of Sparta, and served two years, and again succeeded in his design."

Among the primitive Christians, ladies of the highest rank acted as nurses of the sick, and exposed themselves to contagion and death in the relief of others. Their moneys, toils, and prayers were free as air. In the time of Cyprian, the plague came upon Carthage with a protracted visitation. The heathen abandoned their sick; the highways were strewed with corpses, which none dared to bury. But the Christians faced every danger, and oft died in deeds of mercy. The heathen parents deserted their own children, and the children their parents, in hours of severe distress. If a Christian was thrust into prison, his fellow Christians came around the prison doors, seeking admission amid the insults of surly guards; others beset the prison walls, night and day, with supplications to God and man for the deliverance of the prisoners. In the time of Chrysostom, the Church under his care had on its catalogue three thousand sick and poor, regular beneficiaries, besides various other calls. "Better that we be like the sacred oil of the seven-branched candlestick, consumed ourselves, while giving a holy light to others, than to gain, for our own enjoyment, all that selfishness ever won." See the fellow-laborers of the Lord; "bloody with scourging, fastened painfully in the stocks" of an inner prison, they break the silence of midnight

with songs of rapture. They *loved*; love toils, sacrifices, and suffers, but still sings. This spirit of love no prison wall nor martyrdom can silence.

Again: if the resources of the Church are only as a "handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse, the barrel of meal will not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail," till the work be accomplished. Be of good courage, therefore, and trust in the Lord. He that fed "five thousand" with "five loaves and two fishes," can convert the world through our labors of love. When the Moravians only consisted of about six hundred persons, many of whom were exiles, they began the beneficent work of missions, and, at the expiration of ten years, they had carried the Gospel into Lapland, Greenland, St. Croix, Surinam, to Algiers, Cape of Good Hope, Ceylon, and Tartary. The Methodist Churches have done a good part in evangelizing the world, from the days of Wesley and Coke to Asbury; and from these to the present, our missionaries, particularly in the United States of North America, have not been surpassed in modern days for active beneficence, and our membership have followed hard in the wake.

Another consideration for active beneficence is, the *Divine promises of temporal blessings*. A few must suffice: "Thou shalt surely give thy poor brother, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him; because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto," Deuteronomy xv, 10; "He that giveth to the poor shall not lack;" "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine," Proverbs iii, 9; "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you," Matthew vi, 33; "Give, and it shall be given unto you;

good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give unto your bosom," Luke vi, 38. These Scriptures have been confirmed by a variety of occurrences in the business of men. Hundreds of uncharitable men have failed in business; but point out, if you can, one person, among business men, who has been systematically beneficent, who has failed. Men can not see what may occur in the course of time; but the great Provider can, and he only can, defend both men and their business from failure. That deadly, *money-getting spirit*, that covetous, over-reaching heart, God will give up to the careering winds, tempests, and darkness of a stormy sea, without compass or rudder. Therefore, as God has promised defense, safety, and prosperity to beneficent spirits, this, in addition to the foregoing reasons, should have its influence to inspire us with the spirit of mercy and good works.

Finally, reader, as an intelligent Bible Christian, may we not trust that thou art beneficent, and, therefore, in the surrounding light of Gospel day, thou art determined to be systematically so? Then, dear friend, suffer us to solicit your attention, as we may, to think soberly of one class of our fellow-beings, the widows of deceased Methodist ministers and their fatherless children, as objects of your sympathy and beneficence. These were ladies generally raised in, at least, tolerably good circumstances, and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. These left fairer fame and greater worldly prospects for the more humble but not less honorable stations of being helpmeets for this "self-sacrificing class of men," as the great Dr. A. Clarke terms them. Their husbands have died, and most of them in comparative poverty—men who turned their attention to the *work of the ministry*—"men of *one work*," having the world for their parish. Dear friend, shall the sixty-one thousand Church members in the

bounds of the Ohio annual conference, the garden of our state, suffer a few poor widows of good Christian character and a few orphan children to starve for lack of bread or ordinary clothing? O, no! The sisters named on our Minutes, if their circumstances were known, the hearts even of the friends of the Church would be apt to relieve them. Could the members of our Church see the dear children of their former pastors, who were, in times past, the instruments, under God, of their conversion, live in tattered garments and pine for food, without relieving them? Or, should they have to retire to their fathers' graves to plead to their fathers' God to feed them by ravens? God looks down from heaven upon them. He has placed them among us for the best object, that he may bless us more abundantly, if we relieve them. Yea, more: the Lord places the widows and fatherless children among us instead of himself, and says to us, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Remember Christ will give us credit accordingly, and hereby we shall make him our friend to welcome us into "everlasting habitations." Our habitation here is very fragile, pending on the will of God, and, at any moment, he may call us to give an account of our stewardship.

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## SERMON VIII.

BY REV. WILLIAM F. STEWART.

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD.

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," PSALMS.

BEYOND controversy the Almighty designed that the human family should constitute *one great brotherhood.*

Hence, in man's creation, he not only sent the "one blood" coursing through all veins, thus constituting an endless and universal literal kindred, but he also planted deep in his constitution a desire, yea, a demand for society. This demand is so imperious, that neither the charms which poesy nor the importance which some religions have thrown around solitude can prevent the lone one from sighing,

"O, Solitude, where are the charms  
That sages have seen in thy face?  
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,  
Than reign in this horrible place."

But while men are attracted "together" by inclinations, and compelled, by interest, to "dwell together," seldom is it our privilege to behold that "unity" among them which is contemplated in the text, and which is the essence of that great brotherhood which God designed. A unity of feeling, and purpose, and effort for the securement of God's glory and man's happiness is certainly both *desirable* and *possible*. "Behold how good," etc.; and,

#### I. THIS UNITY IS GOOD:

1. Because *God requires it*. His will on this subject is not only learned from the history of man's creation and position, as set forth in the introductory remarks, but clearly expressed by the pen of inspiration. Hence the astonishment of Paul when informed by them of the house of Chloe that there were contentions in the Corinthian Church, and his present exhortation: "Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." And so solicitous was he that they should understand and obey the will of God in this respect, that he presses it again and again; and even when he had so nearly closed the last epistle to that Church as to say farewell, he would

make, in connection with that endearing word, a final impression on this subject. "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect; be of good comfort; *be of one mind*; live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

The great apostle and his associates only echoed the teachings of Jesus Christ. When he gave to the disciples the new commandment, that they should "love one another," he knew the attractive power of love. He designed that, like kindred drops of water, they should run together till they should "*sit together* in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And, O, how pointedly, impressively, and pathetically is his will manifested in that sublime prayer which he offered up for his disciples! "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that *they may be one, as we are*;" "Neither pray I for these alone, [his apostles;] but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all *may be one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."

2. It is good, because it *gives stability to the Church*. Fluctuations and declensions are abundant in those congregations where Christian unity does not prevail, while advancement in experience and increase of members are peculiar to those congregations who preserve the "unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace." And we will do well to ponder well this very thing. The revivals of the Church, at the present time, great and glorious as they

are, do not surpass those of primitive times; but the proportion of those who stand fast, as the fruits of modern revivals, is certainly smaller than in the days of the Church's infancy. Why is this? Read attentively the state of the Church at the time of the first great revival. Says the historian, "These all continued with *one accord* in prayer and supplication, with the women, and with Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." And on the happy morning, "they were all, with one accord, in one place." This, perhaps, is the grand reason that it is recorded of the three thousand, added that day to the Church, that "they continued *steadfastly* in the apostles' doctrines and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." Worldly wisdom calculates on stability, as connected with human institutions, only in proportion to the unity existing among their patrons, and appropriately says, "United we stand." Jesus calculates upon unity in every Church which seeks to stand upon the rock; and of such only has he declared, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

3. It is good, because it *gives influence* to the Church. It increases her influence WITH GOD. Who has not known a want of unity to prevent the prayers and neutralize the efforts of truly pious ones? poor penitents at the altar of prayer and a part of the Church richly baptized with the spirit of the work, and yet nothing accomplished on account of those who would not come up to the help of the Lord? And till those Achans were put out of the way the Israel of God was compelled to stand still. I know the supplications of a single man of God may accomplish much. I remember Daniel, and Elijah, and Paul; and I have read of their power at the mercy-seat: and yet I remember that Jesus taught, "If two of you shall agree, as touching one thing, it shall be granted." I remember that he taught, "If thou bring thy gift before

the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." From these teachings I am convinced that unity among brethren increases their influence with God. Only when she comes up unitedly to the help of the Lord against the mighty, does she lay hold upon omnipotence; then only do the walls of prisons shake, the doors of dungeons fly open of their own accord, and Heaven's blessings come showering thick and fast. And if the harmony of the Church gives her influence with God, certainly it greatly enlarges her influence with the world. What family exerts the most decided influence in favor of Christianity? Is it the one, where husband and wife, parents and children, professing much love for Christ, exhibit but little for each other? Does not a domestic broil throw a suspicion on the professions and curtail the influence of any family? The same is true of the Church: when divided she is always "weak" if not "contemptible;" but when united, there goes out from her an influence which the world must feel, and by which it may be moved. For of a Church, in such a case, it will not only be said as of her after the Pentecostal baptism, that she "has favor with all the people," but it will be added, as of that same congregation, that an influence will go forth so powerful that "fear" will "come upon every soul." How mighty such a Church! The great geometrician said, "Give me a place for my fulcrum, and I will move the world;" but a band of united brethren, in God's service, can move earth and heaven. O that another Pentecost might come, and brethren show

"How Christians lived in days of old,  
A proverb of reproach and love."

If the plain declaration of Scripture, and the increased stability and influence of the Church sufficiently evidence

that it is "good," other considerations beside these will show that

II. It is *pleasant* for brethren to dwell together in unity. In passing to this thought we may remark:

1. It is pleasant to the *members* of the Church themselves to dwell together thus. The spirit of strife is an unpleasant spirit; the spirit of peace is a pleasant spirit. An individual who had been greatly injured was asked why he did not take revenge upon the perpetrator of the wrong. He responded that he was always unhappy when he allowed himself to become angry, and for the sake of enjoyment he had resolved to restrain wrath. This was the philosophy of an unregenerated man; and surely Christians find more enjoyment in harmony than in strife. When brethren can not meet in the same class, or kneel at the same communion board, how little comfort do they feel! but O, how it swells the ample breast when discord is put far away, and smiling face greets smiling face, and Christian hand grasps Christian hand, and Christian knee with Christian knee in sweet communion bends, and Christian song and prayer with Christian song and prayer sweetly blend, and swell, and rise to God! How pleasant it is to the members!

2. But it is pleasant to the *pastors* of the Church. If there ever is a time when the itinerant rejoices in the approach of conference, it is when, unhappily, strife abounds in the congregation over which he is placed as pastor. If there is ever a time when he would be willing to close his itinerant course, and "build three tabernacles here," and make a permanent abode, it is when he can look over his congregation and say, "Behold how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." He is not afraid then to visit brother B., or sup with sister C., lest brother E. or F. will regard him as taking sides in an unfortunate difficulty. In such a congregation he has a spirit to labor,

and is crowned with success in his labors. Of such a congregation he often dwells in sweetest memories when the infirmities of age have laid him aside from the regular work, and to such a Church he would willingly be a ministering spirit when exalted to a higher sphere of ministration.

3. But such a scene is pleasant for *angels* to look upon. Doubtless they feel deeply interested in the affairs of the Church. That they are thrilled with exceeding joy, upon the penitence of sinners, infallibility assures us; nor can we doubt but they rejoice in that state of things which is calculated to bring sinners under awakening influence. And if, as we have attempted to show, the unity of brethren gives to the Church an influence mighty with God and men—an influence which penetrates the deepest chambers of the soul—in this surely they can but rejoice. The one who was with his beloved disciple on the Isle of Patmos, declared himself to be his “fellow-servant;” and we can scarcely suppose that the memories of the past, and the expanded views of the higher state, would not cause him to esteem more highly than we a scene so pleasant. I sometimes think that if angels ever smile a sweeter smile, or swell a note of higher melody, or bound away with intense joy on their missions, it is when from the battlements of heaven they look down upon such a people and sing, “Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” Thus the goodness and pleasantness of the Christian brotherhood have passed before us in brief review; but there remains an important question yet to be considered. It is this:

III. How can this state of things be brought about and made permanent in the Church? I reply, first, and in general terms, by a new and continuous baptism of the Holy Ghost. But to be more particular, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, we must

1. *Bear with each other's infirmities.* Most of us have

our weaknesses and infirmities. But what is remarkable, is, that we can see and lament the infirmities of our brethren so much easier than we can our own. We can see that a brother prays and sings too loud, but forget that we seldom sing or pray at all. We complain that one is too forward—taking too active a part in every Church movement, and forget that we have stubbornly refused to do any thing. We can overlook the sin of *fault-finding*, and fix the eye only upon the sin of *fault-doing*. It seems that the law in optics, which requires the object of vision to be placed at some distance from the eye, finds place among the laws of depraved spiritual vision. And what is to be deplored is, that the infirmities of our brethren are always found just in the "*focal distance*," so that we can see a mote in our brother's eye easier than a beam in our own. Let us turn about and place ourselves in our brethren's places of observation, and looking back upon our own infirmities we shall learn a lesson of mercy which will prepare us, with some propriety, to say,

"That mercy I to others show,  
That mercy show to me."

We will be willing to bear and forbear, and forbear that we may be borne with. It may be asked, "Shall I never speak of the sins of my brethren?" Certainly, when they *are sins*, and are known to you, you may, nay, you must speak of them, not to your neighbor but *to him* first; not on the street or in the store, but with thee and him *alone*. And if you find it necessary to speak of it further, see that you do it in the way of Bible teaching. If he is guilty of sin and you can convert him, you will do a great work, even "save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins." Bearing with one another; and

2. *Bearing one another's burdens.* Perhaps one of the most prolific sources of alienations among the followers of Christ is the want of a spirit of bearing one another's

burdens, or aiding to bear the common burden. Is there a sexton to be paid; repairs of the church to be paid for; a minister to be supported? By whom shall the burden be borne? The society consists of a hundred members. Shall *ten* of them bear it all, or will the *ninety* help? If the ten are compelled to bear it all, will they feel pleasantly about it? Will they not be likely, in a moment of temptation, to make some remark in regard to delinquents or "pay-nothing" members, which will cause an alienation somewhere? and may they not justly regard themselves as imposed on? If I am not and can not be excluded from any one of the *privileges* of the Church which my brother enjoys, am I not with him in duty bound to aid in bearing the burden as God has given me strength? But I am poor, and this sister is very poor; "it would be a shame to let her give any thing while others can give, and not feel it." Yes, poor woman! she is. Only "*two mites*" in the world, and that is "all her living!" How shameful it was in the officer to allow her to throw her little all into the treasury! How strange that some good man had not interposed! O, that the Savior had been there to have rectified the matter! The Savior! he was there, and he saw it, and he knew it was all she had. He smiled; he approved; he mentioned it, and had it recorded, that she might be honored, and the poor encouraged to bring their offerings as long as the world shall stand. Let the poor bring their pennies; let the rich bring their hundreds; but let all bring something. The poor woman received as rich a reward as if, in other circumstances, she had brought a fortune; but had she not brought her *mites*, she would have received no reward. Find me a society where every one pays his part of the whole requirement, and I will show you one where this sermon would be read without a critique; bearing each other's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of the Lord.

3. *Love one another with pure hearts fervently.* "This is the very thing," says one, "that I don't know how to do. I can bear with infirmities, and I can aid in carrying burdens; but I can't love those in whose piety I have no confidence." How much confidence do you suppose the Almighty had in your piety and mine when he "so loved us" as to give his Son to die for us? Ought we not, then, to "love one another?" "I don't deny that I ought to do it; that is plainly taught. But *how can I?*" He has injured you, has he? and you can't regard him as a good brother, but as an enemy—a wolf in sheep's clothing? Christ says, "Pray for your enemies; do good to those that spitefully use you." Follow those injunctions, and the way may be mysterious, but the issue will be glorious. It is a principle deep implanted in the human heart, by the God who made it, that love will generate and grow in proportion as we extend our benefactions to any one. Mother, why do you love that weak and sickly, that unfortunate child, more than that bright-eyed and healthy one? Is it not because you have been compelled to extend to it more constant and frequent kindnesses? When you meet that offending brother, speak a kind word; when opportunity serves, show a kind deed; and three times a day on your knees pray God that if he is right you may be convinced of it, and if not, that the Almighty Spirit may give *you charity* and *him grace*. O, how will hatred dissipate, and anger flee, and the love of *pity* or *complacency* abound! Remember that Christ and Satan are both interested in the eternal destiny of the man, and ask, "With which shall I throw the measure of my aid?" Bearing with one another, aiding one another, and loving one another; how love attracts! how kindness binds! how goodness blends! The law of kindness regulating pure souls—is not this the perfection to which we press? O, that your society, reader, may be purified and united!

Then will it be one in regard to which a happy membership, a joyous pastor, and rejoicing angels will sing and shout, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

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## SERMON IX.

BY REV. LORENZO D. HARLAN.

THE NEW TESTAMENT TEMPLE.

"Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit," EPHESIANS II, 19-22.

THIS epistle was addressed to the Gentile converts at Ephesus. The apostle Paul congratulates them upon their union with the Church of God, and the happy change effected in their moral condition through the influences of Christianity. He reminds them, in this chapter, of their former state of alienation from God. They were formerly "dead in trespasses and in sins," alienated from the life of God by every species of crime and pollution characteristic of the Gentile nations; they were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." But the grace of God was manifested in their salvation. They who were once spiritually dead had been "quickened together with Christ." They who were once "afar off" were subsequently brought nigh by the blood of atonement. The sacrificial system of the Jewish Church was abolished, and thus one great cause of enmity existing between Jew and Gentile was removed. The

partition wall which for ages had separated them was broken down, when Christ, the great, atoning sacrifice, offered himself a ransom for the sins of mankind. In this way he became "our peace," uniting in one body both Jew and Gentile; and hence, through him as our Mediator, "we both have access by one spirit unto the Father." This brings us to the consideration of the first leading proposition of our text.

I. "NOW, THEREFORE, YE ARE NO MORE STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS, BUT FELLOW-CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS, AND OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD.

1. The Gentiles, prior to their conversion, were strangers and foreigners in the most emphatic sense. In the first place, they were strangers to God. It is true they had "gods many, and lords many;" but they were fearfully estranged from the one only living and true God. So greatly was their knowledge of God obscured through their idolatrous system of worship, that the apostle Paul declares of them that they were "without God in the world." Not liking to retain the true God in their knowledge, the Gentile nations had greatly multiplied the number of their deities. They made to themselves those idol gods which had "eyes, but saw not; ears, but heard not; hands, but handled not; feet, but walked not." Thus the Psalmist speaks of them; and he adds, "They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them."

In the second place, the Gentiles, prior to their conversion, were strangers to all the blessings and privileges guaranteed to the true Church of God. They were not only strangers to God, they were also "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." Having no citizenship in the Church, they had no intercourse with its members. They were treated by the Jews with the utmost abhorrence and contempt; and so deep and determinate was Jewish prej-

udice in opposition to the Gentiles, that the apostles themselves were slow to understand the Gospel commission, which required them to preach among the Gentiles the "unsearchable riches of Christ," and to make known the "fellowship of this" heavenly "mystery," which had been "hid from ages and from generations," but which, according to the eternal purpose of God, was to be manifested, in the last days, to his saints.

2. The Gentiles, before their conversion, were foreigners. As such they had no rights or immunities in common with the Church of God. Under the Mosaic dispensation they were prohibited from mingling with the Jews at the temple service. If a foreigner brought an offering to the temple he could only present it at the court of the Gentiles or wall of partition spoken of by the apostle Paul, where it was received, and sacrifice was offered for him, while he was forbidden to approach the altar.

3. Under the Christian dispensation there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. All are guilty before God. All are still strangers and foreigners till converted, as were the Gentiles mentioned in the text. They forsook their idols and worshiped the God of heaven in spirit and in truth. Hence they both knew God, and glorified him as God. Such a knowledge of God, so frequently mentioned in Scripture, implies a thorough change of heart; and all who are acquainted with God, in this sense, enjoy the forgiveness of sins and acceptance in Christ Jesus. To enjoy a Scriptural knowledge of God is to be, as it were, alive from the dead; for "this is eternal life, to know the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent."

4. We notice that the Gentiles, after their conversion, were "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." They were translated from the darkness and pollutions of Paganism into the kingdom of God's

dear Son. They were, therefore, citizens. Their rights and privileges were secured to them through the Gospel of Christ. They entered, upon their conversion, into new relations, both to God and to his Church. They were created anew in Christ Jesus; old things passed away, and all things became new. Formerly, they were subject to "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience." They were led captive by him at his will. But, when released from that miserable thralldom, they enjoyed, with all the saints, the manifold blessings of the grace of God.

5. The regenerate are members of God's family. They are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus: "And if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Viewed in this relation, the children of God enjoy many exalted privileges. In the first place, they are partakers of the Divine nature. "They are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." They no longer bear the image of the earthly, but of the heavenly—the image of righteousness and true holiness. In the second place, the children of God enjoy the blessing of justification: "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." To such persons "the law of the Spirit," which has a quickening power, imparts freedom from the law of sin and death; and, in connection with the pardon of sin, all true believers enjoy the direct witness of the Spirit, bearing testimony both to their regeneration and adoption. "Because ye are sons," says Paul, "God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." All these blessings accrue to us through God's boundless mercy in Christ Jesus. St. Paul, speaking upon this subject, says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his

mercy he hath saved us ; by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

In the third place, the children of God are subjects of angelic ministrations. In the epistle to the Hebrews we learn that the angels of God are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Again: "Ye are come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels." These angels exercise a constant guardianship over the household of God. Then there must be union between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven; and this union is not merely nominal; it is real, enduring, permanent union. The apostle Paul speaks of the glorified Church in heaven and the Church on earth as constituting one single family. "I bow my knees," says he, "unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and in earth is named." The truth is, the Son of man has opened heaven to the visions of our faith, and the ascending and descending angels shall keep up a perpetual intercourse between heaven and earth, till the glory of the Church militant shall be seen melting away in the bright and burning glories of the Church triumphant.

II. WE NOTICE, SECONDLY, THAT THE CHURCH IS BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER-STONE.

1. The language here employed is figurative, and is designed to show the stability of the Church. The apostle Paul says that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." In the prophecy of Isaiah, the Almighty is represented as saying, "Behold

I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a sure foundation." The apostle Peter, in allusion to this language of prophecy, says, "We have come unto Him as unto a living stone, disallowed, indeed, of men, but chosen of God, and precious." Elsewhere it is said that "this stone, which the builders disallowed, is become the head-stone of the corner." Truly, this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

2. Having thus briefly considered the remarks of inspired writers respecting the foundation of this great spiritual building, we now proceed to speak of the building itself. And, that we may have a clear understanding of this subject, we would here refer to the conclusion of the sermon preached by Jesus Christ upon the mount. "Who-soever heareth these sayings of mine," says he, "and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it." Now, these sayings of Christ we must receive as the embodiment of a system of doctrines taught by the prophets in the Old Testament and the apostles in the New. The doctrines and precepts taught by our Lord Jesus Christ may justly be considered as "the faith once delivered to the saints;" and if this faith should at any time be assailed by men of corrupt minds, it thence becomes our duty to contend for it with holy earnestness, and thus maintain in purity the truth as it has been delivered to us by the authority of an infallible Teacher.

3. There is an article of faith which is essentially nec-

essary in building up the Church, and that is, the doctrine of Christ's divinity. This doctrine, as taught by Christ himself, is shown to be the foundation of the Church of God. In a conversation which Christ once had with his disciples, the following question was asked, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" The answer was, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." But Jesus further inquired, "Who say ye that I am?" Peter responded, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus immediately commended Peter for the correct answer which he had just given: "For flesh and blood," says he, "hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." But what did the Father reveal to Peter? Was it not the glorious doctrine that Christ is the divine, the eternal Son of the Father? So we understand the words of Christ; and this view of the subject comports with what he elsewhere says: "I and my Father are one." If, then, the divine Sonship of Christ be the doctrine implied in the language of Peter, we are hereby enabled to understand, with greater clearness, these words, so long misapplied by the Church of Rome: "And I say 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." When Christ says, "Upon this rock I will build my Church," he is not to be understood as alluding to Peter, but rather to the doctrine involved in his confession.

4. According to prophecy, therefore, Jesus Christ is "the tried stone, the precious corner-stone," giving stability to the living temple of the Christian dispensation. The Church stands firmly on this sure foundation. It has stood upon the everlasting Rock since it was first erected upon this foundation, which was laid in Zion; and, notwithstanding great changes have taken place in our world

since that period; though empires and kingdoms have risen and disappeared, and the mightiest earthly monarchs have been hurled from their thrones; though the earth, morally speaking, has been shaken till its very foundations were out of course; though these mutations have occurred, showing the instability of all human greatness; yet the New Testament temple still, as in former ages, stands upon the hill of Zion, a monument of the wisdom and power of its illustrious Founder.

5. All true believers have come to Christ as unto a living stone. And hence they are "built up," as Peter says, "a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." The apostle here evidently alludes to the temple at Jerusalem, which, with its services, typified, in many respects, the New Testament Church. The following analogies it may not be improper here to point out. In the first place, the temple of Jerusalem was built after a Divine pattern; secondly, the builders were called to the work by Divine authority; thirdly, they were inspired with all the skill and wisdom necessary to finish the work according to the original pattern; and, fourthly, the temple, when finished and dedicated, was a Divine habitation; for it was there the Almighty manifested himself between the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat. According to Jude, all persons who walk by faith in Christ, are building themselves up according to the system of evangelical doctrines delivered to them, and compose what Peter calls "a spiritual house." There is, as we conceive, a special reason why the Church of the New Testament is called "a spiritual house," in the language of the apostle just quoted. Paul teaches that we enjoy, in this dispensation, the glorious ministration of the Spirit. "There are diversities of gifts," says he, "but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." So, if the Church of God is established, through the various instrumentalities ordained, we must, nevertheless, acknowledge the excellency of the power to be of God and not of man. If there are various gifts exercised in the Church, so that all are edified, yet "all these worketh that one and the self-same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will; for as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ; for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." We, therefore, conclude, that the Holy Spirit is the great architect to whose hands is intrusted the work of building up the temple of God according to the pattern shown in the mount. And when this work is done, the Church will be strengthened, settled, established. Then will God's people be ready to adopt the language of the Psalmist: "Beautiful for situation is Mount Zion, the joy of the whole earth." Then may they say, "We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple. Let Mount Zion rejoice; let the daughters of Judah be glad because of thy judgments!" And in this spirit of rejoicing they shall walk about Zion, and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof, and mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces, that they may tell of these things to the generations following.

In this sacred temple we have a holy priesthood. During the Mosaic dispensation, the priests went into the first part of the holy place, accomplishing the service of God. Here they offered the daily sacrifices. The annual sacrifices, also, were offered by the high-priest, who went into the holiest place with the blood of sacrifices, which he offered for himself and the errors of the people.

Let us here consider the exalted privileges enjoyed under the Christian dispensation. We are permitted to bring our offerings to the temple of God, and present them upon his altar, without the intervention of the priesthood. And we may, without the mediation of any high-priest taken from our brethren, enter into the most holy place, and offer our sacrifices with full assurance that they will be accepted. The grounds of this confidence an inspired writer has stated in the following language: "Seeing, then, that we have a great high-priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession; for we have not a high-priest that can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Again he says, "We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail; that is to say, his flesh; and having a high-priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith." Yes, brethren, we may bring our offerings with unshaken confidence; for Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God through him. Has any one a broken and a contrite heart? Let him bring that wounded heart to God's altar, and the offering shall be accepted. God looks with compassion upon him that is of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at his word. Do the pious rejoice in God their Savior? Let them bring an offering of praise to the altar of incense; for Christ, the mediator, is still before the Father's throne, "presenting our songs," as well as our "complaints."

Jesus Christ is the apostle and high-priest of our profession. He was faithful to Him that appointed him. As a servant, Moses was "faithful in all his house, for a

testimony of the things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house, whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Therefore, as a spiritual house, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, we will offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

III. WE PROCEED TO NOTICE, THIRDLY, THE FRAME-WORK AND GROWTH OF THIS BUILDING: "IN WHOM," SAYS THE APOSTLE, "ALL THE BUILDING, FITLY FRAMED TOGETHER, GROWETH UNTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD.

1. We remarked previously that the temple at Jerusalem was built by Divine authority, and according to a Divine pattern. So in regard to the New Testament temple. "God, who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke unto our fathers by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son:" and through him and his apostles have we received the pattern of this magnificent edifice. And now, every man who is engaged in the work of rearing up this building must be a co-worker with God; "for we," says Paul, "are laborers together with God; ye are God's building." God has given the plan and laid the foundation of this building. And "if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire: and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." We would here interpret the apostle without a figure. We suppose his meaning to be this: that every man who teaches the truth as it is in Jesus, and is instrumental in the great work of saving souls, will be rewarded according to the nature and amount of his labors. On the other hand, those teachers who propagate heresy will suffer loss. They will, by no means, receive the approval of the Savior, so far as it relates to their public teachings.

And if they are saved at all, it will be an escape, as it were, from the devouring fires of Divine retribution. The apostle certainly teaches, in this place, the necessity of understanding the precious truths of the Gospel; for "they are more desirable than gold, yea, than much fine gold." Jesus says, "If the Son shall make you free, then shall ye be free indeed." The same may be said of truth.

2. In the epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul has shown how the temple of God is to be fitly framed together. "For as we have many members in one body," says he, "and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having, then, gifts differing according to the grace that is given us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy, according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation." Here we see that the builders engaged in rearing this great temple are required, as were those who built the temple at Jerusalem, to labor according to the wisdom given from above. When God set in the primitive Church apostles, evangelists, prophets, pastors, and teachers, the design of this variety was manifest: the body of Christ was to be edified. And we may here remark, that the body of Christ is spoken of in Scripture in allusion both to the tabernacle and to the temple. The evangelist John says, "The word was made flesh, and dwelt," that is, tabernacled, "among us." Jesus said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will rebuild it." But he spoke of the temple of his body. The New Testament Church is now the body of Christ.

3. In the epistle to the Ephesians, we are shown why it is that God has called men of the various grades of talent and ability to promote the great interests of his Church. This variety, we learn, is "for the perfecting of

the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

4. It is said, that, in the preparation for building the temple at Jerusalem, the material was prepared according to such exact rules, before it was brought to the place where the temple was erected, that "there was neither hammer, nor ax, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building." This fact may serve to illustrate the manner in which the Church of the New Testament is to be built. If the doctrines of the Gospel were now understood with sufficient clearness, and if the duties which the Gospel enjoins were observed with that strictness which their importance demands, then, indeed, would the temple of God be fitly framed together; then would there be both compactness and strength; then would be seen the two pillars—Jachin and Boaz—the emblems of strength and stability, standing erect in the porch of our temple. The nations from afar would soon hear of the fame of this house, and its glory would be spoken of in all lands.

5. We will now proceed to speak of the growth of this building. Our text says it "groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." There are two respects in which this

growth may be considered: First, the growth of individual believers; and, secondly, the growth of the whole collective body of Christians. "Of this glorious Church," as Dr. Clarke observes, "each Christian soul is an epitome; for as God dwells in the Church at large, so he dwells in every believer in particular: *each is a habitation of God, through the Spirit.*" This is undoubtedly a correct and Scriptural view of the subject. "Know ye not," says Paul, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defiles the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." It was in view of the danger of violating the sanctity of this temple, that Peter admonishes us to beware, lest being led away with the error of the wicked, we should fall from our steadfastness. "But grow in grace," says he, "and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." This growth in grace implies an increased refinement of the moral feelings; or, in other words, an increase of that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." As "holiness becometh the house of God," so the believer serves God in "the beauty of holiness." His motto is, "Holiness to the Lord!" Being cleansed from all moral defilement, he "perfects holiness in the fear of God." And in this state of moral rectitude, there is a meetness for a higher and better state of existence; even the blissful abodes of "the saints in light."

But there will doubtless be, in the heavenly world, a perpetual increase of Divine knowledge and enjoyment. Let us here observe the contrast between the present and future states of the pious, as drawn by the apostle Paul. "Here," he tells us, "we see through a glass darkly: we know in part, and we prophesy in part;" but in heaven we shall see "face to face;" our vision there will not be obscured nor bounded by mortality, which shall be "swal-

lowed up of life." There we shall know, even as we are known. Our knowledge there will not depend upon those dull and tardy processes of thought to which we are now accustomed. Dwelling no longer in houses of clay, we shall, in that magnificent building, "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," acquire knowledge with wondrous rapidity; the facilities for intellectual and moral improvement being increased beyond any thing which it is possible for us here to conceive. And this improvement shall be eternal. Ages in heaven may roll on, and still the glorified inhabitants of that world of blessedness shall increase in knowledge with a steady progression. They shall be greatly aided, too, by the teachings of Him whose knowledge is infinite; for "the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to living fountains of water"—shall unfold to their minds the wondrous scheme of redemption, which all the intelligences of heaven desire to understand. Thus shall their knowledge and bliss perpetually increase.

We would notice, secondly, the growth of the Church in regard to numbers. The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. The Gospel of Messiah's kingdom is to be preached till "all shall know the Lord, from the least even unto the greatest." Then shall the prophecy of Isaiah be fulfilled: "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 results of this exaltation shall be glorious. Zion shall become a praise in all the earth. The saints of the Most High shall then possess the kingdom, and shall bear rule till the principalities, and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and all spiritual wickedness in high places shall be effectually cast down. Then shall the Church keep a glorious jubilee, and "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with

songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." All superstition and corrupt forms of religion shall then disappear from among men, and "the gods that made not the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." Every heathen temple shall then be deserted, Mohammedanism shall be overthrown, and "mystery Babylon" shall fall to rise no more. God's ancient people—the Jews—shall then turn and "look on Him whom they have pierced," and shall acknowledge him as the true Messiah. Then shall come in "the fullness of the Gentiles;" the universal spread of Christianity, accomplishing the fulfillment of prophecy, which points out the triumphant reign of Him whose kingdom ruleth over all. The great influx of nations to God's holy mountain shall then be witnessed; "and many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." The law shall then go forth out of Zion, and the distant isles that have long waited for that law shall receive it. Even "the multitude of isles shall be glad," and the whole habitable earth shall rejoice in view of the triumphs of Messiah's reign. In every place shall mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace shall kiss each other. Hostilities between belligerent nations shall cease, and all the implements of warfare shall be converted into implements of husbandry, and every military school and academy shall be left destitute of patronage. In all God's holy mountain there shall be exemption from injuries; destructions shall there come to a perpetual end. The song which angels chanted at the advent of Messiah, shall again be sung by all those shining legions who shall awake the mighty symphony around the throne in heaven, and every true worshiper on earth shall catch the inspiration from above as he repeats the heaven-inspired chorus,

“Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and goodwill to men.”

IV. WE NOTICE, IN THE FOURTH PLACE, THE UNION OF JEWS AND GENTILES IN THE ESTABLISHING OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

1. The apostle Paul says, “Ye are builded together.” In this union all national prejudices ceased. They became one in Christ Jesus. They were taught that in him there was “neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female.” All became one in Christ, and were united into one body. Hence, they kept the unity of the Spirit. The prayer of Jesus, recorded by the evangelist John, was answered in a remarkable manner in the union of Jews and Gentiles into one visible Church organization. After praying for his immediate followers, Jesus then prayed for those who should afterward believe on him through the preaching of the apostles. “Neither pray I for these alone,” says he, “but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they may be also one in us.”

2. God’s design to bestow the blessing of his salvation upon the Gentiles was made known by revelation. It was revealed to Peter in a vision; and when he explained this subject to the people, they rejoiced that God had granted repentance to the Gentiles. St. Paul also declares that the calling of the Gentiles was made known to him by revelation. He styles himself “the prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles;” and he taught that they should be fellow-heirs with the Jews, and, consequently, entitled to a full participation of all the blessings and benefits of the Gospel dispensation.

3. The text shows why the Jews and Gentiles who were converted to Christianity were united together in one body. In this state of unity they were to become “a

habitation of God through the Spirit." God dwelt in the ancient temple at Jerusalem, and there was the visible manifestation of his presence and glory. But he no longer manifests himself to his people by any visible symbol. In this dispensation, which is surpassing in the plenitude of its glory, he dwells with all his true worshipers by the spirit which is given them. And he now seeks such worshipers as call upon him spiritually—such as sing and pray with the spirit and with the understanding also.

4. Let us consider a little further that great principle by which the Jews and Gentiles were united together as members of the same visible Church. They were all of one heart and one mind. The love of God united them in one common brotherhood, and they gave, in this union, an admirable illustration of the doctrine taught by the apostle John: "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." They put on that charity which is the "bond of perfectness," and their union and fellowship should be the model for the Church in all succeeding ages.

5. Finally: we would speak of the superior glory of the New Testament temple. Isaiah, whose prophetic eye beheld the rising glories of the Christian dispensation, thus addressed the Church: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." And this glory was to eclipse the luminaries of heaven in all their brightness. "The sun," says Isaiah, "shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." It may in truth be said that "the glory of this latter house shall exceed the glory of the former." It is even now so glorious, that, were the ancient one still standing upon the hill of Zion, retaining all its former magnificence, it would have comparatively little glory, "by reason of the glory

that excelleth." We may, with propriety, speak of this consecrated temple as did the Psalmist respecting the house of God at Jerusalem: "One thing have I desired, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." How pleasurable are the hours thus devoted to the worship of the true God!

The Psalmist "beheld the beauty of the Lord" as he inquired in his temple, and so may we; for "out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." As in the work of the visible creation God commanded the light to shine out of darkness, so he still shines forth. Not only do the visible heavens declare the glory of God, but also the uncreated splendors of the Divinity are manifested through the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. This glory is revealed to man as a moral being. It shines into his heart; and herein we behold "the excellent glory" of the Church. It is not an effulgence too bright to be gazed upon; not as the brightness of the Divine glory upon Mount Sinai, which seemed as devouring fire; but the calm and steady light of God's countenance, shining upon the believer's heart and upon his pathway all the day long. And this glory shall be perpetual. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from this time forth, and even forever." He will ever defend the glory of his people, Israel. The prophet Isaiah, while contemplating the Divine protection vouchsafed to the Church, thus prophesies of her future prosperity and glory: "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion and upon her assemblies a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defense." In strict accordance with prophecy, "the city of our solemnities," the place where all our solemn sacri-

lices are offered, is still "a quiet habitation." God is still our refuge and strength. He is in his holy temple; and while we find it written, "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob," we will rejoice as did the Psalmist, when it was said to him, "Let us go up to the house of the Lord." "Thither the tribes go up;" for there is the place of rest and security. There, too, is the house of prayer for all nations. It was built for their accommodation, and shall stand till time shall be no longer. In vain may "the heathen rage" against it, or "the people imagine" that it may be destroyed; for the Son of God still reigns upon the hill of Zion, and "appoints salvation for walls and bulwarks." In vain may "that wicked one," the usurper of Divine rights, "sit in the temple of God," and arrogate to himself the honors of Divinity. God shall destroy him "with the brightness of his coming," and thus defend the glory of his holy temple. In vain may infidelity hope for the destruction of this towering edifice, or boisterous elements threaten its overthrow. The rains, and storms, and floods of eighteen centuries have beat with great violence against this noble building, the New Testament temple; but its glittering spires are still seen upon the heights of God's holy mountain; nor shall the wrath of man, nor the rage of devils, nor all the combined agencies of earth and hell, effect the demolition of this temple, which has so long been consecrated to the service of Him that dwelleth between the cherubim.

## SERMON X.

BY REV. GEORGE C. CRUM.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

“And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and upon thy gates,” DEUTERONOMY VI, 6-9.

THE children of the present age are the hope of the age to come. We are now playing our parts in the great drama of life; but we shall soon pass from the stage. Time is sweeping onward, and every day laying some of us to sleep in the house appointed for all the living. In thirty years, another generation will stand where we do. Other men and women will think, and speak, and act for the world—will set forth an example, and put in motion an influence, which will fill the world with happiness or woe, when we are bowing under the weight of years, or gone to our final reckoning with God.

And who are they that shall take our places, and succeed us in the great duties and interests of life? Our sons and daughters, for whom we are now so tenderly anxious—over whom we now weep and pray; or, perhaps, whom we now neglect, and leave to roam at will over town and country, and who, meanwhile, are forming habits which shall compel them to a life of sin, and an end of shame and infamy.

It is, therefore, an inquiry of immense importance, What can we do to benefit and save our children? Shall we entail upon them misery and sin? shall we send them to the next generation as living witnesses of our folly and

wickedness? The thought is shocking! What, then, can we do to secure to them the boon of wisdom, virtue, and happiness? Something can be done; something *must* be done, or they will prove to the next age a shameful bequest, an unmitigated curse. I repeat the question, with intense solicitude, What can we do? I find an answer in the Bible: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The meaning of this divine precept is, *educate* them; and, in doing this, regard their nature, the duties they are to fulfill, and the destiny that awaits them in a future world.

The nature of man is threefold—physical, intellectual, and moral. Each of these forms the basis of a kind of education peculiar to itself, and to educate him as such requires different and distinct modes of training.

There is much said and written, at present, upon the subject of education. The old-fashioned systems of our fathers are thrown aside as worthless; new plans are invented, and then again new methods proposed, to bring these plans to perfection with the least possible delay. I find no fault with this. I censure not the progressive spirit of the age. On the contrary, I rejoice in the discoveries of science, and hail them, not only as new indications of human greatness, but as new and heaven-sent facilities of human happiness and moral elevation. I would estimate knowledge, even in this respect, at a price above rubies, and to be chosen rather than fine gold. But I do complain that, with the multitude, intellectual education is every thing, and moral education nothing, or almost nothing. I do complain that, while men are willing to lay out thousands to train their sons in college, scarcely a dollar can be afforded to the Sunday school, the object of which is to train them to virtue and religion.

Do not misconceive me. I would not put down intellectual learning; but I would elevate religious learning.

I would magnify the Sunday school. I would give it the first place in the first rank of educational measures. For, however important the attainment of human science may be, the attainment of moral principle and virtuous habits is infinitely more so. Neglect the religious training of your child, and, however splendid his intellectual accomplishments may be, he is totally unfit for the duties and responsibilities of life, and the solemn scenes that await him when done with the present fleeting and temporary existence. Such a one is like a beautiful vessel upon a stormy sea, gayly painted, with every sail set, and streamers fluttering in the breeze, but without rudder, chart, or compass, drifting with every current, and driving with every wind, and destined, at last, to founder at sea, or be dashed in pieces against the rocks.

The grand reason for moral and religious instruction is found in the constitution of man. He is a moral being; he has moral susceptibilities; he is the subject of moral law, capable of moral action; he can be wise and good, or he can be ignorant and wicked. Such is your child. Yes; that beloved child, the miniature of yourself, which you fold, with deepest and purest affection, to your bosom, possesses these high endowments. It may know the infinite and ever-blessed Jehovah; it may love him with a pure and unutterable affection; it may enjoy him with a rapture and a relish but a little lower than the angels. Here, then, are the reasons for religious instruction—reasons woven into the very texture of our being, and forming a part of our moral constitution. They speak with a voice loud and clear; and no new revelation, though attended with all the signs and wonders of the past, could more fully declare the mind of God in regard to our duty, than do these reasons, speaking up from the depths of our inmost nature.

Permit me, now, to bring before you a few leading

thoughts, that shall more directly illustrate the importance of early religious instruction.

1. One of the first facts to which I would call your attention is, our children *will* be educated. True, they may never enter the village school-room or the halls of the university; yet such is their nature, and such the circumstances of their being, that they will be educated. It is not for us to say whether these children shall receive mental and moral culture; they will receive it. So exquisite are their susceptibilities, that to neglect their training in wisdom and piety, is to educate them in ignorance and sin. Your child may be denied the ordinary means of instruction; but there is a school kept at home, and there it will be trained for weal or woe, though it may never open a book or learn a letter. Yes; the scenes and examples of its own fireside will print lessons of good or evil upon its mind, the effects of which will be seen and felt through every period of its future life. Society, too, shall become his instructor; and it will stamp him with its own character of good or evil. His public resorts and his private interviews will furnish him lessons of healthful or ruinous tendency. There he will imbibe principles which will shed luster upon maturer life, or which will develop themselves in future guilt, shame, and disgrace. There he will learn to fear God and keep his commands, or to blaspheme his name and trample upon his sacred laws. There he will be led in the path of purity and religion, or be lured, by wicked counsels, into the broad way of sin and death. In view of these facts, what an importance attaches to religious training! Your child *will* be educated. Shall that education be right or wrong? Shall he be virtuous and happy, or shall he be vicious and miserable? In the name of your child I demand your decision.

2. Pernicious and even destructive elements are devel-

oping in the heart of your child. "The heart," says the Bible, "is deceitful and desperately wicked." The corruption of our nature displays itself at an early age. The seeds of sin have been thickly sown there, and in the very twilight of its being we see them sprouting forth. The deadly virus of depravity taints the babe and the child, as well as the old and gray-haired sinner; and, as years roll on, the proofs increase, both in number and in energy. Almost in the infancy of being may be seen the little shoots of pride, of self-will, of impatience, of anger, of insubordination. They are small at first; but they grow, spreading their roots, and pushing them far down in the soil of a depraved nature, till, interlaced and bound around the heart, no human art or energy can free it from their grasp. No mountain oak, striking its roots by fathoms into the earth, ever stood so firmly. Neglect these beginnings of evil, and your child enters the pathway of sin. The tares which the devil has sown will spring up and bear seed, and this seed shall bring forth a fresh crop of evils, and then this be followed by another, and another, till the harvest of corruption is fully ripe, when it shall be reaped and bound for everlasting fires.

This is no fancy picture, but plain and sober truth. Such is the nature of these evils, and such their laws of progress and development, that these results must ensue. Time will not cure them, nor age transmute them into virtues. On the contrary, they will enlarge in size and grow in strength, till they become the complete masters of the soul—masters whose chains are iron and whose bondage is death. I know of no remedy for this but a religious education; and this, by God's blessing, *is* a remedy. Religious truth is not only counteractive of evil, but destructive of it; and, if the youthful mind is brought under its influence, the seeds of sin will perish, and the

beautiful graces of wisdom and religion will spring up and bloom in their places.

We are told by some who affect to be wise, that children are not to be biased and prejudiced by religious opinions. Let them alone, say these wise moralists. Do not trouble them with your Bibles and your prayers. Let them be till they arrive at maturity; then they will act from honest convictions, and choose for themselves with propriety and discretion. Now, all this would have some show of reason, if the heart were innocent and free from native evils—if it could remain unoccupied by sin and uncorrupted by evil. But what are the facts? Simply these: they go astray from the birth, and foolishness is bound up in their hearts. Deep in the soul there is a living, active principle of evil. It permeates the whole moral system, and sends its poison along every nerve and through every vein. Meanwhile, evil influences come from every point, and evil examples multiply on every hand, each alluring them into the flowery but fatal path of sin. This, then, is a deceitful philosophy—in plain words a devilish artifice, the effect of which is to insnare and destroy all who can be brought under its influence. I knew a young man whose history and fate may show us what it is to be let alone. He was the son of fond and doting parents. He had every advantage for cultivation; no money was spared to make him an accomplished man. But his religious culture was neglected. He was never taught to pray, to read the word of God, or reverence the holy Sabbath. No pious example was before him; no attempt was made to check the evil tendencies of his nature. His habits were early confirmed. He came into manhood with the stamp of evil upon his face, and a slave to the most brutal appetites. I saw him at this time. His eyes were inflamed and sunken; his countenance bloated and livid, and his limbs swollen and totter-

ing. Although but in the morning of manhood, the lines of old age were deeply carved upon his haggard face. But his career of sin was short: he died an old man at twenty-five, the victim of strong drink and brutal lust. Do you shudder at the picture of this wretched youth, whose form, like a shadow, even now flits before me? Would you avert from your darling boy a fate like his? Then avoid the rock on which his bark was wrecked. Neglect not his religious training. Remember the evil tendencies of his nature; now they may be controlled, but they will soon be beyond your reach. Time will give them an energy and fixedness which will bid defiance to every effort. They will grow with his growth, and strengthen with his strength, and ripen with his age; and at last he will reap, in anguish and despair, the bitter fruits of parental neglect.

3. A third consideration is, youth furnishes peculiar advantages for religious instruction. The mind is now more susceptible of religious culture than at any other period. It is now more tender and yielding. The fountains of feeling have not been frozen by contact with the world, nor the heart hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. As the soft wax receives and retains the impression of the seal, so the young heart receives and retains the imprint of virtuous principle and the mold of religious character.

At this period it is comparatively easy to arrest the attention, to win the affections, and move the soul by the beautiful and affecting truths of our holy religion. Who has not marked the interest of the child in the touching stories of the Bible, and seen his face beam with pleasure as you told him of God and his works, of heaven and its joys, of Jesus and his bleeding love? Yes; in that young heart there are feelings and susceptibilities that we can not overrate, and that we must not, under the most

awful penalties, overlook. This bright season, with its mellow soil and shining hours, soon, too soon, departs.

“The beam of the morning, the bud of the spring,  
The promise of beauty and brightness may bring;  
But clouds gather darkness, and, touched by the frost,  
The pride of the plant and the morning are lost.  
Thus the bright and the beautiful ever decay;  
Life's morn and life's flowers—O, they quick pass away!”

Spring, with its budding beauties and fragrant blossoms, does not continue all the year. It is speedily followed by the fervid summer, sober autumn, and the dreary snows of winter. If you would have green and growing fields in summer, ripened harvests in autumn, and rich stores for comfort and repose in winter, *good seed must be sown in the spring.*

In connection with this, it is important to remember that, at this period, the operations of the Spirit are more frequent and powerful than at any other time. How early these impressions are we can not say, but we know enough by observation and experience to say very early. With many of us, these stand among the first records of memory. We can remember far back in the morning of childhood, the communings of the Spirit with our hearts, when, with gentle force, it withheld us from evil, and inclined us to good. How oft, under its promptings, have we left the sports of the village green, and gone to the chamber alone, to pour out our young hearts in prayer! O, these were holy impulses, and ever to be remembered as the first efforts of Heaven to lead us in the paths of virtue. And when we reflect that, without Divine aid, our efforts are fruitless, how obvious is it that this is the time for prompt and persevering effort! We can put forth no desire; we can offer no prayer; we can impart no truth, that is not met by a corresponding effort of the divine Spirit. Upon the youthful mind he ever sheds holy influences, which, like rain and sunbeams, soften and

warm the soil upon which we are casting the seeds of immortal life.

4. The importance of early moral training will be further manifest, if we consider the demands of the age in which we live. The present is a remarkable age—distinguished by great events, which portend much of good or evil to mankind. The grand idea of the age, is self-government, and it is rapidly becoming the universal one. The heart of the world is throbbing and swelling with this great thought, and the nations are swaying to and fro under its power, like the forest before a mighty wind. It is like a huge giant, striding from kingdom to kingdom, and marching, in terrible grandeur, round the world. Now he hurls the haughty despot from his seat of power, and levels his throne to the earth. Beneath his feet lie broken crowns and scepters, and in his train follow excited nations, delirious with the prospect of liberty, and rending the heavens with their shouts of freedom and equality. The most ancient forms of government totter, and the very foundations of society feel the shock. The only hope of our own and other nations, is in the training up of generations, who, from their very cradles, shall have the fear of God planted in their hearts. Our hope is not in fleets and armies, in cannon and bayonets, nor in the skill and sagacity of statesmen, but in a sound Christian education. I do not hesitate to say, that, under our own government, glorious as it is, constitutions, and laws, and judges are the veriest mockeries, unless the rising generation be trained to wisdom and virtue.

The kind of men demanded by the age, then, are self-governing men—men whose minds are swayed by high moral principle—who fear God, and hate the wages of unrighteousness. Without these, the best political and literary institutions are of no avail. What an illustration of this have we in the free governments of South America!

Of liberty they have been but a shameful burlesque; and that Eden-like clime has been converted into a hell by the bad passions of men. There despotism, with iron crown and scepter, has held fierce and fearful rule; and anarchy, more dreadful still, rioted in fields of blood and slaughter. And the reason is, they have no religion, or next to none. The masses are sunk in ignorance and crime, without the fear of God, or a sense of moral obligation.

At this age of the world, men must and will govern themselves. If you would prevent it, you must handcuff and spike them down in dungeons, where the free light and breezes of heaven shall never visit them. But they can never govern themselves without the fear of God and the restraints of religion. Nor can we preserve even the semblance of liberty, unless our sons and daughters are trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

But the age demands not only God-fearing legislators, and a people wise and virtuous; it demands ministers of religion, and missionaries of the cross, to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth. At this very time, the isles of the ocean wait for His law; Asia lifts an imploring eye to heaven, and Ethiopia is seen stretching out her hands unto God. Benighted nations, who have so long sat in darkness, are to-day asking for the Bible and the missionary. The age demands thousands of devoted men and women, who, with the zeal of Paul and the burning love of John, shall go forth to proclaim salvation to a lost and dying world.

Parents, we want your sons to be pillars in our Churches, and to stand in these pulpits when we have passed away. We want them to go to the isles of the ocean—to go to the burning sands of Africa—to carry light into the dark heart of Asia—to go every-where, preaching Christ and him crucified. Where shall we find them? Among these

children of the Sabbath school. We are too selfish and money-loving for such a high calling. We want a new generation, better trained, better taught, more benevolent and more self-sacrificing than we. We want men who, like Samuel, have been trained in the house of the Lord, and women who, like Phebe and Priscilla, will be helpers in Christ Jesus. Bring these children, then, to the Savior; let them be taught at his feet, and baptized in his blood. Teach them to value souls more than money; eternity more than time. Imbue their minds with the sacred principles of religion. Consecrate them not to mammon, but to God; not to the world, but to the Church—to the work of saving souls and rescuing immortal minds from the thralldom of sin and Satan. This, I repeat, the age demands; nor can we meet the awful responsibilities of the times if we neglect the moral training of the young.

5. We arrive at the same conclusion if we look forward to the future world. The present life is only the threshold of existence, and but a moment compared with eternity. If a man has no deathless spirit; if his nature and his destiny rise no higher than the mere brute; if, when he dies, the light of his being is quenched forever, then let him alone; let him eat and drink, for to-morrow he dies. But if he has an immortal soul, that shall survive the dissolution of nature; and if its happiness or woe, through endless ages, is to flow from its moral character, how inconceivably important must it be to train it for its coming immortality! A mind unacquainted with itself, with its God, His redeeming mercy and his pardoning love; unacquainted with its duties and its destiny; its faculties locked up in ignorance, and almost blotted out by sin, must be utterly unfitted for the associations and employments of the heavenly world. Whereas, a mind trained to knowledge and piety will be prepared to enter upon that world where its faculties shall continue to expand.

and its knowledge and happiness to increase forever. And when we reflect upon the brevity of life, and the rapidity with which it is passing; that, like a vapor, it appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth away, O how important it is to begin early, to husband every moment, and to improve every favoring influence!

“The Indian mother, who hangs her child to the bough of a tree, and hums her wood-song while the winds rock it to sleep, thinks no further than to rear it a hunter or a warrior.” The man of the world has no higher end than to see his child wealthy and popular, courted and flattered by the rich and the great. But Christians must rise above such low, unworthy aims. Their object must be to train their children for eternity—for the service of God to everlasting ages. True, you may not rear up an apostle here, but you may rear up an angel hereafter. You may not see your child the object of admiration here; but hereafter you may see him stand among the redeemed at the right hand of God.

6. In fine, the importance of early religious training may be seen in the light of the Bible. In every age, and with an energy and distinctness not to be mistaken, God has spoken upon this subject. Three passages, giving utterance to the mind of God, under three several dispensations, will be sufficient authority: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and these words shall be in thy heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house and upon thy gates;” “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from

it ;” “ And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Thus has God spoken ; this is his will. And if he has thus prescribed and enjoined the religious education of children, the question is forever settled, both in regard to its importance and our duty. When we appreciate his will upon this subject, and carry out his wise and benevolent provisions, then shall our sons be as plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters shall be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.

I proceed to remark, in the *second* place, that Sunday schools are peculiarly adapted to this great end. To see this :

1. Mark the great principle upon which they proceed. It is this: the child has a moral nature ; he is capable of receiving and exerting moral influence ; he has moral susceptibilities that may be brought out and improved by culture. The Sunday school contemplates the child in his relations to the present and the future world, and its object is to prepare him for the duties of the one, and the sublime and endless pleasures of the other. These views alone harmonize with the higher nature of man, and that splendid destiny which awaits him when time is no more. Every system of education is defective and incomplete precisely in proportion as these great principles are overlooked or forgotten.

2. Now mark their operation. This is simple but efficient. The instrument employed is the Bible—the living and incorruptible word of God. This wonderful system of truth the child is taught to read and study. By this means he is made acquainted with the will of God, his nature and perfections. Here he is taught the great duties of religion—repentance, faith, conversion, obedience to parents, and kindness and love to all. Here, too, he is taught to hallow the name of God, and to reverence the

holy Sabbath. The evils of sin are here portrayed, and a loud voice of warning lifted against all impiety and transgression. Unceasing efforts are here put forth to inspire the love of truth, wisdom, virtue, and goodness, and then the whole is impressed with songs of praise and supplications to God for his aid and blessing. Such a system as this is adapted to the moral ends proposed. It will secure attention. It will win the heart, and, under the Divine favor, will repress the growth of evil and implant the seeds of a wise and virtuous life. True, the results may not immediately appear, but precious fruit will be gathered after many days. It is said that in the hand of an Egyptian mummy was found a bulbous root, which, being planted in the earth, grew and bloomed a beautiful but unknown flower, after two hundred years. Some years since, a venerable man, upward of one hundred years old, was the subject of converting grace, in one of the eastern states. The circumstance which led to this, was hearing a text of Scripture which his pious mother had taught him in England, one hundred years before. It is thus the seeds of virtue and religion are sown in the infant mind, which shall, sooner or later, spring up and bring forth fruit unto life eternal.

3. Their almost universal adoption, as a means promotive of this end, deserves a thought. Sabbath schools are comparatively of recent origin—but little more than threescore years having elapsed since they were instituted. It was early perceived that this mode of instruction contained within it the elements of a richer inheritance for the young than mere earthly estates. Their influence upon the present and the future was distinctly and joyfully traced. This operated as a kind of universal stimulus. The pious and benevolent felt the impulse, and, one after another, like stars coming forth amid the shadows of the night, these little seminaries of virtue began to appear

over the land, and send forth their beams to guide the young to the feet of Jesus. And they have still continued to grow and multiply, in countless numbers and irresistible influence. They have spread almost over the globe. On every continent and isle of the ocean, where the Bible is known, there the Sunday school exists. They have found a place in every Church, a friend in every philanthropist; and philosophers, statesmen, and divines have spoken in their praise, and eloquently pleaded in their behalf. The eminent and gifted, the benevolent and patriotic, have regarded them with admiration, and contributed to their success by their example and influence. They have seen in them the means of regenerating the world, and of elevating the race from ignorance and sin, to wisdom, purity, and happiness.

4. Let us now glance at what has been accomplished. And here we can point to the most brilliant results—results that shall gladden the universe and glorify the Savior, when the achievements of philosophers and statesmen have been forgotten. The ignorant have been instructed, and the perverse and wicked reclaimed. They have remedied the negligence of parents; they have given the hopes and comforts of religion to families, and sent their peaceful and hallowing influences, like streams of life, over whole communities. The Sunday school is giving intelligence and virtue to the people, statesmen and philosophers to the country, active and devoted members to the Church, and redeemed souls to heaven. “They have sometimes, as with the rod of Moses, smitten a rock, from which has gushed forth living waters, for the refreshment of nations.” Dr. Morrison, who unsealed the Bible to the three hundred millions of China, was taught and trained in the Sunday school. Many of the most efficient ministers, the most devoted and successful missionaries, who have gone to the dark places of the earth, and are

now rending the vail of heathenism, and revealing the Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings, were trained in the Sunday school, and there converted to God. They have improved the moral atmosphere of the world, and will ultimately make it as a garden which the Lord hath blessed. They are fountains of mercy to a perishing world—trees, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

A few words, addressed to the patriot, the Christian, the teacher, and the parent, will conclude our remarks.

As the friend of your country, you would perpetuate her existence, and hand down her civil and religious privileges to future generations. Ignorance and sin are our worst enemies; they strike at the very foundation of our liberties, and will, if not counteracted, overwhelm us in anarchy and ruin. Our strength is not in fleets and armies, but in the intelligence and virtue of the people. These are our true safeguards; with these we fear no foreign foe, no civil discord. "O, if the fire on our altars ever goes out; if ever another Jeremiah shall sing the funeral dirge over our nation's grave, it will be because we have forgotten to teach our children to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God."

Christians! not only are these children the hope of the state, but of the Church. They are to preach and pray, and send forth the light of their example, when you have gone to your eternal reward. If the world is to have a Christian in it, in the next generation, he is to rise up from among these little ones. The only hope of the world's conversion is through their instrumentality. Can you, dare you, withhold the means and the labor necessary to success? No; enter the Sunday school, give it your support, and consecrate your energies to this grand enterprise, which is to fill the world with zealous Christians, and heaven with redeemed spirits. Gather in the poor

and outcast of your city, clothe them, bring them into your Sunday school, and teach them the way to heaven. Along your streets and alleys there goes many a ragged child, who, trained in the Sunday school, might rival in wisdom a Clarke, in eloquence a Summerfield, in missionary zeal a Coke or a Judson. Let no Christian complain of expense or of labor. It is the cause of the Church, of humanity, of the bleeding Savior.

Teachers!\* I see many before me, at the head of their respective classes, who bear this honored name. I would stimulate you in your work. Your office has nothing externally attractive to recommend it to the man of the world. It confers no worldly distinction; it leads to no earthly ease or pleasure; it has no recompense of gold or silver. But is it not enough to feel that conscience approves, that God smiles, and that you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just? The conviction that you are doing good—that you are contributing both to the physical and moral welfare of the young, and the general happiness of mankind—should excite you to unwearied diligence in your humble but godlike vocation.

In order to success, several personal qualifications are necessary. First of all, *piety*. The Sunday school teacher should be deeply, devotedly pious. He may have knowledge; he may have aptness to teach; he may have facility of illustration; but these can never compensate the absence of personal religion. The motives by which he ought to be actuated, and the principles by which he ought to be governed, can never be felt or appreciated, till he knows the saving power of grace. Faith in Christ, love to Christ, compassion for the ignorant, and a fervent desire for their salvation, must prompt, sustain, and prolong his efforts in behalf of the young. Yes, if we would

\* This sermon was delivered January 5, 1851, before the Ninth-street Sunday school, Cincinnati.

see Sunday schools prosper, the fire of true piety must burn in the breasts of the teachers; then a vital warmth will pervade the school, and a quickening, purifying influence will flow from the teacher's heart, to those whom he seeks to guide in the path of life. *Knowledge* is necessary. The teacher himself should be a student; and he should habitually, prayerfully, and thoroughly study the holy oracles. He should study not only to render truth intelligible, but attractive. It must be made such in order to secure and hold the attention. Win the affections of the child, and you have more than half accomplished your work; and you may do this by a mild authority; by the exercise of kindness; by a generous approbation; by care for their interests; by an occasional call when they are sick, and by kind sympathy when they suffer. Such means as these will give you a place in their hearts, and render you at once the object of their respect, confidence, and love. *Perseverance* is necessary. No one whose disposition is versatile, who is fond of novelties, or who is impatient under disappointment, is fitted for this work. There are difficulties to be met, and discouragements to be encountered, so many and so frequent, that nothing but a calm and animated perseverance can overcome them. The object of a Sunday school teacher is to do good; and, in the strength of God, he must be determined to succeed. He must not fail or be discouraged; he must incessantly labor and pray. To be successful in any enterprise, indomitable perseverance must be displayed. Go, then, cheerfully to your work; pursue it with fidelity and prayer, and leave the result to Him who hath said, "*They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.*"

Parents! here you have an abiding interest. It is your cause we plead; it is your interest, and the interest of your child, we this day advocate. If all others turn a deaf ear, you should hear; if all others scowl upon this

enterprise, it should have your countenance and support. You can not disregard the moral interests of your children, without being more cruel than the savage of the wilderness. They *must* be taught to know God, to fear and love him, or bitterly will you weep when it is too late to remedy your neglect.

Look, I beseech you, upon that child. Every thing pleads for him—his innocence, his beauty, his laughing eye and dimpled cheek. But he is destined to another world—he is the heir of immortality; and when time has passed away, he will be lost in the shades of endless night, or shine an angel amid the splendor of eternal day.

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## SERMON XI.

BY REV. MOSES SMITH.

ISRAEL'S TRIUMPH AT THE RED SEA.

“Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” EXODUS xv, 11.

THIS part of the exulting and spirit-stirring song of Moses was expressive of great joy. Truly this heaven-signalized and happy deliverance of the Hebrews was heart-affecting and soul-inspiring. Each spirit, ecstatic in the sunlight of infinite favor, filled and overflowed with love and gratitude to God. Imagination, sped on the wing of faith, hopefully contemplated the distant land of Divine right—the once peaceful tents of the remnant of Israel, safely environed by the far-off hills and towering mountains of God. There yet could be seen the fond traces of their race; their solemn and sacred retreats; the once holy, but now forsaken and moldering altars, with a gloomy, wild wilderness of innumerable graves, still telling

of a holy, beloved, and departed ancestry. Two thousand, two hundred and eighty years had scarcely fled when the youthful Joseph, barely surviving his mother's death, was abandoned to the ruthlessness of a Midianitish band and the fearfulness of Egyptian bondage. Dark, gloomy, and forbidding as was his fate, yet God preserved him amid friendship of irony, burdens of duty, snares to crime and idolatry, the horrors of prison, and the allurements of fame. An unrealized depth of infinite mercy was concealed beneath the vision of the bowing sheaves, and the obeisance of the sun, moon, and eleven stars, till the Lord of the house of Egypt, with tears of suppressed feelings, rose up before the aged Israel and his sons, calmly declaring, "I am Joseph, thy brother."

God determined to free the Israelites. Moses was commanded to gather the people. Heaven aided with mercies on the one hand, and thundered in desolating judgments on the other. The moss-covered ruins of slumbering Ramesis, in the region of Zoar, witnessed the collecting thousands, bearing with them the bones of Joseph. Turning to survey, for the last time, the majestic Nile, the placid lakes, the fertile land of Goshen, then addressing themselves, in obedience to the command of God, they were soon in motion, going "out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians." Sweeping by the lofty hills, over plains of burning sands, and through the mountain-pass, they were soon tented upon the banks of the Red Sea. Scarcely had they ascended the opposite shore, from the depths beneath and the pillar of cloud, till the obedient sea, extending over all the Egyptian hosts, rolled its erratic waves peacefully on forever. The concordant harmony of Israel's song, timbrel, and harp, swelling the diapason of each successive strain—rolling back over the coral graves of the foe, fell like a song of heaven, on the distant, forsaken shore, and ranged along the gloomy

mountains with commingling echoes of sublime and exulting praise.

1. *The inquiry.* "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?" To discriminate between the gods of imagination and the God of Israel was not to them a subject of either conjecture or doubt; and the idea of longer attributing power to insensible and material deities had fled forever. Boundless confidence was then placed in an all-wise, merciful, glorious, eternal, and omnipotent Being.

(1.) *Astonishment* was evidently blending the emotions of heart in this enunciation, as though all imagination or rapidity of thought had been infinitely surpassed—overwhelming love unmerited, and limitless glory of the eternal power divine.

(2.) *Attention* is implied. Let all the people turn to this source of imperishable life, overwhelming in its gift and glory. Humility, gratitude, and awe should mark every feeling of each broken heart, while earnestly looking to Christ for redemption from sin, sorrow, and death.

2. *Egyptian idolatry* was oppressive and degrading to all its votaries; and the effect, when contrasted with the worship of the true God, rolls up to the vision, consciousness, and future hope of man, its appalling mountain of night browing over the stormy waves of the shoreless empire of Spirit, as if convulsed by quaking worlds from beneath and lowering heavens from above. The long forbearance of God was signalized by innumerable calls of mercy to love and obedience. No less than ten plagues, as compulsory agents to their repentance, spread, over the whole land, gloom, sorrow, and death. Their ineffectual invocations to their gods, and fruitless resorts to their sacred groves and templed hills, should have induced an effectual change and inspired perpetual praise to God.

3. *The true God* was the only hope of Israel; and so he is the hope, and the only hope, of a lost world.

(1.) *He could save.* He had power to save; he was willing to save; and he did save, as was every-where evidenced in their deliverances and preservation. Who could doubt but that they were saved from their enemies? They saw that the whole pathway of the past was every-where bestudded as with a gallery of lights, marking the countless providences and grace cast around them for safety, and pointing onward to the rewards of a glorious immortality.

(2.) *He could destroy.* This fact to them was knowledge. He can and will finally destroy all his enemies. They had only to look on the ebbing tide in order to know that there he overthrew the chariots of Pharaoh, and there the horse and his rider were drowned in the sea.

4. *Glorious in holiness.* The majesty, fullness of meaning, and beauty of this sentence can only be described in part.

(1.) *Holiness.* One grain of dust in an ocean of water would render it impure till it was removed. The existence of Deity is boundless. No impurity or discordant element can be attached to the divine Being; he is holy.

(2.) *Absolute holiness* belongs to the divine Being; for he alone is infinite in existence and attributes. We are not required to possess absolute holiness; for we are finite beings; yet it is our privilege and duty to be set apart holy to God, and to be separated from all sin.

(3.) *Glorious in holiness:* the true light of serene and resplendent purity, far beyond all description.

(4.) *In holiness.* If as to degree, it is the degree all degrees beyond—holiest and highest. As to location, he may be said to dwell in, and is the infinite center of, holiness and glory, interminably surrounding.

5. *Fearful in praises.* This glorious and holy Being encircled with compassion and grace the spirits of time, regarding each condition, and is ever present; yet his

throne is eternity. The approach of pure angels, who are accessory to the smiles and glorious beatitude of Deity, is

(1.) *With confiding fear*; not that they are capable of a slavish or unhappy fear; but they come with filial love, fearing to do any thing that would be in the least calculated to resist the holy love and will of such a Being.

(2.) *With deep reverence*; humble and lowly feelings of utter dependence upon the protecting power and goodness of God, subjugating every emotion to the law of love.

(3.) *With veiled faces*. What can more perfectly indicate the prudence, love, and submission of those heavenly beings?

(4.) If this characterizes the adoration of angels, how, then, should *men* of sin, dust, and death, with proper humility, approach into the presence of the great God? We must approach, believe in, love, and praise the great source of incomprehensible majesty, grandeur, and glory—fearful in praises, because he is incomprehensible to man. But are these the only sources of his praise? No, no! Praise, fearful, grand, and overwhelming, arises everywhere and from all that he has made. It is realized in the gentle breeze, the delicate flower, waving forests, verdant plains, and towering mountains, flying clouds, and roaring seas. Praise him, revolving earth, and ye, sun, moon, and stars! Repeat his praise, ye rolling worlds on high! System rising on system, towering far beyond the flight of thought, burn on, reflecting a silvery train of imperishable lights, like holy candles, before the altar of Infinity, conspiring praise, fearful, boundless, and eternal.

6. *Doing wonders*. The acts of Deity are certain and true. They are evidenced in existences. From medium the gradations range in series, ascending and descending. On the one hand, we go down to a microscopic analysis of beings, till they descend beyond all power of vision; while, on the other, the mind, ascending in vigorous

thought, may grasp infinite space, orbed with innumerable revolving worlds. And, without so extensive a range, there is *wonder*,

(1.) In the *plants* and *flowers* of earth. No one can understand the philosophy of the germination of plants; the mystery connected with the commencement of their growth; how they are matured and adorned with such brilliant loveliness and beauty.

(2.) Who can tell how the *oak*, that sturdy, proud king of the forest, waves its tall head on high? A thousand acorns may fall silently and imperceptibly to the ground; but, in process of time, they spring up, and are matured. Yet how can ponderous earth, air, and water, capilorated so far above the earth, contrary to the law of gravitation, become consolidated in trunks, boughs, and leaves, gracefully waving to every breeze, or still erect, having embattled the elements of a thousand storms!

(3.) The *earth*, in its existence, containing, internally, the stratified archives of its own periods and ages, while, at the same time, it moves rapidly on amid surrounding worlds. What mysterious power spreads light over this flying orb; wakes up the ocean roar of its mighty waters; spots its ethereal panorama with brilliant clouds, or congregates them in the blackness of tempest storm, while the voice of the distant, deep-toned thunder, and the responses of a trembling world, are fearful heralds pre-luding its desolating course!

(4.) *Miracle* is a wonder ranging within the controlling power of Omnipotence. It is an event or occurrence contrary to the established constitution and course of things, being a deviation from the laws of nature. That such disturbances have occurred in the regular course of nature no one can question. Who can define the cause, or comprehend the power that originates them? Time was when authority was given to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers,

restore the limbs of the maimed, cast out devils, and to raise the dead.

(5.) *Man* exists in mystery to himself, fearfully and wonderfully made. The soul is incomprehensible as to its immortality of being, and in the nature, variety, extent, and harmony of its faculties. And how can a body of clay be animated with life; pulsate, breathe, and act? But the indefinable, affinuating chords of affection, blending the life of the two natures in one, is beyond demonstration; yet an infinite power arranged them all.

(6.) *Life* is a mystery. Nonentity preceded it, but can never supplant it so as to succeed it. In time it is knowingly and sensitively surrounded by innumerable dangers; yet it is incapable of being annihilated, and must exist in some way without further limitation. He whose inspiration first breathed in earth the breath of lives can perpetuate forever that which he has bestowed.

(7.) *Sleep*, emblematical of death, is an order of Heaven's wisdom and goodness—sweet, balmy restorer of wearied nature! yet no one can understand the philosophy or element of its existence; its repeated returns and salutary effects. Though so simple and plain to experience, yet it can not be analyzed satisfactorily to the mind.

(8.) *Death*, though resembled by sleep, is far different to our reception. Sleep, being natural, is courted, invoked, and desired; but death is unnatural, and filled with appalling horror. Its dark veil spreads solemn gloom over the pathway of life. Its agencies sever happiness, vacate thrones, and hang the earth in mourning.

(9.) *The conversion of the soul* is a reality, wondrous, and as near a miracle as almost any thing of modern times. We do not mean a fashionable or superficial conversion, almost without any repentance, groan of spirit, or sorrow of heart preceding it; but we mean that kind of conversion which is preceded by deep convictions for sin,

a broken heart, and a convulsed soul, shuddering with fearful forebodings over an awful and interminable hell; and a soul that is willing to do any thing or go any where for the sake of Christ, happiness, and heaven—a soul, when converted, has Christ formed within it, the hope of glory, feeling that the Holy Ghost witnesses to the heart that it has passed from death to life—and a soul that is happy in God, that can shout his praise in some way, living wholly given up to religion, having its life hid with Christ in God. A religion which will not stand fire, save the soul, and be felt as a happifying principle, is just that kind which devils love and hell will thank its possessor for when eternally lost.

(10.) *The salvation of the soul eternally in heaven* is a wonderful display of grace. Devils did not desire it, and wielded the powers of the eternal world of night to circumvent the channels of heaven's love and mercy. Earth, though most interested, was once dumb and inactive to every thing but to crime, insensible to the allurements of virtue, deliberately descended downward, barring, bolting, and locking up a fated world in the sorrows of eternal woe. Angels, as though encamped on high, paused in silencé; the harp of eternity ceased to move; a revolting world was lost; justice came down to destroy the earth, when mercy met and encountered it on the top of Mount Calvary, in the presence and person of the world's Redeemer. He conquered; deliverance came; hell quailed; earth trembled; angels rejoiced; saints shouted, and all nations were called to seek for "glory, honor, immortality, eternal life." May we not now attempt to describe the felicity and happiness of the souls in heaven? When the saints have safely arrived there, rejoined to friends, and have gazed with holy awe upon the glory of the Savior of poor sinners, then, looking on the city, the plains surrounding the rolling river, and waving trees of

life, they may speak of heaven. And when the redeemed have progressively ascended, grasping the rising series of the knowledge and love of God, every-where ranging eternally onward, then they may begin to judge of the limitless fullness, glory, and eternity of heaven. Great God, in tender mercy, save us! save the world! let every heart aspire to thee, and hail, in final triumph, the fadeless joys of a glorious immortality in heaven!

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## SERMON XII.

BY REV. JOHN S. INSKIP.

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

“The Lord is risen indeed,” LUKE XXIV, 34.

THE narrative furnished us by the evangelists of the circumstances and design of the mission of Christ to our world will always be interesting and attractive to the pious mind. The mysterious and unexampled union of the widest extremes in his person and character presents a field of thought which will constitute the study and wonder of everlasting ages. The scenes of Bethlehem, where the Virgin gave birth to the child Jesus; of Jordan, where, as he complied with the requisitions of the ceremonial law, he was announced as the beloved Son of God; of the garden, where he seemed to hesitate, and was almost overwhelmed with spiritual horror and anguish; of Calvary, where the shepherd was smitten and the flock were scattered; and of the sepulcher, where he triumphed over all his enemies, at the time excited commotion and amazement on earth, in heaven, and in hell. And when time shall be no more, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, these occurrences will produce rapturous and

adoring awe among the redeemed around the throne, and confusion, remorse, and shame through all the hosts of the rebellious sons of night.

To the event spoken of in the text these remarks are applicable in their broadest and most comprehensive sense. The declaration of the disciples was made with thrilling emotions of surprise and joy. In consequence of the betrayal, crucifixion, and death of their Master, for days together, filled with sadness and overwhelmed with disappointment, they had mourned as those without hope. They had believed that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Messiah, that he had come to restore Israel, and that, according to the testimony of the prophets, to him would the "gathering of the people be." But in this they judged themselves deceived. He of whom they had been led to expect these things, by one of their own number had been betrayed into the hands of his enemies, who had accused, condemned, and crucified him, and his mangled body had been conveyed to the tomb. The sword of the Lord had smitten his fellow. This was, indeed, the "hour and power of darkness." The earth and heavens felt the shock, and gave signs of astonishment and woe.

But early on the morning of the third day the scene was changed. Multitudes of the heavenly hosts, unseen by the soldiers who kept their vigils there, had gathered in the distant clouds to gaze upon the final triumph of the Son of God. As the signs of returning life became more and more visible, angels and seraphim drew nearer and still nearer, till his enshrouded form was full in view; and as he arose from the couch of death, and dethroned the "king of terrors," the earth quaked, the keepers fell as dead men, heaven shouted, hell howled, and through all the range of being there were intimations of the greatness of the battle that was fought, and the glory of the victory which was won. And, in the midst of all these things,

the Prince of life issued from the tomb, and said to the adoring myriads around, "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death." The fact of his resurrection was soon noised abroad; and, because of the evidence thereof before their minds, the disciples exclaimed, "The Lord is risen, indeed!" These words suggest for our consideration,

I. The *certainty* of our Lord's resurrection. Two of the disciples were journeying together to a small village a short distance from Jerusalem. As they moved onward in melancholy mood, and communed and talked with each other concerning the things which had happened, Jesus drew near, and, without making himself known, asked them this question, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" One of them answered, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" Still keeping himself concealed, he inquired, in reply, "What things?" They answered, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and, beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us, went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not." Perceiving their unbelief, he exclaimed, "O, fools and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things,

and to enter into his glory?" He then began to expound the numerous Scriptures relating to himself. They soon reached the village whither they were going, and he appeared as though he would pass on further. They, however, as the day was far spent, persuaded him to tarry with them. As they sat at meat, he broke bread and blessed it, and gave it to them. Their eyes were immediately opened, so that they knew him, but he vanished out of sight.

Scarcely knowing how to understand what they had seen and heard, they at once proceeded to Jerusalem, and spoke to the eleven and those who were with them, of what had happened to them by the way and at Emmaus. And as they all rejoiced together that the Lord had risen indeed, he stood in their midst, and, as they, with wonder and rapture, gazed upon him, said, "Peace be unto you." Hence, we are not surprised that they spoke of this event in terms of the greatest confidence. They might, with the greatest propriety, say, "The Lord is risen, indeed."

It will be profitable for us to examine the circumstances which led to this conviction and induced this confidence. The doctrine of the resurrection is of immense consequence to the scheme of human redemption. Indeed, St. Paul intimates, in one of his epistles to the Church at Corinth, that if it be not true, the whole system of Christianity is false, our faith is vain, and we are yet in our sins. Hence, the investigation proposed is, in every sense, important, and worthy our serious and prayerful attention. The proof of the fact of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is so clear, powerful, and conclusive, that an inspired author designates it *infallible*.

That a person called Jesus Christ, who claimed to be the Son of God, did appear among the Jews, in the manner and circumstances predicted by their prophets; that, after performing many great and notable miracles, he

was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and by them was put to death; and that he was secretly and hastily taken from the cross on which he died, and buried in the sepulcher of Joseph of Arimathea, and his body, on the morning of the third day after his decease, was absent from the tomb, are facts concerning which there never has been any dispute. The enemies as well as the friends of Christ, acknowledged these things.

The circumstance of our Lord's body being missed from the tomb, at the time we have mentioned, being a mere question of *fact*, certainly may, in some way, be explained. This involves no mystery; and to be understood as to its truthfulness, we have only to give heed to the ordinary rules of historical evidence and fidelity. It seems to us we are shut up to the necessity of either *proving* that his body was clandestinely removed, or admitting that he arose from the dead. One or the other of these positions must be true.

Let us briefly and candidly examine the first hypothesis. The theft alleged, if it occurred, must have been perpetrated by one or more of the foes or the disciples of Christ. It is barely possible that the former might have stolen and concealed his body for the purpose of deceiving and confronting his disciples. He had frequently given the world to understand that he would not only lay down his life, but also *take it up again*. Hence, the council, after that he had been crucified, remembered this fact, and requested arrangements to be made accordingly. And it would have been the wisest policy, if they really believed what they avowed concerning Christ, in view of the evident sincerity of his disciples, had the soldiers, or others, been directed to secretly remove his body. In that event, when his disciples should go out among men and proclaim his resurrection, the body could have been produced, and their error and deception would thus have been exposed.

But did any thing of this kind ever take place? No, verily. Hence, the various authorities involved in the guilt of putting to death an innocent man, heard and endured, without contradiction, the most pointed accusations and withering rebuke of the crime, and were again and again dismayed with the declaration of the disciples, that the same Jesus whom they had slain and hung on the tree, had been *exalted to the right hand of God*. Had the body of Christ been in their possession, how easily they could have presented it, and thus have displayed to the world the folly and deception of those who avowed that he had arisen from the dead!

The soldiers, however, alleged that his *disciples committed this theft*. They had been stationed at the sepulcher, it must be remembered, for the express and exclusive purpose of preventing such an occurrence. This precautionary step was taken by the governor, at the solicitation of the elders and chief priests. They feared, unless something of the kind should be done, the disciples would come and take his body from the tomb, and then say that he had arisen from the dead. Hence, the watch was set, and the tomb was made entirely secure. The story told by the soldiers was after this manner: "The disciples came by night, while we slept, and stole him away." Is this account in the least sense probable? We ought rather to say, is it not ridiculous and absurd? Can any reasonable man, for one moment, accredit it?

It must not be forgotten, that, under the Roman law, death was the penalty exacted of the soldier found asleep at his post. Can it be supposed in any degree probable or possible, that all these men, in view of this fact, would so far forget their duty, or their danger, as to fall asleep? Of the whole band, one or more certainly would have been mindful of their obligations or peril, at least sufficiently so to have kept awake while guarding the tomb of

Him, whose dying groans shook the earth and clothed the heavens in mourning. And if only one of their number had been awake, as the disciples stealthily approached, he would have given the alarm, and every one of them might have been arrested on the spot; and, after proper inquiry, their offense might have been proven and punished with such penalties as the law directed.

But it might be asked, if all the soldiers were asleep how could they tell in *what* manner the body left the grave? How could they know that it was stolen, either by the disciples or others? And we would also ask, is it at all likely that a body of unstable and timid men, as were the disciples, would attempt so daring and hazardous an undertaking as to pass a host of well-armed soldiery? Could they, who, upon the very first indication of danger, fled from or denied their Master, suddenly have become brave and reckless enough to engage in such an unpropitious and perilous enterprise? Is it credible that they, for the purpose of consummating an imposture in which they could have no interest whatever, would have attempted a movement of this character, which promised no success, and involved the most serious and dangerous consequences? The account of the soldiers, therefore, is, in the highest degree, improbable, absurd, and preposterous. It was, indeed, but a "clumsy forgery"—a ridiculous lie.

From the foregoing considerations, it is evident that the body of Christ was not stolen from the grave, either by his enemies or his friends. Hence, the only satisfactory solution of the case is that which we find in *the fact of his resurrection*, as stated by the evangelists. This fact the disciples asserted again and again, and, in every place whither they went, challenged and defied contradiction. The terms in which they spoke of this occurrence indicate the purity of their motives, and their unbounded confidence in the truth of their statements.

But was the story told by the disciples true? Does it merit our confidence? We are persuaded it does, because of the *time and place when and where* it was first announced. They proclaimed the fact first of all in the city of Jerusalem, and immediately after the event transpired. While the majesty and dismay of the earthquake, and the humiliation and shame of the cross were fresh in the memory of the inhabitants, and the chief priests and others, who had conspired against Christ, were exulting in the success of their plans, the disciples, surrounded by a throng of strangers from every part of the world, and in sight of Calvary and the sepulcher, boldly said: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." Had these men designed to impose on public credulity, they certainly would have selected a different audience, and a more remote locality; because, by so doing the imposition could have been made with less probability of detection and greater promise of success.

Another and a very important consideration is presented in the *number of witnesses, and the uniformity of their testimony*. The apostle speaks of this. He says, "I delivered unto you, first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the

greater part remain unto this present: but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." All these, without a dissenting voice, declared that the Lord Jesus had arisen from the dead. It is not only incredible, but also well-nigh impossible, that so large a number of persons could have been united in such a scheme of deception and falsehood as that alleged against the disciples. So far as their character is made known to us, they do not seem to have possessed sufficient skill to have originated, or courage to have consummated any thing of the sort. And if, by any arrangement, they had planned and united upon such a movement, it is almost certain some of their number would, by bribery or fear, have been induced to expose the imposture. But they all, at all times, in all places, and at all hazards, persisted in declaring the fact that he arose. Nor has the infidel world furnished us with a single instance in which any of them either doubted or denied it. True, there were numerous apostates from the faith. But none of these ever intimated or discovered to mankind any thing that would lead to the supposition that such a scheme or plot existed.

The testimony of the disciples will appear still more worthy of credit if we take into account the *absence of every conceivable motive to deception*. Wherever men attempt imposition of any kind, there is some interest to be served—some sinister object to be accomplished. But in this case there was nothing to be gained but shame, stripes, imprisonment, and death. By deceiving, in this instance, they could add nothing to their purse, character, or condition; but, on the contrary, they periled and sacrificed every thing, even their lives. The ordinary motives to deception might have induced them to have *denied* the resurrection of Christ, but never could have led them to

assert it. Hence, we must insist, till infidels make it appear that the disciples had some inducements to practice a fraud upon the public mind, consistency requires the charge of imposition to be abandoned. The burden of proof is on the part of those who make the objection, especially as we not only *deny* what they *affirm*, but also present conclusive evidence of the correctness of our position.

We may also remark that the disciples *could not have been deceived themselves*. The sincerity and integrity of these men are admitted by some who deny the fact of the resurrection. They insist that while the veracity of the disciples should not be impugned, no credit should be given to their story, because they were deceived. In reply to this, it should be remembered the resurrection of our Redeemer was not a point of doctrine involving metaphysical and elaborate distinctions and arguments. It was no "moon-struck reverie," or graveyard vision, resulting from previously-cherished hopes, or protracted vigils at the tomb. It was a plain question of *fact*, which might be determined by the ordinary evidence of sense. It was also a fact which they were slow to believe. The spirit of Thomas, who said unless he should see the prints of the nails and thrust his hand into his side he would not believe, in a measure possessed the minds of all his brethren. Mary and others went to the sepulcher, not with an expectation that they would see him arise, but carried spices thither, according to the custom of the times, to embalm him. And when they found he had arisen, they were filled with amazement and fear. And as the eleven conversed together concerning the rumors of his resurrection, wonder and doubt overpowered their minds. Hence, when he suddenly appeared in their midst, they were struck with terror, supposing they had seen a spirit. But that they might not be alarmed or deceived, he said to

them, "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet; that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." And we are told that after he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and feet. And to Thomas he said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." He frequently sat at meat and conversed with them, and in many other ways, for the space of forty days, showed himself alive. These circumstances rendered it impossible for them to be led away by an optical illusion, or deception of any kind whatever.

We should also bear in mind, they *performed miracles in confirmation* of their testimony. These miracles were wrought before the multitude, to whom some assert Christ should have appeared. A miracle, in the true and proper sense, is the work of God. When performed, it is for the purpose of attesting the authority of a religious teacher, or in confirmation of the truth of the doctrine to be taught. No miracles can be performed in defense of error or falsehood. God is true and can not lie. Hence, in all cases where a doctrine or event is sustained by the evidence of a miracle, without controversy it must be received. The apostles wrought many miracles. We may pause at this point to examine a few of them.

The first meriting special notice, is the delivery of their message, so as to be understood in the language of all the nations of the earth. It matters not whether the apostles, in this case, were miraculously endowed with the gift of speech, or the people had their understanding so enlightened as to comprehend, in their own tongue, what they heard. Upon either hypothesis a great miracle was wrought, and the confirmation of heaven was given to the mission and testimony of the apostles.

The day of Pentecost, one of the national feasts, appointed in commemoration of the giving of the law, had come. The disciples were assembled together in a large upper room. There they waited, with one accord, in prayer for the promise from on high. Suddenly there was a noise; as of a rushing mighty wind, which filled the place where they were sitting. Cloven tongues of flame arose upon their heads. The holy Comforter revealed himself in their midst, and God was there in glorious majesty and power. From thence they went forth and declared the wonderful works of God to Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and others from various parts of the earth, all of whom heard them in the language "wherein they were born."

The vast multitude present were overwhelmed with astonishment, and said, referring to the disciples, "Are not all these men which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue?" The apostles answered: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." They thus stated the origin and design of this wonderful and miraculous display of the power and the glory of God.

On another occasion, Peter and John performed a noted miracle by healing, at the gate of the temple called Beautiful, a man lame from his birth. The lame man being healed, arose and went with them into the temple. The people were astonished when they saw him walking, leaping, and praising God. Perceiving this, Peter said to them, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob; the God of our

fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses. And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." The obvious intent of these miracles was to confirm the testimony of the disciples touching the resurrection of Christ. And in this manner, by the authority of God himself, is the truth of their story established.

We should also keep in mind the *credence given to their testimony*. The Spirit was poured forth and multitudes believed. Three thousand, despite all their prejudices, civil and religious, were converted, baptized, and added to the Church in one day; and, in a few years afterward, hundreds of thousands received the Gospel, and felt the power of the resurrection. The moral results following the promulgation of this great truth continue, as a perpetual miracle, to convince and save the world.

Nor was this credence given only by those who became followers of Christ and his apostles. The following language is ascribed to Josephus, a Jew, and consequently opposed to Christianity: "Now, there was, about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, and a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold them, and ten

thousand other wonderful things concerning him." What stronger language than this could be desired?

Pilate, before whom Christ was tried and condemned, sent to Tiberius, the Emperor, an account of his miracles, sufferings, death, and resurrection. The Emperor reported this to the Roman senate, together with a suggestion that Christ should be proclaimed one of the gods of the nation. The senate declined this proposition, simply because it did not originate with themselves, alleging that ancient law gave them the superintendence in all matters of religion.

But the world at large gave credence to their story. And so clear and decisive was the proof of his resurrection, that a magnificent and permanent religious edifice was erected in commemoration of the event; and, although there may be a slight error in the locality of this building, it remains, with much of its original splendor, a lasting and impressive memorial of the extent to which a conviction of the truthfulness of the account of the disciples had attained. It is scarcely possible, and by no means probable, that a few ignorant men, without rank or distinction in Church or state, could have made so great an impression upon the world by any scheme of imposture, however well designed.

When, therefore, we sum up the facts that the body of the Lord Jesus was missing from the tomb on the morning of the third day; that it was not and could not have been clandestinely removed thence by his enemies or friends; that his disciples frequently and fearlessly declared he had arisen from the dead; that this declaration was made by hundreds who, at different times, saw and handled him, and conversed and ate with him; that their statement was first made at Jerusalem, and immediately after the event transpired; that there was no conceivable motive for them to deceive others, and no possibility of being deceived

themselves; that they performed numerous and indisputable miracles in confirmation of their testimony; and that their narration of the fact and circumstances was accredited by hundreds of thousands of those who attended their ministry, we have before the mind an amount of evidence bearing upon the question, the force of which we can not resist; and, though eighteen centuries have passed away since the event occurred, we who now live and candidly contemplate the subject, may say, with rapturous certainty, "*The Lord is risen, indeed!*"

II. The language of the text not only expresses the certainty of the resurrection of our Redeemer, but also the *joy which it occasioned*. Although the shame and sufferings of Calvary produced a melancholy sadness among the disciples, the events of the third day created the greatest rapture on earth and in heaven. When fully persuaded of the fact of the resurrection, the voice of joy and gladness was heard in all the tabernacles of the righteous. They, indeed, were glad when they saw him alive, and, with blissful emotions, exclaimed, "The Lord is risen, indeed!" The sacred historian informs us that they could scarcely believe for joy.

It was the *joy of surprise*. They had heard their Master frequently advert to his decease, and the results which would follow. But they did not seem to understand him. He spoke of the prophet Jonah, and likewise assured them if the temple of his body were destroyed, in three days he would raise it up again. But these things they did not comprehend. Hence, at his crucifixion, they feared, despaired, and fled. But their lingering affection for him during that mysterious hour provided a resting-place for his body in the sepulcher of Joseph. Having hastily performed his funeral obsequies, they returned from the grave without comfort or hope. Their sympathies brought them together, that they might commune with and sustain each

other concerning their disappointed hopes, and the misfortunes that had befallen them. In such a mood, some of their number repaired with spices to his tomb to embalm him. They approached cautiously the sepulcher of the mighty One; but, as they drew nigh, their grief became more overpowering still; for they found that the body was gone. One, however, who stood by in shining garments, bade them not to fear, and assured them that he had arisen. They immediately returned to the rest of their company, and told what things they had seen. Others came in, also, and spoke of what they had seen and heard; and as the listening wonderers grouped around, Christ himself appeared in their midst, and poured the oil of consolation upon their wounded hearts. With the greatest ecstasy, as they gazed upon him, they cried out, "The Lord is risen, indeed!"

The resurrection of our Lord was a further occasion of joy, because it was a *triumphant vindication of his divinity*. St. Paul says that "he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." For claiming and asserting himself to be the Son of God, the Jews accused him of blasphemy, and adjudged him worthy of death. He had commanded obedience from the tempest and the sea; disease and want fled at his word; and his whole life had been one uninterrupted series of great and marvelous deeds. Still, when he hung, apparently a helpless victim, on the cross, the multitude passed by, and sneeringly said, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross, and we will believe thee." But, in the final issue of his conflict with the powers of darkness, he overthrew death, hell, and the grave, and proclaimed himself the LORD, strong and victorious in battle, and great in goodness and truth.

The resurrection of our Lord was also a *glorious proof*

*of the sufficiency of his sacrifice.* He died for our sins, and was delivered unto death for our offenses; but he rose again for our justification. Our Savior's personal ministry, because of the purity of his life and the power of his doctrine, excited the wonder and admiration of all who heard him. His miracles confirmed his mission, and proclaimed him the great Teacher sent from God. But it remained for the events of the cross and the tomb to consummate the great end for which he came into the world, and present him as the Savior of all our sinful race. The "great commission" was not given till after the resurrection. Then the disciples were commanded to go out into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. It was this idea that inspired the poet, when he exclaimed,

"This day be grateful homage paid, and loud hosannas sung;  
Let gladness dwell in every heart, and praise on every tongue;  
Ten thousand differing lips shall join to hail this welcome morn,  
Which scatters blessings from its wings to nations yet unborn."

The disciples also might have viewed it as *the pledge of their own resurrection.* When he arose, he became, indeed, the resurrection and the life. He was the first-fruits of them that slept. Then life and immortality were brought to light. Death was deprived of his sting, and the grave was freed from its gloom. Since then, a halo of glory and of hope rests upon the sepulcher of the righteous dead; and man, by the light which broke forth from the Savior's tomb, may see the path to glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life, at God's right hand.

Again: the resurrection of Christ was a *complete victory over all his enemies.* The scribes and elders united with invisible agencies that participated in this unexampled conflict. Men and devils, earth and hell, arrayed themselves against the Captain of the Lord's hosts; but it was only to be defeated and overthrown. True, they tri-

umphed when he fell; but when he arose, he gathered unto himself his great strength, and his own arm brought him the victory. His blood atoned for the guilt of those who shed it, and his exit from the tomb pointed his murderers to the path to glory and to God. He returned from the field of strife covered with the splendor of his achievements; and, with his enemies bound to the wheels of his chariot, he entered the opening gates of the city of God, and, amid the acclamations of the crowding millions of the heavenly hosts, was declared the King of kings and the Lord of lords; and as the wondering universe gazed upon him, returning to the glory he had with the "Father before the world was," heaven felt a thrill of joy, and the spirits about the throne exclaimed with ecstasy, "The Lord is risen, indeed!"

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## SERMON XIII.

BY REV. CLINTON W. SEARS.

KEEPING THE HEART.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence," PROVERBS IV, 23.

PERHAPS no individual had experienced more deeply the plague of the human heart or felt the need of maintaining over it a continual, holy jealousy, than the writer of the text. In early life, Solomon had chosen God as his friend and wisdom—as his chief good. His judicious election gave him favor and promotion with God and man. His exaltation exposed him to numberless temptations, and he fell. Surrounded by the corrupting honors of royalty, the vitiating influence of wealth, and the fascinations of pleasure, the avenues of his soul were opened to the inroads of vice. That heart, once guarded with

watchful care, became an easy prey to the destroyer. Although Solomon, with all his glory, has long since passed away, yet his sad apostasy and warning exhortation still remain, as an admonition to others, speaking even to us in the expressive language of the text, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

Indeed, the keeping the heart right with God embraces the whole duty of man. It implies the fulfillment of the two great commandments, and comprehends the great secret of holy living. On it depends all our usefulness as Christians and our final salvation. It is this which makes the way to heaven so narrow and the gate so strait. The attention of the reader is, then, invited to *the important duty of keeping the heart* as founded upon the words of the text.

In the exhortation, "Keep thy heart with all diligence," two subjects are presented: *First*, the *meaning* of the term heart as here used; and, *second*, *our duty* in respect to it.

I. The term heart, as here employed, means something different from that important organ of the body which is the seat of animal life. It is a metaphorical expression, used often in Scripture to designate either the whole mind or some one or more of its constituent parts. It is sometimes used as the seat of the *understanding*. In Luke xxiv, 24, the Savior says to two of his disciples, on a certain occasion, "O, fools and slow of heart;" that is, ignorant men without insight or understanding; Matthew xiii, 15, "This people's heart is waxed gross, lest they should *understand* with their heart;" Romans i, 21, "Their foolish heart was darkened." Again, it is spoken of as the seat of the *affections* and *passions*, and, through them, of the *will*. Ezekiel xiii, 2, the prophets are said to prophesy "out of their own hearts;" that is, according

to their own affections and inclinations, just as their own sinful desires might dictate and their own wills determine. In those passages where the heart is mentioned as good, clean, evil, broken, hardened, liberal, it is regarded as the seat of the dispositions. The word, however, as used in the text, embraces not any particular disposition or faculty of the mind. It here designates the entire mind. "Keep thy heart;" that is, thy whole soul. All its powers being bestowed for a wise and benevolent end, that we might thereby glorify God, we are required to keep them from an evil application, and devote them exclusively to his service. It is another form of expression for the great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." The intellect, the sensibilities, and the will, in their diversified operations, which are only so many different modes of mental action, are to be kept with all diligence.

In connection with the meaning of the term heart, it may be proper to inquire in what state it is here supposed to be, or, in other words, what is its *moral character*. It, doubtless, refers to the heart of a believer; a heart that has been renewed and changed by divine grace; a heart that has been set right; and the duty imposed is, to *keep it right*. Nor does it matter as to its degree of purity. No soul, however immaculate, is free from unholy influences while in a state of probation. If there are no foes within, if the strong man has, indeed, been cast out, still there are external foes—an alluring world and a tempting devil. These will ever seek an opportunity to repossess their former habitation. Should the heart be as pure as that of Adam's in Paradise, still there would be need of watchfulness: yea, the greater need; for there are none against whom the malice of Satan is so constantly and fiercely employed as "the pure in heart." A triumph here more fully gratifies his hatred of God and holiness.

Our first parents were created in the image of their Maker. Supreme love to him was the ruling principle in all their actions. Under its influence they pursued a uniform, undeviating course of moral rectitude. Their intellectual faculties, their affections, their passions, and their appetites, all moved in their appropriate spheres, in heavenly harmony. No thought was wrong; no desire corrupt; but they were, nevertheless, in a state of probation. They needed watchfulness, and for the want of it they fell. The love of God was now changed for self-love, and this self-love, with the natural appetites created only to serve, broke out in high-handed rebellion, and became the imperious sovereigns of the man. By Christ Jesus, the Christian regains what he lost in his federal head—the moral image of God, which is “righteousness and true holiness.” He is brought back to holy allegiance. His heart being changed and given to God, the duty enjoined is to keep it thus in Divine conformity. This leads us to our second general topic—*our duty in respect to the heart.*

II. Our duty is clearly pointed out in the words of the exhortation, “Keep thy heart with all diligence.” This embraces two particulars: First, *the duty itself*, “Keep thy heart;” and, second, *the manner of doing it*, “With all diligence.”

We are to *keep* our hearts. The term in the original is applied to keeping a vineyard, or a city. We are to keep our hearts as a *vineyard*. By a reference to Isaiah v, 2, we learn the vineyard was first cleared of stones, and surrounded by a wall, or fence. The choicest vines were then planted, and a tower built as a station for the watchman, whose constant care was to preserve the inclosure from the inroads of enemies; and this was the more necessary in the oriental country, as the wild animals that infested the cultivated fields were abundant. As with a vineyard, so with the heart. The rubbish of sin is first

cast out, a wall of spiritual habits placed around, and the choicest plants of grace cultivated; but now the most important duty is to *watch* it, to so *keep* it that that "evil one," more cruel, more cunning, and more destructive than wild beasts, touch it not. Again: we are to keep our hearts as a city. An old writer on this passage will have the word taken from "the state of a besieged garrison, begirt by many enemies without, and in danger of being betrayed by treacherous citizens within, in which danger the soldiers, on pain of death, are commanded to *watch*." Nor is it an overwrought picture even of the heart of the believer. Without are Satan, the world, and all that is in the world, "the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life;" within are often the remaining corruptions of an unsanctified nature and an evil heart of unbelief. These internal foes are the most dangerous and formidable. Sometimes they are almost in a state of rebellion. At all times they stand ready to betray the soul into the hands of external enemies. There is a continual conspiracy between those without and those within to ruin "the town of Mansoul." Truly, then, our hearts are as so many besieged cities, and we are called upon to watch for life.

But the *manner* of doing this duty is also pointed out. We are to do it "with all diligence." This expression in the Hebrew is very forcible. It implies we are to keep the heart *with all keeping*, or, as others have translated it, *above all that is kept*. As the thing intrusted to our care is of priceless value, so we are to exercise over it a commensurate regard for its present and eternal well-being. But we may properly inquire, What is implied in "keeping the heart with all diligence?" In the language of the pious Flavel, who has written extensively on this subject, it consists "in the *diligent* and *constant* use and improvement of all holy means to preserve the soul from sin

and maintain its free and sweet communion with God," and implies, consequently,

1. *Heart or self examination.* Few persons know themselves as they ought, and the Savior might, with propriety, say to many of his disciples at the present day, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." The Bible informs us that many will be self-deceived at the last day: "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord! Lord!" There is danger of indulging a false hope of final salvation. The human heart is intricate and deceptive. Disappointment may have so often checked the gayeties of a naturally-buoyant spirit as to leave permanent lines of seriousness upon the countenance. The love of praise or hope of gain may have prompted those acts of benevolence whose contemplation fills us with such complacency. We may have a great zeal for the Church, and much seeming respect for the honor of Christ, and yet it may be nothing more than downright sectarianism. We may have the *form* of godliness; be strict as a Pharisee as to all the externals of religion; and yet, when we look for the *power* of godliness; when we look for genuine fruits; when we look for consistent piety in the heart as well as life, which is defined as "pure and undefiled religion," our scrutiny, alas! will only expose our utter destitution of the "one thing needful." Hence, the Bible enforces the duty of self-examination: "*Examine* yourselves whether ye be in the faith; *prove* yourselves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" In doing this duty, try your hearts by the word of God, and thereby ye shall know whether ye are of the truth; "for the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a *discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*" Yes;

bring every thought, word, and action to this test; for by it they will finally be tried when there can be no evading and no means of satisfaction, if once we are weighed in the scales of retributive justice and found wanting.

Thus it becomes the imperative duty of every one who would grow in grace, "keep his heart with all diligence," and save his soul, to enter the secret chambers of that soul, to explore its every dark and hidden recess, strip off its every insidious and seductive guise, weigh the character of its complicated motives, and bring to Gospel light all its interior and concealed operations. If there are internal foes, let them be searched out. If there are idols, let them be brought forth and destroyed. If there are unguarded portals open to the inroad of outward enemies, it should be known, that they may be closed. If there are places strongly besieged, they should be discovered and doubly fortified. He that keepeth a city will examine the character of its inhabitants, to know who are friends and who will prove traitors; yea, he will closely inspect every gate, every tower, and all his munitions of defense. And shall the children of this world be wiser than the children of light? Indeed, I hazard nothing in saying, there can be no real spiritual life without this self-examination. If we will hold constant communion with God, we must search out each and every thing that will hinder that communion. How many complain of their barrenness of soul and want of spiritual-mindedness, who probably never spent an hour in all their lives in conversing with their own wayward hearts. But this duty seems so important, and, withal, is so much neglected, that I will further present it to the consideration of the reader, by giving some rules for its faithful performance.

(1.) If we would do this duty to profit, it must be done *deliberately*. "In the night," says the Psalmist, "I communed with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent

search." Mark the time. It was not amid the bustle of business and the engrossing pursuits of the day. It was at night, when every thing is so favorable to a deliberate discharge of the duty. A hurried examination will never answer. We are prone to perform in haste disagreeable tasks. So in searching the heart. We find so much to condemn—so much that is wrong—we make haste to turn away our thoughts. The picture is too dark and forbidding, and thus the duty, if undertaken, is only half done. There is no stopping to weigh motives, trace relations, and examine consequences. We should bear in mind, however, we are transacting business for eternity, and all things will be reinspected in the day of general judgment. Does the mariner, about to enter upon a dangerous voyage, with a valuable cargo, have no respect to the condition of his vessel? Why are the laws so strict as to the examination of vessels? Indeed, the scrutiny is not left voluntarily with the owner; but agents are appointed by government. Why all this care? Because property and life are committed to these vehicles of the great deep. And shall we be less careful and act with less deliberation in regard to our souls? We are soon to try the fathomless depths and unexplored regions of eternity's boundless ocean. Our bark is laden with a priceless treasure; not with merchandise from India; not with Golconda's gift of diamonds, or gold from southern mines; but with an immortal, never-dying soul. Ah! the Savior himself could not tell the value of our eternity-freighted cargo; and say, shall we go forth on this returnless voyage without careful examination? If once we put to sea, there is no friendly harbor into which we may turn for repairs.

(2.) We are to examine our hearts *impartially*. It is human nature to justify when convicted of guilt. Thus Adam threw back the blame upon Eve, and she, in turn, upon the serpent. It is to be feared that many are

inclined to heap all the guilt of their bad hearts upon the devil, instead of searching out their real, inherent corruption. There may be some sins with which our interests are intimately connected. Prejudice and a moral sense perverted by a long course of wrong-doing will strive to leave these out of the account. Selfishness will say, pass them by; they are of little or no importance. But we must search out each and every sin—those secret, bosom sins—though they are a right hand or a right eye. Peril not the soul by talking about “*little sins.*” There are no such words in the vocabulary of the book of life. God views all sins alike as to character; and the smallest, unrepented of and unforgiven, will consign the soul to perdition. You may think an idle thought or an idle word is of little importance. The infinitely-holy God does not so regard them. Jesus Christ did not so regard them when he said, “that every idle word that men speak they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.”

(3.) This duty must be done *frequently*. Examination once a year or once a month will not do. It should find a place in the duties of each day. It has respect to all our actions. If we delay, many things may be forgotten. Most of our besetting sins appear in the form of habits. These must have had a beginning, and could then have been easily conquered. By frequent examination, we thus detect them in their incipency, and can readily overcome what would become a formidable enemy, if allowed to gain strength by weeks and months of indulgence. Some hour or half hour should be set apart each day for the discharge of this duty. Nothing should be suffered to obtrude upon this consecrated portion of time, neither the call of friends nor the press of business. Each night the Christian should know how his account stands with God. He should so lie down as if he expected to wake up in eternity. The consequences may be fearful if

delayed. The enemy can destroy, in an hour, the labor of months. Who is the careful and judicious tradesman, and one who possesses the confidence of community? It is he who knows each day his positive situation. Too many are like the insolvent debtor, who, conscious of owing more than he can pay, neglects, day after day, to balance his accounts, involving himself deeper and still deeper, till compelled to see his true situation by the irresistible arm of the law. So it will be with those who neglect self-examination. They will involve themselves, more and more, in condemnation, till necessitated to hear their final doom in the sentence of the foolish virgins and misspent talents.

(4.) But, lastly, we should search our hearts under a consciousness of the omniscience of Jehovah, and be willing to invoke God's Spirit to assist in the work, feeling, as did the Psalmist when he prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any evil way in me." Let us rest not till the piercing eye of Omniscience has penetrated our hearts and laid open our very innermost thoughts, and we hear the sweet response of the Spirit saying, "I have searched thee, my beloved, and behold thou art pure." Consider that, however we may pass over little heart evils, they are not hid from his all-searching sight, to whom "the night shineth as the day," remembering "man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart;" that "all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

2. Keeping the heart with all diligence, implies *watchfulness*. Having acquired a thorough knowledge of our hearts by examination, then, and not till then, are we prepared to watch over them; for how can we meet a foe if he come upon us unawares? But we find watchfulness as positively enjoined as self-examination. "Watch and

pray, lest ye enter into temptation ;” “Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober ;” “Watch thou in all things ;” “What I say unto one I say unto all, watch.”

In order, however, to watch the heart faithfully, we must give constant heed to whatever concerns the formation of moral character. This will depend upon the kind of knowledge we cultivate. If we cultivate an acquaintance with the world, its fashions, its maxims, its riches, and pursuits, and mind the things of the flesh, the certain result will be an earthly, sensual character. On the other hand, if we seek God and eschew evil, and mind the things of the Spirit, we will possess a spiritual character. The mind receives impressions of a corresponding nature with the things it cherisheth. “He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” To keep our hearts, then, we must give diligent heed to the kind of knowledge we cultivate. All knowledge is either of *internal* or *external* origin. It is either received through the senses from without, or by the internal operations of the mind from within. Hence, to keep the heart we must watch, first, *what enters*, and, second, *what transpires within*.

We are called upon to watch what *enters* the heart. It is a matter of much importance whether we admit friends or foes, allies or enemies ; whether we throw open the portals to the indiscriminate entrance of all, or admit those only whose services will insure good. Most, if not all, the incipients of knowledge are derived, through the medium of the senses, from without. It has been advocated by all writers on the origin of ideas, that the mind entirely closed to the external world, would probably forever remain a blank. It is doubtless without character before impressions of some kind are made ; but after a few

have been formed, they furnish an unfailing material of thought, which may be combined in reproductions unceasingly changed and endlessly varied. The nature of the mind's action will depend upon the nature of its impression. The thought, the mental operations, and hence the whole moral character, take their coloring from the objects entertained. It becomes, then, a question of great practical importance, that we guard, with assiduous attention, those *inlets* of knowledge termed the *senses*. They may be considered the avenues of the soul, through which it holds converse with the objective world, and derives the material of thought. They should be guarded with a vigilant eye, remembering that nothing useless is imported. "But," says the objector, "I can not help seeing when an object is presented before my eyes, or hearing all sounds made within audible distance. My sensations and perceptions are involuntary." This is true, but it is not true that you are involuntarily placed within their reach. When in proximity to vicious conversation, you can not but hear it; but your being in that situation is voluntary, and here lies the accountability and consequent guilt. The command is, "Let thine eyes look right on, and thine eyelids straight before thee." David said, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity. He that shutteth his eyes to seeing evil shall dwell on high." We should watch scrupulously both what we see and hear, for upon the nature of the things introduced will depend the internal operations of the mind and moral character.

The importance of this part of the subject can not be better enforced than by a reference to our early associations. Contemplate, for a moment, their subsequent influence upon our characters. How have the visions of childhood, either as virtuous or vicious, exerted a corresponding influence upon our moral feeling? The things

we then saw and heard, still live as a savor of life or of death. Vicious scenes, early impressed, and more deeply fixed from the congeniality of the receptive powers, still live to vex the soul. How often is our peace of mind disturbed, our seasons of meditation interrupted, and our purest thoughts contaminated by our unholy recollections! How often will a word or an action awaken association and flood the mind with thoughts we would have buried long ago in eternal forgetfulness! When the chord has once been touched, and imagination is awakened, they come, however unwelcome; yea, when the reflections seem clothed with naught but purity, they flit through the mind, and, like the fabled harpies, shake uncleanness from their filthy pinions. Guard, then, the eye and the ear, recollecting that whatever enters the mind, is indelibly engraven upon the tablets of memory as tenacious as the inscrutable records of eternity; and when our final doom is read from the "book of life," our memories, faithful to their charge, will respond to every thought, word, and deed there recorded.

We are to watch what *transpires within*, or the internal operations of mind. Our duty refers especially to those actions that are voluntary, and consists in "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." God requires the service of the whole heart; and we are not permitted to serve self with any of our powers. His commands are exceedingly broad. They not only lay restraint upon the outward act, but reach guilt where existing in conception. A physical act, aside from an intelligent agent, is without character. It resides alone in the motive—in the hidden man of the heart. Hence, a man can be as vile a murderer or adulterer in thought as in deed. Such was the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ. He applied it to the

hypocritical Jews, who made clean the outside of the cup and platter, while within they were full of extortion and excess. Let not the reader rest with watchfulness over the outward act merely, trusting to outward forms and ceremonies. The Lord, who searcheth the heart and knoweth its inward motions, and who will at last make manifest all its counsels, demands purity in the inward parts. We should watch, then, every power and faculty of the mind over which we have any control.

(1.) *Watch the attention.* It may be defined as the mind's inspection of particular objects, or the fixing the mind's eye on any particular thing. The exercise of this faculty has much to do, not only with intellectual culture, but especially in the formation of correct spiritual habits, and the proper improvement of the means of grace. Correct spiritual habits are obtained only by a due fixedness of the attention. How important, in our seasons of devotion, that we learn to concentrate our thoughts! Have we not often visited our closets with a wandering mind? We presented an offering, it is true, but how unhallowed from vagrancy of mind! There were solemn words, it is true, but how thoughtless the tongue that uttered them! Without sincerity God abhors the offering and the offerer. It is drawing near to him with the mouth and doing honor with the lips, while the heart is far off. Let us not complain that our closets have no attractions till our sincerity is vindicated by thoughts fully fixed on God. The same is true of reading the Scriptures. How often are they read, while foreign objects are occupying the attention, so much so that scarcely a sentence is recollected! And is this the manner we treat God's will to man? Well may we expect leanness of soul. For a want of attention, how often do the public means of grace become worse than useless! We are commanded to "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time

we should let them slip." Consider the significancy of this last expression. To *let slip* means to leak out. Alas, how many hearers of the word are like leaky vessels! The precious truth may be poured in with a liberal hand, yet it is as water spilled upon the ground. Truth can never fasten on the conscience with effect, till, by attention, it gains a permanent lodgment in the mind. Look into our churches. How many do you find sleeping under the most solemn appeals! Bear this in mind: there is nothing so destructive to piety as a habit of listless inattention.

(2.) *Watch the imagination.* It is the mind's power of combining ideas formerly presented. It thus becomes a source of virtue or vice. It enters the regions of memory, and there, from her rich and endless variety of material, it combines and recombines, fashions and shapes as fancy may dictate. Under virtuous and religious restraint, it is highly productive of happiness; but give it loose reins; let it revel amid scenes of vice, and wantonly range the fields of sensual and unhallowed pleasure; feed it on fiction; energize with the corruptions of popular romance, and you open upon the soul the gates of a spiritual Pandemonium. Perhaps the devil has no means by which he can so successfully attack the soul as through the imagination. By this he can fully supply the absence of outward excipients. Any scene, however full of voluptuous pleasure, can be presented to the mind with even a greater power than by the presence of the real object; for the imagination can supply any thing necessary to heighten the effect. Thus armed, the enemy will assault the soul. The passions are awakened, and lust is engendered. Lust, when it is conceived, bringeth forth sin. Beware, then, how the imagination is allowed to wander. Chastise it early, constantly, remembering the adage that "the imagination of the idle man is the devil's workshop," and

that the "Lord understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts."

(3.) *Watch the actions of the sensibilities.* Here all our acts take their rise, and receive their incipients of character. Without them there could be no such thing as character, for they originate the idea of accountability, rewards and punishments. With every change of the mind emotions are produced. These are involuntary. They are followed by desires, and these must be watched so as to cherish or repel, according as their nature is good or evil. Our most important desires have been ranked under the affections, embracing two great antagonistic principles—*love to God* and *selfishness*. Upon their proper regulation depends the whole duty of keeping the heart. According as the one or the other is indulged, the other powers of the mind will be properly or improperly governed. Give unrestrained license to self-love, immediately the appetites assume the supremacy, the passions are inflamed, the propensities become ungovernable, the voice of conscience is unheard amid the incessant clamor of selfish and conflicting interests, every virtuous principle dies, and a moral miasma infects the soul, more deadly than the death-dealing breath of the pestilence. On the other hand, let supreme love to God be the generic and predominant principle, and how different the picture! All the inferior principles take their appropriate position. There is no jarring string in the sensibilities or intellect. God becomes the center of the soul, around whom all the powers of the mind move in glorious harmony. All the Christian graces, like so many burning satellites, commence their revolutions, reflecting their borrowed light uninterrupted and unimpeded by unhallowed attractions. Hence so much stress is laid in Scripture upon the regulation and right exercise of the affections. On it depends the fulfillment of the whole law.

But there is one other faculty that demands our serious attention, whose importance is often overlooked. It is Heaven's best gift to man. Dethrone it, and you efface from the soul every lineament of divinity, and forever blot out whatever of human dignity has survived the fall. The last ray of hope, still lingering around apostate humanity, would expire, and a moral night enshroud the soul with darkness more gloomy and fearful than ever settled down upon the waters of the Egyptian Nile. That faculty is *conscience*. It is the arbiter of mind. It discriminates what is right from what is wrong, inclining us to choose the right and refuse the wrong. When the propensities are awakened, and the passions inflamed, they often make a terrible onset upon the soul. Then it is that conscience steps into the breach and raises its warning voice. The one is imperious, seeking only for present good, without respect to the means, the other sits in judgment upon the propriety and extent of those demands. The one asks what is *good*, the other inquires what is *right*. Watch, then, the decisions of *conscience*. Never yield to self-interest against the counter claims of moral sense. It is only by watching carefully and obeying unhesitatingly these moral decisions, that we can gain a tender conscience, which, to the Christian, is above all price. Sensitive as the most delicate balance, it detects the least deflection from the path of rectitude. Like the sleepless, vigilant sentinel, it will allow the approach of no hostile footsteps without giving timely alarm.

Do these respective duties, not in creature strength, but in humble, constant reliance upon Him who has said, "Without me ye can do nothing." Ever consider the interest you have at stake, the number and power of your enemies. Bear in mind the great motive by which the injunction of the text is enforced—out of your heart are the issues of life. Like the pure, perennial waters of the

fountain, like the vital current from the heart, that bear in their ceaseless flow the elements of life, beauty, and happiness, you are called upon to send forth streams that will gladden and vivify, refresh and fertilize in their course, making the traces of your life's journey like those of the river in the desert, marked with perpetual fertility, with lines of fadeless green and ever-enduring bloom; where germinates the "incorruptible seed" of eternal life, whose fruit is unto holiness and the end immortal blessedness.

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## SERMON XIV.

BY REV. NATHANIEL WESTERMAN.

NECESSITY OF DIVINE SUPPORT.

"If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" JEREMIAH XII, 5.

INTRODUCTION. Man's life is a warfare upon earth. Whatever gives him pain he seeks to shun or conquer, as he would an enemy; and those enemies, the perplexities and ills that flesh is heir to, are various and innumerable. They come against man like an army, from all the elements, from all the seasons, through all his senses, and through all changes of times, persons, and places. Nor can his vigilance elude them, nor his strength repel them. No; not all the advantages of birth, fortune, and genius can afford him a shelter from the "blast of those terrible ones when it comes as a storm against the wall." The life of every man confirms the inspired statement, that "he is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." Trouble begins and ends, and is distributed through life, so that "sufficient unto the day [every day] is the evil thereof"—

sufficient to try man's strength and to prove it weakness. The ills of life's brightest period are wearisome and perplexing. How insupportable, then, must be the seasons of heavy affliction and dark adversity, when, "in many days, neither sun nor stars appear;" when human skill, and sympathy, and strength essay in vain to give relief! And yet, my friends, how tardy we are to make God our refuge! How often do unbelief, stupidity, and pride make men try to do without God, till they can scarcely be saved—till it is only as by the skin of their teeth they miss of everlasting burnings—while goodness and wrath, promises and threatenings, encouragements and expostulations are alike and altogether thrown away on multitudes that hate wisdom and love death! Now, that we may not be "led away by the error of the wicked," let us consider,

I. THAT THE COMMON ILLS OF LIFE MUST RENDER US UNHAPPY WITHOUT THE FAVOR OF GOD. But that

II. THE CALAMITIES OF LIFE WILL BE OVERWHELMING WITHOUT DIVINE SUPPORT.

I. 1. Of the common ills of life, many arise from *inexperience*. Poets and sages have conspired to celebrate the happiness of the morning of life. Then men are thought to be free from care, and to enjoy a progressive increase of knowledge. All the senses are active, while the varied world still affords new subjects to gratify the curiosity, inform the understanding, and delight the fancy. But unsuspecting youth discerns not the deceitful glare that is thrown over human conduct and earthly possessions. By the fall men have lost happiness, but gained pride, by which they seek to disguise their loss. The practiced smile and exciting laugh are made to cover the darkest purposes; and youthful inexperience, mistaking the assumed semblance of good for the substance, grasps at a shadow, and embraces a sickening disappointment. Thus the unsuspecting Shechemites of old fell, and the iron-

sinewed Samson; and every generation furnishes unwary victims to the cruel and vengeful Simeons and Levis that precede it or the treacherous Delilahs that accompany it. It is thus that crafty gamblers and bar-keepers, with tongues as smooth as oil, are mistaken for friends; and places of midnight revelry and frantic mirth, the very hot-beds of the direst ills that plague mankind, are mistaken for the fountains of pleasure. We grant that these examples may be a little too strong for common life; but yet a general cause, producing occasionally such baneful effects, does, in its ordinary operation, give rise to evils sufficient to imbitter the life, not only of the subject of such rashness, but often much more of those who are nearly associated with him.

2. Physical suffering from severe labor is another source of unhappiness to man. Many mechanical pursuits are injurious to health, either from the position of the workman, or the exposure of his body to heat or cold, or to sudden transitions from one to the other. The protracted confinement in unventilated rooms, or the dust or effluvia from the raw material worked up, might also be added. These give the mechanic to feel, more than he that tills the earth, the force of the curse, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread till thou return unto the ground." Many kill themselves to keep themselves; and it was an appalling thought, wrung from the anguished heart of a daughter of toil,

"O God! that bread should be so dear,  
And flesh and blood so cheap!"

Let it be admitted, again, that these last are extreme cases; that, in our happy country, such instances of wasteful toil are rarely found; yet he has but little practical acquaintance with mankind who does not know that multitudes are compelled daily to exert themselves for support to the point of extreme weariness, if not distress.

3. Nor are the sons of luxury and wealth exempted. He that has wealth usually wishes to keep it and increase it; and to do either requires exertion. As riches are generally the *treasure* of those that possess them, there is a morbid and carking anxiety for their security, and such vexation, even at trivial losses, as leaves them but little peace.

4. To these we might add the miseries arising from the various acute and painful diseases or vexatious accidents, which, although neither fatal nor dangerous, are yet sufficiently wearisome; and then how small a part of the miseries of mankind shall we have glanced at, the far greater part arising from wicked tempers, anger, pride, jealousy, and self-will! It is through these that

"Man's inhumanity to man  
Makes countless thousands mourn."

For the crowd that throng the downward road "live in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." The envenomed tongue of slander, to which "sharp arrows of the Almighty shall be given, with coals of juniper;" that "world of iniquity that setteth on fire the course of nature and is set on fire of hell:" alas! how many have their lives embittered by its baneful operation!

5. It must be admitted that wit and satire have their legitimate uses; but they are keen-edged weapons, and are often dipped in poison by *professed* wits and satirists. Some men, finding themselves in possession of a quick sense of the ludicrous, easily fall into the habit of referring to paradoxes or whimsical coincidences that occur to them in debate or common discourse. When these witticisms embrace personalities, they often sting deeply; and as are the wounds which wit and sarcasm inflict, so are the resentments they generate; and, in the light of mere reason, no satirist should expect the man he has made a public laughing-stock ever to forgive him. Yet such is the

depravity of human nature that, in party strife, the biting sarcasm is loudly applauded; and this, feeding at once both the rancor and vanity of the satirist, he becomes so fond of using his weapon, that, upon the slightest affront, or, rather than miss an opportunity of making himself felt, he will strike his best friend, and change him, in a moment, into an irreconcilable enemy. Pursuing this course, he comes to be generally hated or dreaded as an armed maniac in whose presence no one is safe. And would it not be strange if those who have cultivated a spirit so unfriendly to the quiet and peace of mankind should themselves enjoy serenity? Jonathan Swift, the prince of wits, and John Randolph, that master of sarcasm—were they happy men? The former, in a ramble with some literary friends, was seen gazing at the blasted top of a forest tree, and exclaiming, "I shall go like that tree. I shall wither at the top first;" which sad prediction was verified in the deplorable lunacy of his latter years. That mind which prided itself in its fervor, and had been employed oft, even for amusement, in lashing the weaknesses and errors of others, became, in itself, all weakness and error in the end. And of the latter it is affirmed, that, about the melancholy close of his life, he reached out his tawny, skeleton hand, and, drawing to him a card, wrote the single word, "Remorse." That word spoke volumes. It expressed, in the most condensed form, the natural effect of a keen and unbridled sarcastic vein in a public man. Now, whatever so strongly tends to produce dire enmity between men must, in every grade of its unsanctified use, be productive of much misery.

6. Ambition is a fruitful source of evil. Not to speak of the floods of human gore with which it has deluged the earth, the efforts for intellectual pre-eminence are painful. Who can expect to excel as a man of mind without much study? and this is a "weariness to the flesh."

In the race for distinction, all can not be successful. The far greater part must be defeated and disappointed. The advantages sought by the student are not like the pebbles found on ocean's shore, but like the pearls that must be drawn from its depths. Ere he leaves college he feels the effects of rivalry, and it is well if the trial of his strength with others does not lead to chagrin, that must be concealed, to avoid the more dreaded sting of scorn and ridicule. Inferiority of natural capacity or of previous opportunities, the real or suspected bias of the judges, and an unfortunate hebetude at the time of trial—some, or all of these evils, have convinced many a sanguine heart

“How hard it is to climb  
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar.  
Ah! who can tell how many a soul sublime  
Has felt the influence of malignant star,  
And waged with fortune an eternal war!”

Thus many intellectual men, even in the morning of life, are actually weary and heavy laden; and happy are they who thence discover this world's emptiness. They hear the Savior's invitation, and go to him for rest.

Nor is the successful aspirant to fame any better off. Even when genius is favored by fortune, and a brilliant course is the result, this does not hinder its being a miserable one. Voltaire shuddered at heart, and “feared he would die with glory,” when his impious plots had succeeded, and his frantic admirers bore him into the theater. Herod was smitten by the Almighty, and brought to a loathsome death, at the moment of his triumphant deification. The period of the consummation of great, ambitious aims is dreadfully critical. Partial success may cause temporary enjoyment; but complete triumph is almost certain ruin. Let it be observed that the ills arising from all-pervading rivalry are common ills, belonging to all periods and circumstances of unrenewed life. As ambi-

tion is natural to man, so competition is natural to society; and how often, after a long and toilsome day, does the husband and father return home with a clouded countenance and a troubled mind, not from the want of actual success, but comparative; he has failed to cope with a rival or reach his own expectations.

And how closely to a father's heart lie the interests of his children! How eagerly he desires their success in life! What disadvantage, or loss, or suffering of any kind can they endure but it wounds him! And then, again, to the earthly mind, the loss of money or of other creature comforts is the loss of the *best* things. Consequently, when these depart, hope departs. The foundation gives way, and the house built on the sand totters to its fall. But these, as already observed, are common troubles, encountered in the midst of general prosperity. These "footmen" weary us. These ordinary evils make, at times, man's life a burden to him. How, then, can he stand the real calamities resulting from floods and conflagrations, frauds and villainies, that impoverish men in a day; the loss of friends, of reputation, of health? O, who can contend against these foes, that, like fierce cavalry pursuing a weary and disheartened soldier, leave him no hope? If in the land of peace wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee; if in health, among friends, in the strength of thy years, they wearied thee, how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan, when calamities come upon thee as an avalanche? thy beloved children being plucked in a moment from thy embraces, or the friend who is as thine own soul? when fierce disease brings thee in view of the king of terrors?

This is the second point presented in the text:

II. THE CALAMITIES INCIDENT TO LIFE IN EVERY CONDITION ARE INSUPPORTABLE WITHOUT THE FAVOR OF GOD.

1. *Loss of wealth.* Insensibility is not strength any

more than stubbornness is wisdom. We may safely affirm that it is not in human nature to see all the elements of enjoyment depart without a shuddering, overwhelming sense of woe. Money answereth all things, is the leading maxim of this world. Hence, with the earthly mind, to lose money is to lose the grand elements of enjoyment, the great means of happiness. But the sudden and unexpected loss of large property is an every-day occurrence; and experience, as well as Scripture, teaches us that riches make to themselves wings and fly away, as an eagle toward heaven, quite beyond our reach. And, alas! how often does suicide, either direct by violence, or indirect by a sudden plunge into intemperance, prove that such losses destroy the enjoyment of the earthly mind, but induce misery less tolerable than death itself!

2. The loss of our children by death is another of the most formidable ills of life. To see them wilt and wither like the blasted flower, or hear them groan and scream with agony, and no better relief in prospect than gloomy death affords, who can endure this without Divine support? To refuse to feel in such cases, or, when distressed, to stay up the heart with earthly, selfish consolations, is the only alternative to a soul that knows not God, yet dreads despair. Ah! sinner, "what wilt thou do in such a fearful dilemma?" To true affection, either way seems base, and, at best, is a refuge of lies.

3. But it is natural to regard a man's own last sickness as the time of his greatest trial. Then, indeed, he experiences the swelling of Jordan, when a rill from the river of death, laving his feet, gives the chilling notice that he is nearing the dark-rolling flood. Brought to the confines of time, with no hope beyond it, what avail human resources? What place is there for strength and sagacity to devise ways and means in a world which itself is receding and disappearing forever? It is with God, judgment,

and eternity he now has to do. He is under the law which curses every one that "continueth not in all things written therein to do them." "He is condemned already" by his own conscience; by the word of God in general and in particular; by the law and by the Gospel; by all the threatenings, doctrines, and promises of the Bible; by all its warnings, its recorded experiences, examples, and histories; yea, doubtless by every book, and chapter, and verse, and letter in God's holy book. The Spirit and Church of the living God; the arrangements of Providence, general and particular; the varying seasons; nay, all the successive days and nights of his worthless life bear witness against him. "What, then, will he do?"

Distress, in common life, finds sympathy its sweetest solace; but where will the dying sinner look for sympathy? Divine sympathy he has despised, till he has made God his enemy. Human sympathy can not reach him now. Angelic pity gave him up when God deserted him; and now what fate awaits him but to be the sport of fiends and of the flames of hell? O, sinner, stop and turn thee! Venture not another step in the broad, the downward road. Let present ills remind thee that God is angry with thee—that continuance in sin is laying up wrath which will make the close of thy life hopeless, and introduce thee to a world of woe, "where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." God has no pleasure in thy death. He did not make thee to be damned. No. "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

"God, the offended God most high,  
 Embassadors to rebels sends;  
 His messengers his place supply,  
 And Jesus begs us to be friends."

Listen, O listen to the voice of mercy! for "why wilt thou die?" Thou art now unhappy and without Christ.

Thou canst do nothing to support thy soul under adversity, much less to ward off the *curse of the law*. Then fly, by repentance and faith, to rest thy soul, thy all, in the hands of thy Redeemer. "Thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee. Then how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"

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## SERMON XV.

BY REV. JOHN MILEY.

### THE DUTY OF REVERENCE IN APPROACHING GOD.

"Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace," LEVITICUS x, 3.

THIS text will instruct us as to the disposition of mind in which we should approach the Lord. It indicates and enjoins that sanctified reverence and holy awe that we should feel when we come nigh him. The occasion of the text is a very interesting and striking incident, and will serve to introduce the subject which it furnishes to our notice, and also to impress us with its importance.

Aaron and his sons were divinely appointed and consecrated to the priestly office. In the fulfillment of the duties of this office, they were to offer the different sacrifices enjoined in the law; and they were to perform this service in the method and with the observances prescribed by the law. One thing to be observed was, that strange or common fire should not be used in offering sacrifices or burning incense. The fire required was of a celestial kind. It was to be given at the first by the Lord, and

then to be perpetually preserved, or to be again directly given upon special occasions. Numerous incidents are recorded in the Scriptures as interesting occasions upon which this sacred fire was given. When Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the priestly office, various sacrifices and offerings were made to the Lord: "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out and blessed the people; and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat, which when all the people saw, they shouted and fell on their faces." Gideon placed his offerings, according to Divine directions, upon a rock. "Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there arose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight." Elijah, in his ever-memorable controversy with the prophets of Baal, offered his sacrifice upon the rebuilt altar of the Lord, and lifted up his heart and voice in prayer to "the God that answereth by fire." "Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench;" "Now, when Solomon had made an end of praying, [at the dedication of the temple,] the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple." These instances were in accordance with the Divine plan, which required celestial fire for the consumption of the sacrifices and burnt-offerings of the law. Such was the order of God. This order Nadab and Abihu transgressed; and thus they brought upon themselves the curse of God. "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein,

and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.”

How fearful the threatenings against innovations upon the institutions and order of God—against adding to or subtracting from his sacred word: “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar;” “Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand: ye shall lie down in sorrow;” “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Such, then, was the wickedness, such the destruction of Nadab and Abihu. Such was the occasion upon which Moses uttered the solemn words of the text which we have selected: “This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.” In the further treatment of this subject, we propose to view it as enjoining generally *the duty of reverence in approaching God*. Such is the general subject of this sermon. Various particulars will be embraced in the plan of discussion which we propose.

#### I. THE REVERENCE REQUIRED OF US IN APPROACHING THE LORD.

This is expressed in the word sanctified: “I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.” The word to sanctify has various meanings as it is used in Scripture.

In the first place, it means to consecrate or devote—to separate or set apart from a common to a sacred use, from secular offices to the service of God. In this use of the term it has the same sense, whether applied to places, cities, temples, altars, or persons. Thus the place where Moses stood when the Lord spoke to him from the burning bush, Mount Zion, Jerusalem, the temple and its altars and vessels, were all holy or sanctified. They were consecrated by the presence and to the service of God. So the children of Israel were a “holy nation”—a nation sanctified or set apart to God.

The next import of the term is to make pure, holy, upright, blameless. In these senses it can apply only to persons, as having a moral nature, and capable of moral purity and upright action; and when applied to them in these significations, it imports purity of heart and uprightness of life.

Further and finally, the term means to respect, to venerate, to reverence, to hallow. All these are embraced in the meaning of the word sanctified as it is used in the text. It, therefore, very plainly furnishes us with the general subject of reverence for God as a duty in approaching him. This reverence implies several things, which we may briefly notice.

1. *Thoughtfulness of God.* Without this we can not reverence him. To be thoughtless of him, particularly when in attendance upon the sacred services of religious worship, is to treat him with the greatest indignity. There is a courtesy, a proper respect that is due even to men of elevated character and worth, and of commanding position; and he who would disregard these things, and act in their presence as though they were absent, would be justly chargeable with unbecoming and offensive rudeness of character. To be forgetful of our friends or benefactors, or to dismiss from our minds the recollection of our earthly

parents, is to withhold from them that regard and veneration which they deserve, and to deport ourselves most disrespectfully toward them. But if due respect for men, or for earthly benefactors or friends, is demanded of us, particularly while in their presence, how much more is it demanded of us while in the presence of God! His greatness, his glorious majesty, his boundless goodness, his universal presence and government, his sleepless watch-care over us, his ceaseless benefits dispensed to us, all forbid us to forget him. They forcibly claim and should fully command our thoughtfulness of God.

“Consider this, ye that forget God.” Forgetfulness of him indicates an absence of almost every Christian principle or virtue—an absence of love and fear, of reverence and adoration, of gratitude and obedience. These can not exist where he is forgotten. Strange it is that so many forget God! A thousand things of the most trivial and transient character, that pass away and perish in a day, engage their thoughts and engross their affections, while the Creator and Preserver of the universe is forgotten. It is with many now as it was with the heathen of old, who “did not like to retain God in their knowledge.” Thus men live as though he did not exist; courses of life are pursued as though not prohibited by his divine law; forbidden objects are sought as though not interdicted by his sacred word; the neglect of a thousand duties creates no concern, no apprehension of his displeasure.

2. *An apprehension and impression of the greatness and goodness of God.* True greatness and commanding worth constitute the only proper object of reverence. These alone, as united in the same being, and embraced in the same view, can create or call forth into proper exercise this disposition of the soul. The greatness and goodness of God, thus embraced in one view, can alone call forth the disposition of due reverence for him. Mere greatness

may inspire an apprehension of evil, a painful sense of fear; or it may call forth into intense exercise our feelings of wonder or surprise, of deep and silent awe. But all these feelings will be destitute of the proper characteristics of true, sacred reverence. Again: mere goodness may excite in us affections of approval, of gratitude and delight, of admiration and love. But all these will be void of the true nature of godly reverence. Reverence views, at once and together, the greatness and goodness of God, and derives its peculiar character from that view. It blends in one the feelings of wonder and delight, of fear and hope, of dread and confidence, of awe and love. These, coalescing in one, constitute that true disposition of reverence which all should feel while in the presence of God. Thus there arises in the soul an all-pervasive, a profound and sacred sense of God. This is reverence.

3. *An acquiescence in the will of God.* There must be this acquiescence, whether that will be expressed in the written revelation of God or in the dispensations of his providence. At the foundation of such acquiescence there must be a lively faith in the wisdom and goodness of God; a faith that acknowledges his righteousness in all his ways; a faith that yields a cheerful submission to all his providences, whether prosperous or adverse; a faith that accredits and approves all his written word; a faith that respects and conforms to all the divinely-appointed forms and observances, institutions and usages of religion; a faith that yields obedience to all the precepts or duties of his word. How forcible and impressive is the expression of Aaron's submission to the afflictive providence of God in the destruction of his two sons, "*And Aaron held his peace!*" A father's heart was in him, and a father's affection went forth toward his sons; deep anguish was moving through his whole soul; but there was no murmuring; no utterance of complaints; no manifestation of

rebellion; no uprising of hostile feelings toward God. "Aaron held his peace." His lively faith in the wisdom and goodness of God enabled him quietly and submissively to acquiesce in this dispensation. Thus he revered God; thus he glorified him before all the people. The course of Nadab and Abihu was different. They would not observe the order instituted of God. This was their sin, and thus they refused that reverence which is due to him.

4. *A supreme respect to the glory of God.* Such respect for the glory of God has, for its foundation, proper views of our own insignificance and unworthiness, of the comparative insignificance and unworthiness of all things of creature character, and of the supreme excellence and claims of God. The man of inordinate self-esteem, or of selfish purposes as the ruling motives of life, can not duly reverence God. His own interests and claims are, in his view, superior to those of his Creator and Sovereign. The authority of God's word, the interests of his government, the prosperity of his Church, the triumph of his cause, the display of his glory, are, with all such, matters of minor concern, and not at all to stand in comparison with their own interests. Such may often say, "Lord, Lord;" their lips may be ever clothed with the "hallowed be thy name;" yet with them God is lightly esteemed; his name despised, rather than hallowed, dishonored rather than glorified.

The same is true of all those who give themselves to the pursuit of worldly objects, as the chief ends and interests of man. God is displaced from their view, while worldly objects fill their whole vision, engross their thoughts and affections, and command their most earnest efforts and pursuits. In the view of such, a thousand things of earth are more prominent and important than the Sovereign of the universe. This is as much true of

the time-serving, pleasure-taking, mammon-seeking, fashion-following millions of the present age, as it was of the heathen of Egypt or Assyria, of Greece or Rome, who, "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things; . . . who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." With the worldlings of Christian lands, of whom we are now speaking, the grossness and the form of this heathen idolatry have passed away; but the spirit, the living, polluting soul of it, remains, and is none the less dishonoring to God, or irreverent and offensive in his sight. All such are of the world. Would that they were only in the world! Alas! too many such are in the Church!

II. SOME INSTANCES OF NIGH APPROACH TO GOD, AS OCCASIONS UPON WHICH WE SHOULD SPECIALLY REVERENCE HIM.

As a general truth we are ever in the presence of God. Therefore, we should ever cherish in our soul a sense of his presence, and a disposition of reverence toward him. God is every-where. There is no escape from his presence, or from the gaze of his all-seeing eye. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are

both alike to thee." Who can be unmindful of all this? Who can forget the solemn truth, "Thou, God, seest me?" Or who, recollecting it, can be indifferent to it? But let us note some instances of nigh approach to God.

1. *We come nigh to him when we view or examine his works.* These indicate his being, his attributes, his presence. Nature is God's temple; he dwells in it—in every department of it. Into whatever of its courts we enter, we press into his presence. On all such occasions, at all such times, we should reverence God.

The chemist, as he stands in his laboratory, and analyzes or synthetizes the various material substances, ascertains the simple elements of nature, their properties and laws, their affinities and repulsions, their combinations and uses, should stand in awe, as in the presence of the Author of nature.

The naturalist, as he ranges the wide fields, animate and inanimate, of his inquiries; as he delves the depths of earth and ocean, exploring the wonders of the past and the present; as he arranges in consecutive order the geological periods, determining the formations and orders of animate existence belonging to each; as he presses on in his inquiries through all the hidden secrets of the physical world; as he traces the various ages and orders of animal existence from the lowest up to the highest, from the earliest down to the latest; as he develops their organisms and endowments, their instincts and habits, their employments and products; through all and in all he should trace the footsteps and handiwork of that divine Being whose creative fiat gave existence and endowments to all, and whose providence supported, controlled, and directed all. And thus, as he explores nature, he should ever bear upon his soul a sense of the Divine presence, and, through all and in all, reverence the God of nature.

The psychologist, as he sits in his study and investigates

the mind, analyzes and ascertains its powers of thought and reason, evolves its various and vast emotions; he, too, should ever be solemnly impressed, as in the presence of that infinite Mind whence spring all human minds, and who takes cognizance of all their thoughts, and feelings, and purposes, and will hold them to a strict accountability at the great judgment day.

The traveler goes forth to commune with nature. He wanders through forest and field, over mountain and vale; loiters along the streamlet's winding way; pursues the river's wider, deeper flow; stands gazing where the cataract, with fearful bound, leaps into the abyss below; rides upon the ocean's rolling billow; in all and over all he should realize the presence and agency of God. In every step of his progress, in every beauteous scene over which his delighted eye is glancing, in every awe-impressing scene of the grand and the majestic, he should feel that God is present, and hallow his name.

The astronomer goes forth amid the heavens, where star shines to star, sun beams to sun, system circles system. He gazes in rapture upon the stellar skies; counts the worlds that are rolling around and above him; determines their distances and velocities; weighs them as in scales. He, too, should feel himself in the presence and reverence the majesty of God, at whose command they sprang into being, by whose word they are sustained, and whose glory they display.

“An undevout astronomer is mad.”

2. *We come nigh to God when we read his word.* The Scriptures are given by Divine inspiration, and are divine. They came from God, and bear to all the impress of their divine original. “The law of God—speaking after the manner of men—is a copy of the eternal mind—a transcript of the Divine nature; yea, it is the fairest offspring of the everlasting Father; the brightest efflux of his

essential wisdom; the visible beauty of the Most High." The doctrines, duties, threatenings, promises of sacred Scripture, all are from God. They are the word of the Lord—his own lively oracles. When, therefore, we read the Scriptures, we should remember that God is speaking to us in his own word, as with his own voice, and that while we read we stand in his Divine presence, and should reverence him who speaks. Think you the high-priest would have approached thoughtlessly or carelessly the mercy-seat, upon which, and amid the hovering wings of the cherubim, the Shechinah, or Divine Presence, rested, and from which the Divine oracles were given out by an audible voice? And no more should we come thoughtlessly or carelessly to the reading of God's sacred, living word. While we read, we should reverence him in whose presence we are, and whose word we read.

3. *We come nigh to God when we join in the psalms and hymns, the sacred songs and melodies of Zion.* All these contain much of sacred truth, much of divinity. They embody the sacred titles of Deity; they contain descriptions of the being and character of God, of his attributes and works, of redemption. How profane to sing with levity,

"Before Jehovah's awful throne,  
Ye nations bow with sacred joy;  
Know that the Lord is God alone,  
He can create, and he destroy!"

What profanity, what disrespect for the sacred solemnities of religious worship, what an insult to the infinite majesty of Deity thus to sing,

"God is in heaven, and men below;  
Be short our tunes; our words be few:  
A solemn rev'rence checks our songs,  
And praise sits silent on our tongues!"

How irreverent, how offensive to the Most High, what trifling with his infinite mercy, what contempt of his dying

love, to sing, with a mind void of thought, and a heart void of feeling,

“Alas! and did my Savior bleed?  
And did my Sov'reign die?  
Would he devote that sacred head  
For such a worm as I?”

The angels and seraphs, the thrones and dominions, the principalities and powers of thy presence, O God, treat thee not thus.

“Thee while the first archangel sings,  
He hides his face behind his wings;  
And ranks of shining thrones around  
Fall worshiping, and spread the ground.”

How much more does a sacred reverence, a solemn, soul-pervading awe become us, while we thus approach the Lord!

4. *When we pray we specially come nigh the Lord.* Prayer is an address to God; it is speaking to him; an hour of converse with him; a season of audience with the Deity. The same is true whether we join in the prayers of the public assemblages of God's house or in the more private circles of his children; whether we pray alone in our chamber, or join in the devotions at the family altar. In all there is an approaching unto God. Then shall we carelessly or irreverently enter into the place of supplication, or assume the attitudes, the language, and the sentiments of prayer? Shall we approach into his presence, and assume to converse with him in prayer, while our thoughts and affections are far away? Far be such impious profanity from us!

5. *We approach the Lord when we come into his house.* It is there that he records his name; there his honor dwells; there his presence abides. And thus is given such sacredness to the sanctuary of God as requires reverence of us while we enter or remain therein. Even the heathen have ever regarded and approached the temples,

and groves, and altars of their vain idols with profound solemnity. So the Jews regarded and approached both the tabernacle and the temple with reverence and awe. Surely, then, while we come into God's house, and draw nigh to his presence, we should hallow his name. He is truly present there. There the beauty of his truth and grace is displayed; the brightness of his glory beams forth; the riches of his holiness and love are made manifest. He is verily present in the power and offices of his Holy Spirit.

Then how unbecoming, how wicked and profane, are thoughtlessness and levity in the house of God! How irreverent to allow our thoughts and affections to be occupied rather with the vanities of life than with the solemnities of sacred worship! How undevout and impious to be more interested with the appearance of those around us than impressed with the presence of God! How profane any attempt at display, with a view to arrest attention, to catch the eye and secure the admiration of others! This, in the sentiment of Massilon, is an attempt to rival the Savior, and to draw away the people from him whose glory should attract all eyes, whose goodness should charm and possess all hearts.

6. *In the ministry of the word and of the sacraments of our holy religion, we come nigh to God.* Even Nadab and Abihu came nigh him, though they came in a profane way, and with unauthorized observances. While we minister to the people from the sacred treasury of the Gospel; while we proclaim the ministry of reconciliation which God has committed to us; while we do this as ambassadors for Christ, persuaded that God has commissioned us to this work in his stead, surely we should feel that we are in the immediate presence of God, and that reverence becometh us. How shall we feel otherwise while we speak for God; while we preach Christ crucified; while we pro-

claim the tidings and the terms of salvation to perishing souls; while we disclose the momentous destinies of a coming eternity? And the same solemnity should characterize us while we administer the sacred ordinances, the solemn sacraments of religion, which represent the work of the Spirit and the redemption of Christ.

High-Churchmen quote the disorderly intrusion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram into sacred things, as an example of the wickedness of those ministers not in the line of their technical, apostolic succession. We may repay this favor by calling their attention to the case of Nadab and Abihu. They, so far as orders were concerned, were not disorderly intruders into the priestly office. Yet they committed this great sin and received their fearful doom. And, doubtless, many of those in the line of this succession of High-Churchmen, by the perversion of the truth and the introduction of false ceremonies and sacraments into religious worship, have committed like sins. And yet, while guilty of the sin and deserving the doom of Nadab and Abihu, they are essential links in the chain of succession, without which it can not be made out. While, therefore, they address to us the other example, upon a proposition which assumes to stamp with a disorderly, irreverent, and wicked intrusion into sacred things nearly all the evangelical ministers of our country, we may repay the kindness by addressing to them this example, which should at least teach them a little modesty, and remind them of the solemn words of Moses: "This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me; and before all the people will I be glorified." And how stands the case now? Why, that many who are essential to the completeness of their personal succession have been guilty of like sins with that of Nadab and Abihu needs no proof; while their claims of apostolic succession, which alone can countenance their use of the

example of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, never has been and never can be maintained.

### III. THE OBLIGATIONS OR REASONS FOR DUE REVERENCE IN APPROACHING GOD.

These are many and striking. This is specially so when we approach him in the sacred services of religion.

1. *The services of religious worship are holy.* Sacredness attaches itself to all parts, to all the principles and forms of religion. The Church is holy. Her institutions are holy. They are divinely appointed as means and modes of approaching God. They derive their sanctity from the appointment or sanction of God, and from the purposes for which they are instituted. There was sacredness in the religious services and sacrificial offerings of the patriarchs. There was sacredness in the tabernacle, and temple, and altars; in the washings and purifications, the sacrifices and confessions; in the penitence, the prayers, and praises of the Levitical economy. So there is sacredness in the baptism and the supper; in the penitence and prayers; in the communings and praises; in the Gospel ministrations of Christian worship. These all have to do with God the Father, who is above all and over all; with Christ Jesus, the Son of God; with his atonement, his sufferings, and death, and intercessions for us; with the Holy Spirit in his offices of awakening and regeneration, of adoption and sanctification; with the highest duties and responsibilities of life, the solemnities of death and judgment, and the great and ultimate, the endless and changeless destinies of eternity. Reverence is, therefore, required of us while we approach God in the sacred services of religion.

2. *Reverence for God is due from us in approaching him because of our own character and condition.*

What are we in the presence of God? A shadow; a passing cloud; like the early dew or mist of the morning, that quickly vanishes before the rising sun. "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;" "Behold, thou hast made my days as a handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee. Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Such are we; and our habitation is in the dust of God's footstool. Surely, then, reverence becometh us when we come nigh him.

In our higher nature, in our intellectual and moral endowments, what littleness, what nothingness we are in comparison of God! We can but scan the mere surface of things. The circumference which compasses the range of our powers crowds upon its center. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God;" "All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity;" "Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the earth stand in awe of him."

And surely there is reason for the duty of reverence in approaching God in the sad truth of our sinfulness; and, though forgiven and sanctified, the remembrance of our past sinfulness will remain; and while we come before him with the recollection of the deep stains that polluted us and the aggravated guilt accumulated upon our soul, and deeply penetrated with a sense of God's justice, and holiness, and love, we shall feel that solemnity and awe become us in his presence.

3. *The character and majesty of God form the chief reason for this reverence.* On this subject no merely human composition can equal the force and spirit, the grandeur and majesty of the sacred writings. "God is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and prospered? which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger, and the pillars thereof tremble; which com-

mandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars; which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea;" "He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills and they smoke;" "Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering. He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them. He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it. He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end. The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof. . . . Lo! these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?" "The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God who dwelleth on high? who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth? Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" "Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him;" "Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man who shall be made as grass? and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth?" "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread;" "That thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful name, **THE LORD THY GOD**;" "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him."

Such is the character, such the infinite perfections of God; such the grandeur of his works and the greatness of his majesty and glory. In his presence the nations are

as nothing. At his approach the mountains flee away, or flame on fire and dissolve; the waters of the sea part asunder; the foundations of the earth tremble and give way; the sun veils his light and hides himself; the moon and the stars, trembling and awe-struck, retreat back into the darkness of night. The universe bows in reverence before the greatness of his majesty—the universe, those excepted who, plunged into the depths and darkness of sin, maintain an impious rebellion against him. Saints on earth, saints and angels in heaven, all reverence and hallow the name of God. How often, when they come into the place of his presence, are his saints constrained, like Jacob, to say, “How dreadful is this place!” How often, when God comes nigh and manifests himself, do they feel, like Moses, that the very ground whereon they stand is holy! And thus, saints and seraphs, angels and archangels, mingling in the worship of the skies, casting their crowns before him, and prostrate in his presence, in profoundest adoration, “rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” Surely, then, a soul-pervading, profound reverence is our duty in approaching God. “This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.”

4. *And yet, while we should come before God in the profoundest reverence and awe, we may come in the fullness of filial confidence, and in all the freedom of the children of his compassion and love.* “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” The condescension of God is equal to the greatness of his majesty and glory. “Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

Through the atonement and mediation of Christ there is provided for us the gracious privilege of free access to God as our father. "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Christ is our advocate with the Father, the propitiation for our sins. He is a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. In the character of our high-priest he has passed into the heavens, thus opening up to us the way of free access to the throne of grace. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having a high-priest over the house of God, let us draw nigh with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." Thus let us approach God in the spirit of profound reverence and confiding trust. So shall we find nearness and freeness of approach, and ever remain and rejoice in the smiles of his love. Amen.

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## SERMON XVI.

BY REV. WILLIAM H. SUTHERLAND.

THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich," 2 CORINTHIANS VIII, 9.

THE principles of imitation and emulation are often efficient incentives to deeds of charity. The apostle, aware of the influence of these principles, appealed to them in this epistle. Before and at the date of the text, the poor saints in Judea were the subjects of bitter persecution.

As it was vain for them to expect relief from the authors of their wrongs, they naturally turned an imploring look to those whose hearts God had touched. And, my brethren, when God touches the heart with the finger of his love, it overflows with charity toward all mankind. Hence, they implored not in vain. The Macedonians, even beyond their ability, joyfully contributed to the relief of their suffering brethren. For this object the apostle had written also to the Corinthians; but from some cause, not mentioned, the contribution had not been completed. To urge its completion was one of the objects of this second epistle, in the eighth chapter of which he endeavors to incite them to emulate the noble deeds of the Macedonians, delicately intimating, that if they, who were poor, had given so freely, the Corinthians, who were opulent, ought to equal or surpass their poorer brethren in liberality. But he rises. Having given an instance of human charity, he presents an example of benevolence, of grace, the most illustrious the universe has seen—the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. “For ye know,” says he, “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

The subject of this text is, obviously, “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” The word *grace*, in the Bible, has various meanings. They all, however, are comprehended in two words, *excellence* and *favor*—excellence, whether physical, mental, or moral, and favor, conferred or received. It has both these senses in the text, in the elucidation of which I shall consider the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ as exhibited in

I. HIS ORIGINAL RICHES.

II. HIS SUBSEQUENT POVERTY.

III. HIS BENEVOLENT DESIGN.

I. I am to consider the grace—the *excellence* of our

Lord Jesus Christ as exhibited in HIS ORIGINAL RICHES.

“He was rich” in

1. *His nature.* That nature was *divine*. This is declared in the first title given him in the text. He is called “Lord.” The Greek word *Κύριος*, here translated Lord, is the same by which the Seventy generally render the Hebrew word Jehovah, which is the incommunicable name of the ever-blessed God—a name expressive of his infinity, immutability, eternity—one which the Jews, through reverence, refuse to pronounce, and always use a circumlocution to express. Christ is, in the Scriptures, also called *God*. That disciple who was admitted to a peculiarly intimate communion with the Savior, who leaned on his bosom at the last supper, and whom, it is emphatically said, Jesus loved, in the first verse of his Gospel says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was *God*.” And the chief of the apostles testifies that Christ “is over all, God blessed forever,” Romans ix, 5. As God, he possesses *divine attributes*. To him belong a wisdom omniscient, a power almighty, a presence universal, a holiness immaculate, a justice without respect of persons, a goodness overshadowing all, a mercy reaching even the rebellious, and a truth firmer than the foundations of “the everlasting hills.” But *divine actions*, as well as *divine titles and attributes*, are ascribed to him in the Scriptures; hence, “he was rich” in

2. *His works.* The beloved apostle informs us that “all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” Paul declares that “by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers—all things were made by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist,” Colossians i, 16, 17. Here, in

the number, order, variety, beauty, magnitude, utility, and perfection of his works, we behold the riches of Christ.

*His wisdom* is manifest in the tiny flower of the field, and in the giant oak of the mountain; in the vicissitudes of day and night, and in the constant roll of the seasons; in the conformation of the earth, and in its vast mineral treasures. The myriad creatures that move on its surface, or fly in the open firmament, or plow the deep, from the animalcule to leviathan, all display the wisdom of Christ. We ourselves are "strangely, wonderfully formed." And if we elevate our view, and behold the sun shining in his strength, and the moon walking in brightness, attended by all heaven's glittering host, we shall, perhaps, exclaim with the Psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge;" "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in *wisdom* hast thou made them all; the whole earth is full of thy *riches*."

Nor less illustrious is his *goodness*. It breathes in the balmy morning, and distills in the evening dew. It smiles in the verdure and beauty of spring, and flows brightly on in the rippling waters. It sings in the simple and touching melody of nature's own warblers, and rejoices in the shouts of the harvest. It

"Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;  
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent."

Equally conspicuous is his *power*. It is he who, in the elevated language of inspiration, "stretcheth the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing;" "Who weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance; who taketh up the isles as a very little

thing; and Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing; and vanity." "Lo, these are *parts* of his ways!" and yet in even these, the depth of his wisdom, the exuberance of his goodness, and "the thunder of his power, who can understand?" But Christ was rich in

3. *His possessions.* As "all things were made by him," so all things were made "*for* him." To him belongs a wealth greater than that of the Indies or Peru. His are the useful, the beautiful, the sublime of nature. His the gushing fountain, the majestic river, the placid lake, the boundless ocean, with all the treasures of the depth. He knows all the fowls of the mountain, and "the cattle upon a thousand hills are the Lord's;" yea, "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." And worlds on worlds, and systems on systems immense, whose elemental fires, though lighted at nature's birth, have scarce yet reached our little sphere, are all, with all their glories, their treasures, and their inhabitants, the possessions of Him who was rich, but for your sakes, my brethren, became poor. Christ "was rich" in

4. *His government.* He is "head over all things;" "by him all things consist;" "he upholdeth all things," not by the arm nor hand, but "by the *word* of his power." He reigns in the kingdom of *nature*. It is he who "causeth the day-spring to know his place," and at his bidding the sun hastens to his going down. He "bindeth the sweet influences of the Pleiades he looseth the bands of Orion, and guideth Arcturus with his sons." He "lifteth up his voice to the clouds, and abundance of waters covers the earth;" "fire, and hail, and stormy wind fulfill his word." He "maketh the clouds his chariot, and darkness his pavilion, and walketh upon the wings of the wind;"

yea, the fearful bolts of heaven go forth at his command, and return crouching at his feet, saying, "Here are we."

He rules in the empire of *mind*. "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." This he does, not compelling the volitions, but rather controlling the *events* to which those volitions lead. And this is accordant with Scripture, which declares that though "the Lord directeth a man's steps, yet his own heart deviseth his way." Brethren, I rejoice that Christ reigns. Men of talent, and learning, and wealth, and power, may combine to oppose the Church; "the kings of the earth may set themselves, and the rulers take counsel against the Lord and against his anointed; yet he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision." He who saith to the roaring ocean, when, in the plenitude of its power, it rolls, and foams, and dashes upon the shore, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be staid," can make the "wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath restrain." Christ "was rich" in

5. *The worship paid him.* "Let all the angels of God worship him," is the command of the Father. The fiat has gone forth, "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." Accordingly, from primeval ages, the wisest and best have worshiped Christ as God. In him the faith of Abel, the first martyr, centered. It was he whose day Abraham rejoiced to see, and for whose worship he erected an altar wherever he had a tent. It was he whose very reproach Moses esteemed greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. It was on his atoning merit the devout Jew relied, when he brought his victim to the altar. It was

he whose praises and passion were sung in the sublime strain of Isaiah, and in the touching melody of David's harp. It was he who was worshiped in heaven by angels and "the spirits of just men made perfect," saying, "Thou art worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing;" and cherubim and seraphim bowed before him, and veiled their faces with their wings, as if unworthy to look on his uncreated majesty and glory, crying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts!" Such, my brethren, are the riches, the excellence, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;" such they were before he became poor.

We come now to contemplate a very different part of the same picture, but one which, not less than the former, exhibits the grace, the excellence of our Lord Jesus Christ, namely :

## II. HIS SUBSEQUENT POVERTY.

This is declared in the text: "For your sakes he became poor;" and it is intimated, also, in the second title therein given our Lord. He is called "Jesus," which signifies a Savior; and to be a Savior he must become poor. This he did, not in ceasing to be God, but in becoming man, in enshrining the divinity in humanity; that as the human nature had sinned, so might the human nature suffer; but as mere human sufferings were valueless, the indwelling and sustaining divinity might give infinite value to the sacrifice. But under what circumstances did he assume humanity? Did he come as an emperor, or an emperor's son? Was his birth heralded by the shouts of a nation's joy? Did an imperial palace or an imperial city receive him? Nay, my brethren. He came as the reputed son of the obscure Joseph. He was born, not in royal Jerusalem, but in "Bethlehem Ephratah, the least of the thousands of Judah." A stable was his first dwelling, and a manger his cradle. To bear great reverses unshaken, has

always been esteemed a mark of commanding excellence. But the universe presents no reverses comparable to those which Christ so meekly bore. Here we behold the I Am, an infant of days; the omnipotent, a powerless child; the adored of angels, a companion of beasts of the stall! In early life we find him without education, toiling many years at the laborious trade of a carpenter; and even after he enters fully upon his momentous mission, his temporal circumstances do not improve. His wants are supplied by the charity of a few women whom he had healed of their diseases. He hungers at the fig-tree, thirsts at Sychar, and begs drink of a woman, a stranger to him and an enemy to his nation. Hear his own account of his possessions: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man [the Lord of both] hath not where to lay his head." Thus, my brethren, did Christ *literally* become poorer than the poorest of his creatures, that we "through his poverty might be rich." But he was despoiled of *reputation*, which the noble prize dearer than life. Although he was the Lamb of God, whom none could convict of iniquity—in whose mouth was no guile, and in whose heart was no sin—yet they aspersed him as a glutton, a wine-bibber, and a companion of sinners. They even asserted that those miracles of mercy, which he wrought by the Spirit of God, were performed through Satanic aid. "He casteth out devils," said they, "through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils;" "He came unto his own, and his own received him not;" "He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and they hid, as it were, their faces from him; he was despised, and they esteemed him not."

But let us view the closing scene. Go we to Gethsemane, and who is that pale, meek one, prostrate on the cold, hard earth? What mean those gory drops that fall

so thick and fast from his marred visage? And what that thrice-repeated, plaintive cry, "O, my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt?" Sinners, he suffers, and yet prays for you and me. Behold him before the Sanhedrim and at Pilate's bar, falsely accused, unjustly condemned, spit upon, buffeted, scourged, and crowned with thorns! "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, yet he openeth not his mouth." See him toiling up the steep of Calvary, fainting beneath the weight of his own cross! He is bound to the accursed tree. The rough iron transfixes the quivering flesh. The poisonous thorns press down their points into his sacred temples. He is elevated between heaven and earth, in most ignoble company. He hangs on his wounds. His precious blood distills. See, from his head, his hands, his feet, "sorrow and love flow mingled down," one crimson tide! In this piteous condition he is derided by the Jews, deserted by his own disciples, and forsaken and afflicted by God! This last was the bitterest dreg in the cup of the Savior's anguish. Even the martyr, slowly consuming at the stake, has been sustained in the inner man by the grace of God, and shouted victory in the fire; but Jesus, the martyr's Lord and supporter, in the extremity of his own torture, was bereft of the cheering presence of the Divinity, and writhed beneath his Father's frowns. Yes, "he bruised him," "he put him to grief," "he made his soul an offering for sin," and poured upon it, without mixture, the fierceness of the wrath of an almighty God! Else what means that plaintful cry, "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" O, Lamb of God! were ever poverty, and ignominy, and agony like thine? Well may the earth quake, the sun hide his face, and the heavens be shrouded in mourning—the God of nature and of glory dies! And well may our minds be lost in astonishment,

and our hearts be overpowered with emotion at the excellence, the condescension, the love, the unutterable "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But let us further consider the grace, the excellence, and *favor* of our Lord Jesus Christ, as exhibited in

### III. HIS BENEVOLENT DESIGN.

That design was, "that ye through his poverty might be rich." It is shadowed forth in the third title given in the text to our Redeemer. He is called "Christ," that is, the anointed one; a name or phrase expressive of his regal, sacerdotal, and prophetic offices, by virtue of which he confers "gifts on men."

It is through his mediation that we have a second trial. Man having failed in his first trial, God was not obliged to grant him a second. He might justly have cut off the race in Adam, and consigned man to irremediable woe. But Christ, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," interposed, and through his prospective poverty, found out a ransom—procured the possibility of the salvation of all mankind from sin, and from many of its temporal, and all its eternal, consequences, and an exaltation to an infinitely better Eden than Adam lost. It is through Christ that we have the written word; a light shining in a dark place, revealing our origin, nature, duty, and destiny, "bringing life and immortality to light." It is to Jesus we are indebted for a living ministry. Men who have themselves "tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," are inspired with love, and zeal, and wisdom, and eloquence, and sent forth to declare to poor perishing sinners "the unsearchable riches of Christ," "beseeching them in his stead, to be reconciled to God." It is Jesus who sends the Holy Spirit to illumine our minds, to soften our hearts, to "reprove us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," and to grant us "repentance unto life," and saving faith in Christ. By

his obedience unto death he procured a full pardon for our rebellions. He became the son of man, that we might become the sons of God, and have the Spirit of God within our hearts, "crying, Abba, Father." He submitted to the punishment of our sins, that we might be saved from their tyranny, pollution, and dreadful penalties, and be filled with a pure and ever-enduring peace, an immortal hope, and "a joy unspeakable and full of glory." He became poor, that we might gain the imperishable riches of faith, and "find grace to help" in every step of our pilgrimage through this vale of tears. He died and rose again, that we might triumph over death, and our once weak, vile, dishonored bodies be raised in power, incorruption, and glory. He left the New Jerusalem, that we might enter its pearly gates, walk its golden streets, and look with undimmed eye on all its ineffable glories. He descended from his throne, that we worms might sit on thrones. He laid aside his glorious crown, that we rebels might wear "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." He drank the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out, that we might quaff from that stream "which makes glad the city of God." He relinquished the worship of the angelic host, and the spirits of just men made perfect, that we might share their society, their praises, and their happiness forever. Yes, the riches which Christ procures for us, unlike the riches of earth, shall endure and satisfy forever. To-day, my brethren, "on faith's strong, eagle pinions let us rise, and scale the mount of God." Let us enter the inner sanctuary, and mingle with its holy society. Let us look on the unclouded glories of the Lamb. Let our hearts thrill with his love, and our lips tremble with his praise. In these delightful employments let an age of one million of years circle away; let a million of such ages pass; multiply the vast aggregate by every atom in the universe; and when the last sand

has run out, there is still before us an eternity of improving bliss, infinitely greater than that we have enjoyed. Such, my brethren, is but a glance at the riches procured for us by the poverty of our Lord. Mortals can neither describe nor conceive them perfectly. Even the experience and eloquence of that angel longest in heaven, would fall infinitely beneath that "far more exceeding and *eternal* weight of glory." And shall we not adore the grace that could merit and procure these inestimable riches? Shall not our minds be filled with wonder, and our hearts with gratitude, at the excellence, the condescension, and love of Him "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 man: being found and in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross?" That was *disinterested* love. I know it is doubted whether there is such a thing on earth. It has even been said, when the fond mother pardons, and receives to her embraces her long-lost, prodigal boy, that hers is not disinterested affection. I will not discuss so delicate a point; but I will aver that the love of Christ to us, *was* disinterested love. He who dwelt in the bosom of the Father before the worlds were; who was "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," could not become richer, wiser, holier, happier, by becoming poor; and there was nothing in us to merit this love. We were neither rich, nor wise, nor pure, nor lovely, nor loyal, but were ingrate rebels; and yet he loved *us*, and "for *our* *sakes* became poor." "Look down, O ye heavens, and be astonished, O earth, at the matchless grace of the Son of God!" "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die; but Christ commendeth his love toward us, in that

while we were yet sinners, he died for us." "O, for this love let rocks and hills their lasting silence break," and all human tongues, whether "harmonious" or inharmonious, "the Savior's praises speak!"

And shall love so pure, so intense, so divine, appeal to our hearts in vain? Shall we love the man who but *risks* his life for ours, and not love our glorious Savior, who *actually died* to deliver us from eternal death? Shall we love the man who gives us earthly, perishable riches, and not love our divine Redeemer, who freely resigned the treasures of the universe to purchase for us a *heavenly inheritance*, "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away?" Can we contemplate the poverty, and ignominy, and agony which he for us endured, and not crucify the sins which crucified our Lord? O, can we look on him whom *we* have pierced, and while his dying groans rend the adamant heart of earth, and dim the eye of heaven, can our hearts remain unfeeling, and our tears refuse to flow, and we return to forget his sorrows, to crucify him afresh, and put him to an open shame? Let us remember that Christ's merits procure, indeed, the *possibility*, but not the *necessity* of our salvation. He became poor, not that we inevitably *must* or *shall*, but only that we "*might* be rich." After all that Christ has done for us, we may undo ourselves. God will *let* the obstinate sinner be damned. If we reject, or even neglect that great salvation so affectionately offered us by him who died to purchase it, we renounce our only hope; "for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved;" and we must sink beneath the awful curses of the law we have violated, and feel, in addition, how bitter a thing it is to "trample under foot the Son of God, and count his blood an unholy thing."

But while the salvation of none is made necessary, I rejoice that the salvation of *all* is made possible through

the poverty of our Lord. The most distant wanderer with whom the Spirit strives, may yet return. "Though your sins be as scarlet they may be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they may be as wool." Come, then, ye sinners, "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;" none but Jesus can relieve and enrich you. Ye who vainly toil for the unsatisfying, fleeting riches of earth, here you may *certainly* have heavenly, satisfying, and enduring treasures at small cost, even by "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." And ye that are athirst for happiness, who pant and pine for living streams, know ye not that "a fountain has been opened in the house of David?" It runs divinely clear and full—enough for all, enough for evermore. Come to these living, satisfying, purifying waters. "And he that hath no money, come," buy Christ's grace and heaven's riches, "without money and without price;" "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come;" and let him that heareth the glad sound, that "knoweth the grace," echo it to those that are afar off; let him "say, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life [the riches of Christ] freely."

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## SERMON XVII.

BY REV. WILLIAM I. ELLSWORTH.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

"Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God," 2 CORINTHIANS IV, 1, 2.

THE world has always acknowledged and professed a religion of some kind, and has always had its religious

teachers, both in the Church and in its schools of philosophy. In the patriarchal age, and before the organization of the Church proper, every father and head of a family was priest and religious instructor to the domestic household, and also presided over its religious devotions. During the Mosaic economy, prophets and priests were the appointed teachers of religion, and ministers of its sacred rites. But under the Gospel dispensation and in the Christian Church, "God gave some apostles and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

It is generally conceded that there were two classes of ministers in the Christian Church: the one extraordinary, and made up of apostles, prophets, and evangelists; the other ordinary, and consisting of pastors and teachers. It is also allowed that the office creating the extraordinary class of ministers, namely, apostles, prophets, and evangelists, has been done away, and that, consequently, they have no successors proper. But the office pertaining to the ordinary ministry, including pastors and teachers, is still continued in the Church, and that these are the only successors of the apostles, and stated ministers of the Church, who were to remain with the Church, to be her spiritual guides and teachers to the end of time.

In the further amplification of this subject we propose to show,

I. THAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO THE CHURCH A DIVINELY-INSTITUTED MINISTRY.

1. *The Christian minister is divinely called to his work.* The office of the Christian ministry is at once the most elevated and important trust to which men are called in this life. The Gospel minister is no less a personage than an ambassador of Christ—a spiritual plenipotentiary, sent out to treat with sinners, to proclaim God's terms of rec-

conciliation to them, and to beseech them, in his name, to accept his proffered mercy; a work that might

“Fill an angel’s heart,  
And filled a Savior’s hands.”

St. Paul says, “No man taketh this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.” When Christ would institute the Christian Church, he first called and commissioned the twelve apostles for the work of the ministry, and endued them with special gifts, and invested them with plenary authority to teach and disciple the nations, and to build up his kingdom in all the earth. Subsequently he ordained seventy others as ministers of his Gospel, and sent them out into all the cities and places whither he himself would come. And later still, he called and commissioned the apostle Paul to be a special minister to the Gentiles, and then gave him Timothy, and Titus, and others, to be sons in the Gospel. These, again, have been succeeded by others in the work of the ministry till now, and their successors will, doubtless, continue to the end of time—till the Jews shall be brought in with the fullness of the Gentiles, and the top-stone of the Church shall be laid upon it with the shouting of “Grace, grace unto it!” There is, however, considerable diversity of opinion in the Christian Church in regard to a call to the ministry. Some look upon it as a mere profession, that may be taken up or laid down at pleasure. Others, again, consider it a sacred and holy calling, to which they may be directed simply by the providence of God, and upon which a man may enter as the most promising field of usefulness that presents itself in this life. Again, other branches of the Church—and among them is the Methodist Episcopal Church—hold a Divine call to the ministry in a yet higher sense than the views named. We hold that, in addition to the indications of Providence, which seem to direct to the ministry, men are

inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel, and, accompanying these impressions of the Spirit, is a peculiar love to and ardent desire for the salvation of souls. Some go further still, and profess to hear supernatural voices, and to be called in dreams and visions of the night. We once heard a very good brother relate his call to the ministry after this manner. He said, after laboring a long time in a state of painful anxiety and doubt as to his call to the ministry, having retired late one night, after much prayer and meditation in relation to what was his duty, he fell into a sleep, when he had a very remarkable dream, the purport of which was, that he saw the Savior, who bade him go and preach his Gospel, and doubt no more. The vision awoke him, when, as he affirmed, his room was as light as though a candle had been burning in it. We know not how far the great Head of the Church may condescend to human weakness; but God's ordinary method should chiefly be relied on in determining the question of a call to the ministry. Furthermore, the minister thus called of God must be authorized and sent by the Church. The Church may not call a man to the work of the ministry; but it is her prerogative and duty formally to set him apart by ecclesiastical authority to preach the Gospel, and administer the sacraments, and take the pastoral oversight of the flock.

2. *The Christian minister is divinely qualified for his work.* The character and importance of the work itself would seem to require this—the work of saving souls. Certainly no merely human qualifications could fit men for so important, so momentous a work. This is eminently the work of the Spirit. It is his to convert, to sanctify, to set apart and endue with gifts and graces the minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. We would not disparage learning for a moment, but rather claim it as an important auxiliary; nor would we discourage the acquisition of exten-

sive and varied literary and scientific attainments where circumstances will permit it; but we would not, as some do, make it a *sine qua non*—an indispensable passport to the Christian ministry. On the other hand, we maintain that no man is prepared for the Christian ministry who is not divinely called and qualified. God has reserved to himself the right, in all ages, to choose and qualify his own ministers. We are not, however, to take it for granted, that a man will be qualified and made an able minister of the New Testament without personal application, without much study. He who said that he was taught the Gospel by the revelation of Jesus Christ, also said to Timothy, his son in the Gospel, “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” The Christian minister should not merely study to acquit himself well in the estimation of his fellow-men, but should endeavor so to study and to preach as to be approved of God, whose servant he is and whose work he is to perform. No minister, whether called from the ranks of the learned or from the less educated classes of society, should conclude his studies at an end when he enters the ministry, but rather just commenced. He should look upon the fields of science and theology as spread out before him for exploration and occupancy, and apply himself to the acquisition of all the knowledge he can attain to fit him for the work of saving souls and building up the Church of God. The Bible should be his principal text-book, and should be carefully read and studied, that he may bring from its rich stores the precious truths of life, and from its crystal fountains the waters of salvation, with which to irrigate and fertilize the heritage of the Lord. If there ever was a time when ministers of the Gospel should stand up in defense of the plain, the pure and unsophisticated doctrines of the Christian religion, it is

now. Infidelity is not dead; it is alive and active, but masked. It is no less hostile to the pure doctrines of the Gospel now than heretofore, but has simply changed its mode of attack. It now waives a direct warfare, and resorts to strategy. It even subscribes to the Christian Scriptures, but puts an entirely new gloss upon them, and by philosophizing would make them teach another religion—a religion unknown to the apostles, the fathers, and Church of Christ. Every minister of the Gospel, therefore, should be prepared to detect and expose the sophisms and poisoned potations of these masked enemies of our common faith, and maintain uncorrupted the pure word of God.

3. *The Gospel minister is divinely sustained in his work.* "Having received mercy," says the apostle, "we faint not." Christ never claimed that the office of the Christian ministry was a sinecure, or that his ministers would not be called to toil and to suffer, but the reverse. No class of men have been called to endure so much as the ministers of religion. They have often periled every earthly interest, and even life itself, for the truth, and have stood up in defense of religion when its enemies would have trampled it in the dust, or shouted its overthrow, and swept it from the earth as with the besom of destruction. But in the midst and above the noise of the winds and waves of persecution, has been distinctly heard, by the ministers of the cross, the voice of Jesus, "My grace is sufficient for you," and, "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world." With these cheering promises before St. Paul and his co-laborers, we do not wonder that he should exclaim, in the midst of all his sufferings, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of

God." And similar is the language of every true minister of Christ. The promised presence of the Savior and the supports of his grace will cheer and sustain the hearts of his servants to the end of time.

The planting of Christianity was the time to try men's souls. The apostles and first ministers of the Gospel literally forsook all to follow Christ, and, with their lives in their hands, went forth to preach, and convert the world. They had to encounter the stern and deeply-rooted prejudices of the Jews on the one hand and the errors and superstitions of the Pagans on the other. Long and fearful was the conflict between the power of truth and error, of light and darkness; and, as the spiritual warfare went on, the hand of persecution was uplifted to chastise and destroy. The arm of the civil power, too, was invoked, and dungeon, lash, faggot, beasts of prey, and rack were employed, as instruments of torture and death, to cut down the heralds of the cross, and stay the onward progress of the Christian religion. But the Lord was present to sustain and uphold his ministers. True, they suffered much during the ten successive persecutions, and not a few of them sealed the truth with their own blood; but even these became the seed of the Church. When Paul was sentenced by the cruel Nero to die, he did not shrink from his fate, but wrote from his prison to Timothy, his son in the Gospel, informing him of the fact, and assuring him that he was fully prepared for the solemn event. How triumphant his language on the occasion: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." In every period of the Church's history God has made good his promise to be with his ministers to the end of the world.

Witness the protection of Luther and his co-laborers, of Wesley and his co-laborers, and of all true ministers in every age. Were not the ministers of Christ divinely sustained they must long since have abandoned the conversion of the world as a hopeless task, and have fainted in their work; but divine grace is still vouchsafed his faithful servants.

II. THIS TEXT TEACHES US THAT THE MINISTERS OF CHRIST ARE SINCERE AND FAITHFUL.

These are important elements of ministerial character. How necessary that Gospel ministers occupy a high and commanding position in piety and Christian fidelity! They are not only the spiritual teachers, but pastors and guides of the flock of Christ. Should they be insincere or unfaithful, the souls of the people must be endangered, and the cause suffer. But the true ministers of Christ are trustworthy.

1. *“They have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty.”* “The things of dishonesty,” says Matthew Henry, “are hidden things that will not bear the light, and of which men are ashamed.” The apostle Paul claimed, in behalf of himself and his ministerial brethren, that they had renounced these—that they walked not in them. The term honesty, in its common acceptation, means fair dealing; but we are to understand it, in this connection, in a wider sense. The apostle and his co-laborers not only observed the strictest principles of fairness in their business intercourse with society, but they carefully shunned those hidden or secret evil practices in which the false teachers and wicked men indulged, but who endeavored to make a show of innocence and external purity before the world. Every minister of Christ should make it a matter of conscience to be pure in all the privacies of life, and to be open and fair in all his dealings and intercourse with the world and with his brethren. There is in this a principle

indispensable to virtue and morality—a principle which should ever distinguish the Christian minister. We must not permit ourselves, as Christians or Christian ministers, to do that which we would condemn in others. Nay, more: we should be patterns of the strictest virtue and holiness; we should keep at such a distance from breaking the law, that we may not, as some of the Jewish rabbins say, “even touch the hedge that guards it;” we should *abstain* not only from *evil*, but from the very *appearance* of it, and, in the language of another, “sometimes even deny ourselves that liberty which conscience, perhaps, allows, if the indulgence would offend a weak brother and obstruct our usefulness; we must exceed the highest measure of holiness which we propose to our people, or which we wish them to possess; for whatever we are, they will think they may safely fall short of it by many degrees, so exalted are the notions which are generally formed of ministerial sanctity.” And may I not add, that, as Methodist ministers and sons of Wesley, we should wholly consecrate ourselves to God, and seek to attain the highest state of Christian experience, and to enjoy the richest measure of divine grace. Our creed embraces it, and our Discipline enjoins it, as well as the word of God.

2. “*They walked not in craftiness.*” The term craftiness means acting with cunning and art. Dr. A. Clarke thinks the apostle intended this rebuke for the false teachers, who, he says, were accomplished fellows, and capable of any thing. It would have been fortunate for the Church and for religion if there had been no ministers of cunning and craft since the days of the apostles—men who have not hesitated to resort to every species of artifice to accomplish selfish or party ends. Witness the conduct of many of the Catholic clergy, especially the Jesuits.

Protestant ministers, too, have sometimes stooped from the dignity of their station to the practice condemned by

the apostle. A low system of proselytism has been resorted to, and attempts made to build up one denomination at the expense of another equally pious, and often more so. So did not the apostles; and such is not the proper work of a Christian minister; his mission is to the world, to sinners. These are to be faithfully plied with the truths of the Gospel; their sinfulness, their guilt, and their danger pressed upon the conscience on the one hand, and the promises of pardon, of sanctification, and the hopes of the Gospel on the other hand; and, by all fair and honorable means, endeavor to win souls to Christ, even plucking them as brands from the burning. Furthermore: a resort to cunning, or craft, or worldly policy, to proselyte men to the Christian faith, or to bring them within the pale of any branch of the Christian Church, is of doubtful expediency, if not positively sinful, and will not be indulged by any minister who fully understands the nature and responsibilities of his calling.

3. "*They handled not the word of God deceitfully.*" They used great plainness of speech, and did not make their ministry serve a turn or truckle to base designs. They did not teach the people falsehood for truth, nor preach to them what they themselves did not believe. Some think the apostle alludes to the deceit used by treacherous gamesters, or that of hucksters in the market, who mixed bad wares with good. The apostles did not imitate these persons; they attempted no deception; but preached the truth, the whole truth, fearlessly and faithfully.

There are many ways in which the word of God may be handled deceitfully: 1. This is done when writings are proclaimed as the word of God that have not the stamp of Divine authority, such as the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, which are claimed by the Romish Church as part and parcel of the revealed will of God. 2. This is

done when human traditions or opinions of the fathers are mixed up with the word of God, and palmed off as revealed truth, or of paramount authority with the word of God. 3. This is done when the word of God is wrested from its plain and obvious meaning to sustain favorite theories or serve selfish purposes or party ends. 4. This is done when a part of the truth, or that which is believed to be truth, is concealed or kept in the background because unpopular. No minister may assume the province, in his instructions to the people, to withhold any part of the revealed will or purpose of God to men, and especially that portion of it which relates to their personal salvation. 5. This is done when the truth of God is modified and tempered to suit the tastes and wishes of the fastidious. There is a strong temptation at the present day to induce ministers of the Gospel to preach to please their auditors, especially where the minister is gifted with popular talents, a fine voice, and winning manner. Many have itching ears, and can only be satisfied with something novel or something very fine; and such, too, are ever ready to praise the preacher and applaud the sermon that happens to please their fancy. Few ministers are impervious to human praise. The strains of adulation fall so softly and so sweetly upon the ear, that even the best-intentioned are not insensible to their influence. But let the minister of the Gospel be careful how he preaches and what he preaches. He preaches not himself, nor for himself, but for his God and souls. Let him see to it that guilt be not upon his conscience, nor the blood of souls on his skirts at the great day of reckoning.

4. *And finally, the apostles preached so as to commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.* That was a faithful ministry. They did not stop to inquire whether the truths they preached would please the fancy or suit the tastes of their hearers; but would they

reach the conscience? would they leave the impression indelibly fixed upon the mind, these are the truths of God, and these are the true ministers of Christ? So should every minister preach.

“Shall I, to soothe th’ unholy throng,  
Soften thy truth, or smooth my tongue,  
To gain earth’s gilded toys, or flee  
The cross endured, my Lord, by thee?

What, then, is he whose scorn I dread?  
Whose wrath or hate makes me afraid?  
A man! an heir of death! a slave  
To sin! a bubble on the wave!”

All sensible men, whether religious or not, will approve the minister who preaches the truth fearlessly, faithfully, and earnestly. Candid men always expect fidelity in the pulpit, and a zeal suited to the importance of the cause.

It is said of Governor Morris, one of the early governors of the state of Pennsylvania, that having heard a sermon from a minister who was an applicant for a chaplaincy, he was afterward in a private company where the sermon was much eulogized, and being asked for his opinion of its merits, very promptly replied that it did not suit him at all, though a fine discourse. “It was,” said he, “too smooth, too tame and spiritless,” and then added, that he liked that kind of preaching best that would drive him up into the corner of his pew, and make him feel as though the devil was after him. It is the preaching that plies the conscience, and deals with the heart, that will move men to penitence and prayer, and bring them to God.

Such was the character of the early Methodist ministry, and such is the general character of our ministry still. And I most devoutly pray that we may ever retain this feature of early Methodism in the ministry of the Church. One of the most distinguished divines of the present century has characterized Methodism, “Christianity in earnest.” And why is she such? Principally because she

has always had an earnest, faithful ministry. See the fathers of our itinerancy going forth to the conversion of the new world—a noble and Herculean task. They encountered the lukewarmness of the Churches, on the one hand, and the infidelity and wickedness of the world, on the other, and the deep-rooted prejudices of both combined. But success crowned their ministry. Like true successors of the apostles, they traversed the states and territories of this great republic from Maine to Louisiana, and from the lakes of the north to the Carolinas. They scaled its mountains, crossed its plains, swam its rivers, and preached the Gospel in the midst of its forests, and, with Bible, Hymn-Book, Discipline, and a few clothes in portmanteaus, kept pace with the advancing tide of population, and turned the moral wilderness into a fruitful field, and made many portions of it as the garden of the Lord.

To conclude: we would exhort those who may chance to read this discourse, to remember the fathers in the ministry—the sainted dead of our Church—not to pray for them, or weep over them, but to cherish their memories; to think of their noble deeds, their self-denial, living piety, burning zeal, and unremitted toil, and, as far as may be, imitate their example. But especially should we remember their widows and orphan children, who are still with us. And we should remember those, too, who have outlived their generations, and still continue with us as representatives of an age gone by, whom we occasionally greet in the annual conferences, and whose venerable forms, whitened locks, and furrowed cheeks tell us of the wastes of time and former toil. They well deserve our affectionate regard, and a comfortable support in the autumn of life from the Church they have so faithfully served.

## SERMON XVIII.

BY REV. JOHN W. FOWBLE.

THE CERTAINTY OF PROPHECY.

“For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry,” HABAKKUK II, 3.

THE argument in favor of the inspiration of the Scriptures, drawn from the fulfillment of prophecy, is plain and convincing. To us, poor mortals, it may, with great propriety, be said: “Ye know not what a day may bring forth.” Let the most gifted of men be placed, at the dawn of a cloudless morning, upon some lofty eminence, whence an extensive prospect may open on all sides; from this point of observation let him narrowly scan each object of heaven and earth, within view; let him carefully mark every indication, and, beside, let him be placed in instantaneous communication with other favored individuals, in every part of the world, and yet, with all these advantages, and the history of each preceding day, since the commencement of time, spread out before him, he can not, with any degree of certainty, predict, at morn, what shall be at even. With all his boasted abilities he can not penetrate the future. To him it is dark and void.

Far otherwise was it with those men who spoke of the future “as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” We hear them, in the language of the prophetic Scriptures, predicting events improbable to human reason, and even in opposition to it, which, centuries afterward, met their accomplishment so minutely, and so fully, as to leave no room to doubt that infinite Prescience alone could have seen and revealed them to men. The antecedence of the

prophecy, and the consequence of the events being established, we are compelled to acknowledge the hand of God in them. Such is the unyielding strength of that foundation upon which the word of the Lord rests. Standing on this rock the Christian triumphantly says :

“Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan his work in vain;  
God is his own interpreter,  
And he will make it plain.”

The text suggests the following proposition :

THAT THE PURPOSES OF GOD, THOUGH APPARENTLY LONG DELAYED, WILL INEVITABLY MEET THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENT.

In the first place, let us illustrate this proposition.

For this purpose we will select an individual in a remote age of the world. An account of this remarkable man, and of the events of his history, which shed light upon our subject, is given in the inspired book. We turn to the twelfth chapter of Genesis. “Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

These passages contain two distinct promises, or two prophetic declarations. God here engages to bestow upon Abraham, and his posterity, great national distinction, and special religious privileges. This is the first promise. The second relates to a period more remote, and to the bestowment of blessings more exalted in their nature, and extensive in their compass—“In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” The Gospel is here preached to Abraham. These are the purposes of God, revealed to the patriarch. Now let us inquire into the *manner* and *period* of their accomplishment.

The first step, in the order of divine Providence, for the fulfillment of this first promise, is to lead the patriarch out from his own land and kindred. Abraham is henceforth to be a wanderer and a pilgrim in a strange land. St. Stephen says, "God gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on," Acts vii, 5. To us it would seem that this order was calculated to defeat the declared purpose of God. What a strange road to family distinction and national pre-eminence! But this act is full of instruction. The Church is henceforth to be distinct from the world—a community of itself. The beginning of sanctification is to separate from evil.

Let us pursue this promise toward its accomplishment. Other seeming difficulties arise; the future becomes more dark. Not only does the "heir of the promise" find himself a stranger and pilgrim of the wilderness, but at nearly one hundred years of age, with a wife also far advanced in life, he is yet childless. To human reason the fulfillment of the promise was almost impossible; to the divine Mind it was absolutely certain. The Lord's ways are not as our ways. At ninety years of age Sarah bears a son. Abraham is no longer childless. One ray of light falls upon the darkened pathway of the patriarch. Years pass away, and the child grows in stature, and in the confidence and affection of his parents.

Let us again turn to our history. And God said to Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." If ever mortal man was challenged to reject the counsel of the Almighty, it was in this instance. Every consideration of affection, honor, and justice seemed to say, this must not, can not be. Affection for children must, in every believing parent, be strong and enduring as life. But in this instance it was

such as only an Abraham could feel toward an Isaac. And yet *faith* triumphed. Abraham rose up early in the morning, and with his son and servants, and the cloven wood, set forward to the mount of sacrifice. Arriving, he builded the altar, laid the wood upon it, bound his unresisting son, and had lifted up the bloody knife for slaughter, when the angel of God interposed, saying, "Lay not thy hand upon the lad!" It was enough; his faith was perfect; he loved God with all his heart.

Years roll on, and every year tends to "ripen" the purpose of God. Abraham and Sarah, having closed the long and painful pilgrimage of life, are now quietly sleeping, side by side, in the sepulcher of the field of Machpelah. The posterity of Abraham, in the family of his grandson—Jacob—has increased to the number of seventy and five souls. All-consuming famine overspreads the land. There is no corn, and death threatens, at once and forever, to thwart the purpose of God declared in prophecy. By providences, mysteriously afflictive, the whole family are forced into Egypt. They live, prosper, multiply. Oppressive jealousy lifts its iron scourge over their heads. Chains of servitude are fastened upon them. They are slaves! O, how the doubting skeptic now, for a time, triumphs! Where is the promise of his coming? Where the national pre-eminence promised the posterity of Abraham? Hold thy peace, doubting one, "for the vision is yet for an appointed time; in the end it shall speak and not lie; it will surely come; it will not tarry."

The cry of distress filled all the land—rose up to heaven and entered the ear of God. It was not only heard, but heeded. Jehovah came down, brought his people out of bondage, with a high hand and mighty arm led them, "dry shod," through the midst of the Red Sea, and then buried, forever, the persecutors and oppressors of his Church.

The star of promise now brightens in the firmament of prophecy. The seed of Abraham are now marching toward Canaan; but new disasters await them. They are yet to be proved. They enter the wilderness, from which, alas! but few are ever to escape. For forty years the conflict between the unbelief of the people and the truth of God continues. Failing to allure them onward by benevolence and mercy, Jehovah swears in his wrath, that they shall not enter into that rest. A new generation grows up and takes the place of those, doomed, through unbelief, to lay their bones in the solitude of the wilderness. The time of the promise draws nigh. The cup of the Amorites is full. The memorial of the faith and obedience of Abraham is yet present to the divine Mind. The "end" of the vision is at hand. For nearly five hundred years the purposes of God have been maturing, and now we see a large army of men, women, and children approaching the eastern bank of Jordan. Who are these, and whence come they? These are the children of the solitary and childless wanderer of the wilderness; and they come from Egypt, from Hara, from Ur of Chaldea. They enter and possess the land, the word of the Lord is magnified, and the purpose of the Almighty, though so long delayed, is at length accomplished.

But the promise of God to Abraham included other, remote, and yet more extensive blessings. "In thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed;" "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ," Galatians iii, 16. Earlier and fainter manifestations of this great truth had, indeed, been given to mankind. Long prior to this time it had been predicted, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." But now, that the Church is located in a single family, and is distinguished by peculiar marks and signs, we are led to look, in a certain direction, for the

accomplishment of this glorious prediction. God promises the world a Savior; that promise he never forgets, nor does any event in the great plans of his moral government diverge from the leading intention of Divine benevolence, in the redemption of man by the Lord Jesus Christ. But how many and sad the reverses that happened to God's people, during the "waiting of this vision," for four thousand years!

We see them in the wilderness; we see them in captivity, spoiled by rapacious conquerors, and corrupted by idolatrous rulers; their towns and cities despoiled, sacked, pillaged, and burned; the country overrun by hordes of implacable barbarians. Babylon, and Syria, and Egypt, and Philistia, in turn, are engaged in spoiling the heritage of the Church. By Babel's streams, companies of captive Jews are seen touching their harps of sorrow, and weeping, in anguish, over the desolations of Judea and Jerusalem! But yet, at length, though torn, and scathed, and persecuted, they come up out of the wilderness, leaning upon the arm of their beloved. After a long night of darkness the star out of Jacob arose; the deliverer came to Israel. "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," Galatians iv, 4, 5. The purpose of God is accomplished; the world has a Savior. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

Having illustrated the proposition in the bearing of these prophecies, let us now, in the second place, *apply* it.

God can not change. "He is the same yesterday, today, and forever." He continues to govern the world in righteousness and truth. The Lord's word, upon earth, is yet but partly perfected; much yet remains to be fulfilled. But the Christian, planting his feet upon the im-

movable foundation of prophecy, looks forward, in glorious hope, to the future and full revelations of the mercy and power of God. Let us contemplate a few leading events, shadowed forth in the prophetic Scriptures, which are yet to be accomplished.

First. The destruction of idolatry and false religion.

Whatever system denies to Jesus Christ the excellency and splendor of his offices and character, robs the divine Being of his sovereign authority and rule, or corrupts the spiritual and effective simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus, is Antichrist. This power is marked by various characteristics in the word of God. It has long been in the world, and will hinder and interrupt the pure doctrines of Christ, till it be taken out of the way. The same inspired finger that writes its characteristics upon leaves of Scripture, in that same Scripture predicts its destruction. The day of doom is fast approaching; no power on earth can arrest it. Though now, for a time, this system of lies and blasphemy may prosper so as to alarm the fears of many pious Christians, the prayers of the souls under the altar, crying, "How long?" are entering into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Sudden, fearful, and complete will be her overthrow. Like a great millstone shall she be cast down, to rise no more forever. Then shall heaven and earth resound the acclamation, "Halleluiah, halleluiah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

Again: the Scriptures predict the spread of the Gospel to all nations, and the approach of the day when the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the great deep of ocean. This event may be long delayed; corruption may roll, like a flood of desolation, on the world; God may be denied, and religion subjected to universal contempt and opposition; yet the eye of faith steadily contemplates the triumph of truth. "As I live, saith the Lord God, every knee shall bow to me, and every

tongue shall confess to God," Romans xiv, 11. Jesus Christ has put into the mouths of his praying followers the sentence, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done *in earth*, as it is done in heaven!" That prayer will be answered; how and when, are questions we do not now attempt to explain; but the event itself is certain. The wicked shall not always triumph; all of earth shall feel the renovating hand of God. The tempest of evil having passed by, then shall the bow of endless peace span the moral firmament. Eden's innocence, and Eden's happiness shall then be restored in that new heaven and new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell.

But, further: the word of the Lord predicts the resurrection of the human body, and the final judgment of the world.

Skeptics may still tauntingly inquire, "How are the dead raised up? and with what bodies do they come?" This can not be; it is unphilosophical, absurd, and impossible. All this shakes not our faith. Was Jesus raised from the dead? Let the witnesses be heard! Did he rise? Answer, ye millions, in whose hearts the Holy Ghost witnesses this fact. His resurrection is the model and pledge of ours. "Christ, the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

But we shall be judged. "We must *all* appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works," Revelation xx, 12, 13. What a scene will then be presented! Can imagination picture its overwhelming realities? The dead of all ages are here—kings and mighty men, the

aged patriarch, the seer, the apostles, martyrs, and all the witnesses of Jesus. And the wicked are here—the proud, the persecutor, the vile, the infidel, skeptic *man* is here, and he is here for judgment for heaven or hell! That judgment has its issues. They are life and death. They are eternal, unchangeable, limitless. “Come, ye blessed,” and “Depart, ye cursed,” are the final sentences which shall, on the one hand, fill with rapture, or, on the other, drive to desperation. In God’s holy book, salvation or damnation is regarded as the inevitable doom of each and all.

The subject is full of terror to the wicked. His day is coming. Now he may sport with eternal things, and laugh at the idea of coming vengeance, but it steadily approaches. O, sinner, haste for thy life; haste to Jesus!

But the Christian is interested too deeply to forget it. To him it will be the end of care, and trouble, and sin. Both events are certain. God hath said it. The prediction can not fail. It must meet its final accomplishment. Christian reader, endure unto the end and thou shalt have a crown of life. Amen.

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## SERMON XIX.

BY REV. ASBURY LOWREY.

THE PROFOUND PRAYER.

“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God,”  
EPHESIANS III, 16-19.

THIS is, perhaps, the most comprehensive, vigorous, and deeply-spiritual prayer ever uttered even by inspired lips. The power of a mighty intellect, the energy of a cultivated

style, the afflatus of plenary inspiration, the fertility of a sanctified imagination, and the sweetness and fervor of a holy heart are here concentrated in one mighty effort to evolve the most lofty, most profound, and most transcendently-glorious thoughts. No man, unless God had breathed upon him, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," could ascend to such sublime heights in divinity, and flash around him such a blaze of glory. In this remarkable prayer, which expresses the essence and plenitude of religion, there are specifications of the blessings implored, of the agent and instrument by which they are to be communicated, of the measure according to which he would have them conferred, and of the great end for which he covets their bestowment.

1. The first cardinal blessing implored is *strength*; thus expressed: "That he would grant you . . . to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." It is not physical nor intellectual strength; but moral power; the power of faith; the power of love; the invincible power of holiness. That such is the power pleaded for, is deducible from the agent which communicates it—*the Spirit*. Physical strength may be augmented by material nourishment and corporeal exercise; and intellectual strength may be vastly increased by scientific culture and intense methodical thinking; but the spiritual man can not expand or strengthen his powers by any such appliances, because the moral faculties, in unregenerate nature, are not merely suspended in their exercise, but are *dead*. The Holy Ghost, a creative energy, must resuscitate and breathe life into them before moral power becomes an attribute of the man. In every stage of spiritual improvement, from inception to maturity, it is the appropriate function of the Holy Spirit to generate life and strength in the soul. Indeed, the Holy Ghost is the only efficient, quickening, renewing, invigorating agent in the world of

mind. The whole executive department in the kingdom of grace belongs to him, and every encouraging aspect in the moral world is directly traceable to his agency. He empowers conscience, begets love, implants hope, and inspires the energy to believe. That it is spiritual strength pleaded for, is further deducible from the nature of the substance which is the recipient of it. This is designated as the inner man, that is, the soul, which is pure spirit; the immaterial in our composition; the seat, and only seat, of moral power. Hence, if there be any adaptation of means to ends in the plans and operations of God, the strength implored must be spiritual, as the appropriate work of the agent is to communicate this species of power, and the capacity of the recipient will admit of strength in no other sense. That the "inner man" is powerless in its unregenerate state, is the uniform doctrine of Scripture. This is clearly implied in the numerous passages in which the human family are declared to be *dead*. It is involved in all those texts which affirm man's inability to do any work acceptable to God without supernatural aid, and in those passages in which men are described as alienated from God and imprisoned by sin and Satan. But the doctrine is specifically asserted in the words following: "For when we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly;" without strength to change the bias and tendency of our own natures toward evil; without strength to overcome the world and resist the grand adversary of the soul; without strength to check the fury and control the irregularities of our passions. This is the state to which sin reduced us—the state in which the redeeming blood and strengthening Spirit found us. But the text comprises a prayer for strength which is based upon the glorious truth that, as the atonement provides for it, the Holy Ghost is competent to speak the might of God into our spiritual being; and in so great a measure, too, that every

unruly passion is subdued; that every inordinate desire is quenched; that every wild, unchaste imagination is controlled; that every wandering affection is restrained; and that every temptation, whether it spring from the lurking vestiges of the carnal mind within, or the perverseness of the world without, or the devices of Satan beneath, is resisted, and the vestments of the soul are preserved "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Nor is the strength of the inner man without its perceptible manifestations. Like the electric fluid that plays along the wires, it speaks in significant language across the world. Like the compressed steam, it moves a complex machinery. Like the insinuating water, it sets a mountain avalanche in motion.

Will you have instances of might in the inner man? What empowered Daniel to visit his chamber and kneel with his windows open toward Jerusalem, and pray three times a day to his God, in cool defiance of the infamous decree which doomed every one to the lion's den who should dare to ask a petition of any being, except Darius, the King, for the space of thirty days? What qualified the apostle Paul to defend himself before haughty Roman dignitaries with such noble, commanding eloquence, unmoved by prospective torture and a violent death? These things were not done by the strength of mind or muscle, but by the unconquerable "might of the inner man." We have countless instances in the triumphant Christian deaths chronicled every year in the history of the Church. There is a delicate, timid female, so diffident that she startles at the sound of her own voice in public, and trembles, turns pale, and faints at the slightest prospect of danger. Death approaches. She views it as the call of her heavenly Father to pass away to her real home; whereupon she takes a friendly leave of earth; then sets her face toward her native skies, and walks, with a firm

and steady tread, through the valley and shadow of death, while cheerful hopes and smiles sit undisturbed upon her sweet, seraphic brow. How shall we account for this strange conjunction of fortitude and timidity, except it be on the principle that the Holy Ghost had inspired her with "might in the inner man?"

2. The second blessing supplicated is, the *indwelling of Christ*; thus expressed: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Faith institutes union between Christ and the soul. It is a bond so strong, a grace of the heart so acceptable and winning in the sight of God himself, that it brings Christ into the soul, and detains him there, not as a transient guest, but as a permanent resident. Faith serves two purposes in this uniting process. First, it sets the heart in order, making it a habitation of God, through the Spirit; then it soars heavenward, and, exerting its giant power with the Supreme, prevails upon Christ to accept its occupancy and reign over the empire of our spiritual being. This works a splendid revolution. The dark, heaven-insulting usurpation of Satan is subverted, and a new government over the heart is established; Christ is enthroned in the affections; he sits there as a sceptered monarch, guiding the soul to a glorious destiny. Now he pervades the passions, quickens the hopes, and breathes the hallowing ardors of divinity into the devotions. He proves his supremacy and cements his subjects to himself by his incomparable administration. It is benign, universal, and all-controlling. Do commotions arise? he says, "Peace, be still!" Do enemies attack? he says, "Thus far shalt thou come, but no farther." Does death approach, clad in terror, and the grave send up her legion of specters? we hear him say, "O death, I will be thy plague! O grave, I will be thy destruction! repentance is hid from my eyes." This mystic indwelling of Christ is a generic blessing, com-

prising all the elements of the interior life. The instant the coalition takes place we become partakers of the Divine nature; his quickening energy pervades our whole being; we are full of Christ. And it is when we stand upon the summit-level of such vast experience that our life is hid with Christ in God, and the apostolic acclaim tells the story of our victories, and indicates the onward and upward march of the soul: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It must be conceded the mode of Christ's being in the soul is mysterious and incomprehensible. But we can not discard the doctrine on this account without taking a position that would land in universal skepticism. We can not comprehend how we live in the air and the air exists in us; nor how, by inhaling the atmosphere, it is decomposed and its constituent elements transmuted into the different substances of the physical system; yet we admit the facts. So Christ dwells in our hearts, augmenting the energies of the "inner man" with his own nature; but the mode of his being therein, and the process of communicating his strength to the spiritual faculties lie beyond our comprehension. It is spirit embracing spirit; the finite in coalition with the Infinite; God and man communing and co-existing together by faith on our part. This fact we know by revelation's beaming light and the soul's sweet experience, while the manner is locked up in the arcana of mystery, and belongs to the ways which are past finding out. Nor should we complain because a veil is spread between us and this holy of holies. The joy is ours, the purity is ours, all the resulting benefits, now and forever, are ours.

3. The apostle extends his prayer thus: "That ye may be rooted and grounded in love." This may be regarded as the result of the indwelling of Christ—a deep, permanent stability in love. The apostle labors to utter

the profound thought by a double metaphor—one taken from vegetation, the other from architecture. The first allusion is to the majestic forest-tree, which, with towering trunk and spacious branches, has resisted the storms of a hundred winters and the war of a thousand tempests. To acquire such firmness, the Christian must be rooted deeply in the soil of love. If you would feel the force of the illustration, look at the proud tree, whose top penetrates the skies, and whose far-reaching branches and matted foliage seem to challenge and defy the broad sweep and united forces of the tornado. To what shall we ascribe this surprising power of resistance? Plainly to the circumstance that it is so curiously and philosophically rooted in the solid earth as to secure every mechanical advantage. The roots are long, interlaced, full of sprigs, extending in every direction, and deeply imbedded in the dense earth. Here lies the secret of its strength; fit emblem of the Christian confirmed in love; fit symbol of his power to resist the antagonistic influences of earth and hell. Why is he able to rule his own spirit, despite its turbulence and tendency to wrong? to overcome the world with all its perverseness? to repel and foil Satan with all his crafty devices? The secret of his moral power lies not in the high order of his talents, nor in the extent of his literary acquisitions, but in the glorious reality that he is rooted. Before such a giant spirit the most enraged and furious enemy is subdued, the colossal structure of infidelity melts away like snow beneath a burning sun, and frowning Death is dismantled of his terrors, while the soul passes its somber gates and rides away to its empyrean destination. Moreover, the metaphor teaches that the soul has a vegetative substance in love. This is the source of its nutrition—the means of its growth. In this nourishing element he strikes deep his powers and affections, and grows up in knowledge, holiness, and bliss, till

he vies with archangels in sweetest charms and moral grandeur. Indeed, the whole Christian life may be styled a growing process. The soil is love, the green tree is holiness, the ripe fruit is glory.

The apostle expands the idea by borrowing an illustration from architecture, seemingly anxious that nature and art should be vocal with his theme—"grounded in love." Here the feature of stability receives still greater prominence. The Christian is likened to a structure needing a firm foundation—a foundation laid deep in love. As the strength and firmness of the foundation give durability and permanence to the superstructure, so the love of Christ, as the basis of the temple of Christian character, imparts a fixedness to the principles, purposes, and habits. Moreover, as a solid foundation is the grand security against the war of elements and the wasting impressions of time, so being grounded in love is the unfailling preservative against apostasy. A temple of Christian character, having such a foundation, is proof against the winds of adversity, the fires of persecution, and the pernicious touch of worldly and satanic influences. In darkness and tempest he can sing, "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High."

Another effect of the indwelling of Christ is to render him who is so blessed competent to comprehend, with all saints, the vast amplitude of the love of Christ. Here the imagination is lost in the illimitable fullness. The apostle does not attempt to trace its boundaries, and yet his language indicates that the Christian has a capacity, in some sense, to compass its dimensions. Let us attempt

the admeasurement and comprehension: First, its breadth. It has a lateral extension. It is as broad in redeeming influences as the habitable earth, which has been mapped out by the pencil of God as the probationary home and range of men. If you travel over each hemisphere, explore the ocean, touch every isle of the sea, and visit every spot where the voice of man has been heard, or his footprints seen, you are still within the compass of Christ's love. It is the girdle, the vesture, the atmosphere of earth. Like the sun, whose mellow light pours along the boundaries of the globe, the love of Christ is a universal, a world-wide blessing. You may pass the limits of Christendom, and of civilization, but the limits of his love you can not pass. Indeed, as infinite love is the grand provisional element in redemption, its sweep must not be bounded by the confines of this world. It is coextensive with the empire of glory. It is as broad as the fields of light, which the redeemed range in their beatified state. In short, the breadth of this love can only be measured by the inconceivable spread of infinity. It spans the ocean of immensity.

Look at another phase of the subject—its "length." The love of Christ has its pre-existence and its perpetuity. But where shall we commence or close our reckonings of either? Where, in the dateless calendar of eternity past, shall we chronicle its birth? Begin with its placid flow in thy soul, and trace this river to its source—trace it through the Christian Church, then travel up through the wilderness of the prophetic period, and the deeper shades of the patriarchal dispensation. There pause and witness its first outgushings, in earth's direction, at the fall and alienation of man. Then pass on beyond the period when man was created, and the still more remote day when the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy over infant creations in their purity and prime.

Then ascend still higher, to that far-distant age when God lit up the first intelligent spirit to move and flame in sublime loneliness in unoccupied regions of space. Then penetrate the bosom of the Godhead, and calculate the pre-existence of Christ, whose history is coeval with eternity, and you will have a faint idea of the beginning of his love. But this process leads you backward in the measurement of Christ's love, till you are lost in eternity past. And could you compass its origin, your work is but half done. The length of his love comprises all eternity to come. The atonement of Christ has swept out a channel in the hearts of men and the territories of the moral world for his love to flow on, rising and spreading, till the blast of Gabriel's trumpet shall wind up the history of time. And thereafter the fidelity of God will force it to glide on, swelling the tide and expanding the ocean of bliss, for those who have complied with Gospel requisitions, as long as spirits exist, whose being is measured by immortality.

Another aspect—its “depth.” The love of Christ has its depth—its profound, unfathomable depth. The ocean has its depth, the concave of heaven has its depth, but the love of Christ is immeasurably deeper than either. We can only calculate its profundity by its downward reachings to secure man from his abyss of misery and danger. In this light contemplate it. See Jesus above the skies; above the highest shining orb; above the higher range of angels, quite in the third heavens, seated on his throne of light and holiness. From thence he reaches down an arm of love. It passes the foot of the throne; it passes the sphere of angels; it passes the orbs in the visible heavens; it stops not till it impresses its hallowing touch, and exerts its plastic power, upon our sin-defaced earth. It stops not even here, but in its downward reachings fathoms the abyssmal depths of our depravity, and

in its redeeming provisions and schemes of rescue, descends as deep as hell. If, then, we are not all fated to the depths of perdition, it is because the more than equal depths of Christ's love have snatched us thence.

Another phase—its "hight." But how shall we measure its altitude, except by its provisional privileges, which deluge earth, crowd the sky, and gush up into heaven? There is nothing equaling its hight but the throne of the Infinite. Judge of its hight by the exalted relations to which it promotes you. By it, you are made kings and priests with God, and companions of angels. The Church of the first-born, and the spirits of just men made perfect, are your kindred. Indeed, there is not a spirit, human or angelic, basking in the pure sunlight of heaven, to whom you do not bear affinity and honorable relationship. Judge of its hight by the immense rewards which it bestows. They are nothing less than a crown of life, an eternal weight of glory, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Measure its hight by the transcendent moral sanctity which it confers—a pure heart, a new nature, death to sin, fruit unto holiness, crucifixion to the world, a life hid with Christ in God. Judge of its hight by heaven's supreme felicities, to which it leads. These are indicated by every variety of expression and figure; as, for instance, "Enter into the joy of the Lord;" "For they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;" "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also;" "That they may behold my glory;" "Who shall change our vile body, and fashion it like unto his own glorious body;" "For when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye

also appear with him in glory." Grandeur hights language can not paint, nor mind conceive.

Now notice the final supplication: "That ye may be filled with all the fullness of God." This petition crowns the comprehensive and significant prayer. It is a perfection. A great author remarks: "Among all the great sayings in this prayer, this is the greatest. To be filled with God is a great thing; to be filled with the fullness of God is greater; but to be filled with all the fullness of God utterly bewilders the sense and confounds the imagination." Beyond all controversy, it is a prayer for perfection in the largest sense; a prayer, that the soul may attain the highest possible enlargement, under spiritual influence; a prayer, that the soul might be filled with the whole number and variety of gifts and graces that compose the Christian character; a prayer for perfection, in the sense of maturity and ripeness of those gifts; and, finally, a prayer that this state of mind, so divine and exalted, may flow on and flow out, according to the measure and progress of our being in eternity and the provisions of Christ in heaven. The soul is like an elastic substance. Sin acts upon it as a refrigerant—contracting, shriveling its powers, and fitting it only as a dark lurking-place of Satan and evil affections. But spiritual influence expands it into a noble receptacle of the Divine nature; a spacious temple of the living God. Now, when the powers of the soul are developed to their utmost tension, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, then is perfection attained in this sense. It is the fullness of God in the unfolding our faculties. There is a fullness in the number and variety of Christian graces. The apostle thus enumerates them; "Add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly-kindness, to brotherly-kindness charity." These are the furniture of the capacious

soul ; the vestments of the noble character ; the rich pencillings that beautify your whole being. When you are the embodiment of this constellation ; when the whole golden galaxy is concentrated in and shines forth from your character, then have you attained another degree of perfection—another measure of the fullness of God. But this is only a numerical fullness of gifts in their incipiency. You have but the germ of these spiritual plants. This suggests that there is a fullness of growth and maturity. When faith becomes so unwavering, lively, and strong that our life becomes literally a life of faith, and we walk as seeing Him who is invisible, then is this grace perfected. When our love becomes so ardent and pervasive as to expel the antagonistic element of hatred, and burns with supreme intensity to God, and all the fervor of self-love toward our neighbor, then is this noble passion perfect. So with the residue. When they all have a completeness of growth and golden ripeness, then have you the beauty of holiness, and all the fullness of God ; at least so far as appertains to the present state. But overstepping the boundaries of this life, what is meant by being filled with all the fullness of God there ? I can not tell. This is a question too abstruse for me to explain ; a problem too intricate for me to explain. I can not find any limit to the merits of Christ ; therefore I can not tell what fullness of grace and glory they have purchased for the redeemed in heaven. I can not fix a limit to the mind's improvability ; hence I am utterly unable to tell how far on toward infinity it may yet travel. It is an ocean depth that drowns all my thoughts. It is an ethereal summit that wearies and exhausts my imagination. It is a broad sweep of glory that baffles and defies the most vigorous comprehension. Take me around the circling confines of immensity, and I will show you the gilded borders of this fullness. Conduct me through the perfections of the

Godhead, and I will show you the depth of this fullness. Lift me to that point that marks the highest possible flight of the finite toward the Infinite, I will show you the height of this fullness. If this can not be, contemplate, in silent awe, the vast subject, and let this be your rejoicing, that "of his fullness have all we received."

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## SERMON XX.

BY REV. ARZA BROWN.

CHRISTIAN PURITY.

"Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God," 2 CORINTHIANS VII, 1.

THE holy Scriptures assure us that we are not only guilty and condemned, on account of actual transgression, but that our whole moral nature is totally corrupt: "The whole head is sick, the whole heart faint;" "The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the laws of God, neither indeed can be;" "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." It is a fountain of moral corruption, and its polluting stains are visible in the actions of the life. The word of God and reason itself confirm the truth of the doctrine, that all the attributes of God are opposed to sin; that none but the "pure in heart shall see God." Nothing unholy can enter heaven; therefore, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." All that have been redeemed from earth and are now saved in heaven, have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Moral purity and happiness are inseparably connected. It is important, therefore, that we have an experimental knowledge of the nature and truth of the doctrine of entire

sanctification or moral purity. It is necessary not only to be forgiven, but also purified, in order to present peace and usefulness, and our eternal happiness in the world to come. In illustrating the words of the text, we will notice,

I. THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE MORAL PURITY REQUIRED.

It is a state of complete sanctification—an entire conformity to the Divine nature and government. By the terms “flesh and spirit,” the apostle, doubtless, means the whole man, in his sentient, intellectual, moral, and social nature, including all the faculties of the mind and affections of the heart. In the state of moral purity required in the Gospel, the soul is not only delivered from the guilt and dominion of sin, but is also saved from its very existence. It is so renewed after the image of Him that created us, as to be sanctified throughout spirit, soul, and body, and “preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In the language of Mr. Fletcher, “It is the cluster and maturity of the graces which compose the Christian character. In other words, it is a constellation made up of these gracious stars—perfect repentance, perfect faith, perfect hope, perfect love;” and we may add, perfect obedience.

1. *Perfect repentance.* The Bible teaches that repentance is the gift of God: “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior; to give *repentance* to Israel and forgiveness of sins;” “Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted *repentance* unto life.” From God we receive every “good and *perfect* gift.” Now, as repentance is the gift of God, it must be *perfect*. A true and genuine penitent will hide nothing of his state. He attends to serious reflection, close self-examination, till he sees and bewails the acts of sin which he has committed, and the disposition that led him to sin. He deplores not only the transgression, but also the deep depravity of his heart.

The light of divine truth that shines into his soul shows him not only the corrupt source whence transgression proceeds, but points him also to the "glorious fountain opened to the house of David for sin and for uncleanness." He now asks, with all his heart, pardon for his transgressions, and washing and cleansing from his inward defilement. This is *perfect repentance*, and this alone can find favor with God.

2. *Perfect faith.* By perfect faith we mean that which is the result of the grace and ability we receive from God; uniting assent with reliance, belief with trust: acknowledging salvation to flow from the unbounded love of God; that can speak in the first person, and say, "I have sinned; I have need of pardon; my heart is depraved; I need full salvation; I believe that Christ died for *me*, and I accept of him as my Savior, and the Holy Spirit as my sanctifier. The promises are all the gift of *my Father*; the blessings promised are the purchase of *my Savior*; they are all *mine*." This is *perfect faith*, which was clearly exemplified by Abraham in offering up his son Isaac, Jacob in prevailing with the angel, Daniel in the den of lions, the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, and Stephen in the hour of death.

3. *Perfect hope*—which, as a bright and glittering star, is always visible in the moral sky of the humble Christian; a guide through life, radiating its light around the pathway of the pious; an "anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast;" throwing around the grave a glorious halo; teaching us to despise the world and labor for eternity. He who has this *perfect hope* purifies himself, even as God is pure.

4. *Perfect love.* "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Here the perfection of the love required is clearly marked. "*With all thy*

*heart.*” the *whole* heart is filled with the love of God. This love admits no rival. The allurements of the world will not alienate the affections from God. The soul thus elevated by perfect love, can look down upon wealth, pleasure, honor, and dignity, as possessing no attractions. “*With all thy mind.*” every intellectual faculty employed for God; the understanding consecrated to the contemplation of his infinite excellences; every thing banished from the mind which is opposed to the glory of God, and the salvation of man. God is in all his thoughts: “He is all and in all.” The soul thus “rooted and grounded in love is able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge;” and is “filled with *all the fullness of God;*” “God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him;” “Herein is our love made *perfect*, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because *as he is so are we in this world.*”

5. *Perfect obedience.* Not perfect obedience to the paradisiacal law of innocence. That law was adapted to beings whose perceptive and judging powers were so perfect that, so far as God permitted them to know any thing, they knew it correctly, and were not subject to error in judgment or practice. Man in his fallen state is not a proper subject of that law. His mental and bodily powers are so enfeebled that he can not avoid breaking that law in numberless instances. But Christ has fulfilled that law of innocence; so that we shall not be judged by it, but by a law adapted to our fallen state—the “perfect law of liberty;” “the law of Christ.” This law allows of sincere repentance, and is fulfilled by that “faith which worketh by love.” By this law of liberty we shall be judged. Hence, it not only may, but it must be kept. It is the privilege of the believer to say, “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, 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." If love be sincere, it is accepted as the fulfilling of the law. When the soul is fully "cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," all the Christian graces are perfected, the whole mind is assimilated to God, and all its energies unreservedly consecrated to his service. The Holy Spirit, as comforter and sanctifier, dwells in the heart, and every root of bitterness is eradicated, and all the plants of holiness are fresh, vigorous, and productive. This state of moral purity is what the apostle calls "sanctification of spirit, soul, and body." It is a full salvation from every principle of the heart opposed to holiness; the entire destruction of sin—of sin properly so called. We will now proceed to show,

II. THAT THIS PURITY OF HEART MAY BE OBTAINED IN THE PRESENT LIFE.

1. *From the nature of God.* God is holy; he is the "high and lofty One whose name is holy, and who dwelleth in the high and holy place," and who is "glorious in holiness."

2. *From the amplitude of the provisions of the Gospel.* "The Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;" "Christ also loveth 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;" "Therefore, Jesus, also, that he might sanctify his people with his blood, suffered without the gate;" "If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of

Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin;" "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth: thy word is truth;" "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus."

3. *From the commands of God.* "Be ye, therefore, perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." God is infinitely holy. The command requires unmingled holiness. Be ye holy as God is holy, according to the extent of your powers. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Can the Christian, in the exercise of all the powers God has given him, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit, which God has said shall be sufficient for him, and which all who ask will receive, obey these commands? If he can, then our proposition is sustained; holiness is attainable. "I am the Lord your God; ye shall, therefore, sanctify yourselves; and be ye holy;" "Put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness;" "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing;" "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord." Now, if it be true that God is ever ready to grant us his Spirit to enable us to do our duty, then certainly we have power to obey the command of God, and to be fully sanctified in the present life.

4. *From the promises of God.* "And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities;" "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you;" "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and

with all thy soul, that thou mayest live;" "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." With these promises, and many more that might be adduced, who can doubt the possibility of being fully cleansed from all unrighteousness in the present life?

5. *From the prayers of our Savior, and by the prayers of men who were inspired by the Holy Ghost.* "I pray not," said our blessed Lord, "that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil;" "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth;" "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." David prayed, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin;" "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Paul said, "I bow my knees unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fullness of God;" "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he who hath called you, who also will do it;" "Laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Here are prayers for entire sanctification in this life; and the apostle says it will be done.

6. *From the testimony of God concerning many of his saints.* The Holy Ghost bears testimony that "Enoch walked with God three hundred years; and by faith he was translated that he should not see death; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Now, as God is holy, and can not look upon sin with allowance, but is angry with the wicked every day, and as two can not walk together except they be agreed, Enoch must have been *holy* three hundred years. "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation;" "Caleb and Joshua followed the Lord fully;" "Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous before God, and walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless;" "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord;" "The upright shall dwell in the land; the *perfect* shall remain in it;" "Blessed are the *pure* in heart, for they shall see God;" "Herein is the love of God made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because *as he is so are we in this world*;" "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God;" "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believed;" "Those things which ye have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you;" "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example;" "Be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Here, then, we have the nature of God; the rich and ample provisions of the Gospel; the commands and promises of God; the prayers of Christ and inspired men, and the examples of the Old and New Testament saints, all testifying that we may be "cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," and that we

may receive this great salvation now. Who, then, can doubt the possibility of being fully sanctified in the present life? "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." We will now proceed to show,

### III. HOW THIS WORK IS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED.

1. *We must have a clear and definite view of the doctrine itself.* Some persons, by placing it too low, have presumed that they were fully cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit when they were only *justified*. This opinion may do serious harm; for unless believers are fully convinced of the deep depravity and corruption of their hearts, they will have but little concern about entire sanctification. Nor will they be likely to exercise their abilities to the uttermost, trusting in the efficacy of the blood of Jesus, and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit for a higher state of inward purity. Others, by placing it too high, have mistaken it for the maturity and glory of departed saints, and, finding they can not attain to it, have given up seeking for it; while others, by viewing it as the maturity of grace to which all true believers may attain under the Gospel dispensation, have, by faith, soon entered into the rest of perfect love.

2. *In order to seek this blessing aright we must deeply feel its importance.* We must have an internal wrestling; our hearts must be stirred with inexpressible desire after holiness or moral purity; we must "hunger and thirst after righteousness," before we can be filled. But do you ask, "What can I do? I have no faith; I do not hunger and thirst after righteousness?" I answer, there is something that you can do. God's word declares, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Can you not call on him? But you say, "I have no *earnestness*." Still call on him as well as you can. Begin to pray in a spirit of deep and unwavering earnestness, and

fix your mind on the necessity of the present attainment of holiness of heart.

3. *We must consecrate ourselves wholly to God*—soul, body, talents, property, and friends, just as we are, and all we have, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, as our most reasonable service; submitting in all things to the will of God; praying, “Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean; I yield myself up to thee; I can not form my heart anew; thou only canst do the work.” In all this cleansing, or setting ourselves apart for Christ, we can not put away sin; our only remedy is the blood of Christ.

4. *This blessing must be sought by simple faith*—by an unwavering trust in Christ as an almighty Savior, and in the method he has revealed in his holy word—by faith in his atoning sacrifice, and by the power of his sanctifying Spirit. It must be a firm trust in Christ to save *us*: We must believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is willing to save *us*—to save *us now* from all sin: “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” If we apply to him with no other plea than this, that we are sinful and defiled, and embrace him by faith as a mighty and gracious Savior, we shall find the blessing sought. He came to make an atonement for *us*, and to create in our hearts holiness and love. By submitting to be saved by the sanctifying grace of Christ alone, we give all the glory to the gracious Savior. True faith in Christ places us within the circle of the Divine attributes, as a fortress. Obtain this, and the privileges of the new covenant of grace are ours. We must let nothing hinder us. Why should we? Christ is ready, and “he is able.” He is now waiting for us; he is at “the door;” believe and be saved; the work is done.

“I am my Lord’s and he is mine;  
He drew me and I followed on,  
Charmed to confess the voice divine.”

## SERMON XXI.

BY REV. ALEXANDER NELSON.

NECESSITY AND EVIDENCES OF REVELATION.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," 2 TIMOTHY III, 16.

OUR object will be to show, first, the necessity of a revelation; and, second, some of the evidences of that revelation.

I. Every thing in nature gives evidence both of design and goodness. The sun is placed in the center to dispense light and heat, life and power to all around. The earth, by obeying some hidden laws, revolves around this central fire, causing the seasons, and, by its counter revolutions, day and night. We discover that this earth is productive, yielding a sufficiency, in every clime, for the wants of man, the only rational being upon the globe. Hence, we see that all this goodness is directed to him.

We discover, also, by the aid of philosophy, that the laws of nature are admirably adapted for this purpose; and it would seem, in some instances, that Nature stepped aside and formed exceptions to her general rule, for the very purpose of bearing comfort to man. This proves that man is the great object of God's regard.

We are thence led to examine man, the favored object of God's love. And, at first, we are struck with the beauty of the structure, and the intelligence that beams from his countenance, unlike any thing that the mortal eye ever beheld. But no less beautiful is the whole physical organization; combining symmetry and strength, beauty and harmony, to a degree unsurpassed by any other object upon the earth. Well might the Psalmist say, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made."

From this we ascend a step higher, and examine what distinguishes him from the creation over which he has dominion. We discover what we term mind, with powers that are almost infinite; capable of separating the constituent parts of air and water, and holding up the very atoms that the God of nature put together to form these elements, and can "send the lightnings, and they go, and say, Here we are;" and then darting into space, and measuring the distance and weighing those bodies, with accuracy, that are millions of miles distant. This shows us that man was created for some great and important end. From this we are led to examine, not only what man is *now*, with the light of science beaming upon him, but what he is by nature. We behold the infant in the arms of its nurse, in a degree of entire helplessness, incapable of uttering an articulate sound, and yet we find it subject to affliction. Pain racks its system, and cries are extorted from its lips. And as it progresses, we learn it is not only subject to pain, and disease, and death, but its nature is defiled. Anger lurks within, jealousy tortures its soul, and passion rankles in its bosom. Such is man by nature. Now view him in prime, when all these passions are fully developed, and you will see him eagerly and obstinately pushing his way through life, in pursuit of something the world has been pleased to call happiness; and although he never finds it, yet he is always in pursuit of it. No less eager is the man of science. He analyzes nature; examines earth from center to circumference; ransacks sea and land; but is equally unsuccessful.

There is another characteristic peculiar to man—a consciousness of a supreme Being, and a future state. But what that Being is, or what he requires of him, he can not find out by nature—as the African chief retorted upon the missionary, "I know," said he, "there is a God, but what that God is, whether he desires our worship, or

what kind of worship will please him, I know not." Such is man without revelation.

Now, what do we learn from all this? First, that God manifests goodness in his works; second, that goodness has man for its object, and that blessings have been lavished upon him. In addition to these already hinted at, he is made susceptible of pleasure and enjoyment in a high degree, and there is given him wisdom and power above all terrestrial objects, and yet he is blind and ignorant—unable to solve those difficulties that agitate the breast of mortals, namely: Shall I live hereafter? What is the state of that hereafter? Is it conditional? These and other questions are constantly forcing themselves upon the mind of man, which he is unable to answer. In view of man's situation, who would not say a revelation was necessary? Now, we come to the conclusion, if man stood in need of a revelation, that the goodness of God would cause him to bestow a revelation; and these two facts, clearly inferable, we take it as evidence that a revelation has been given.

II. What are the tests by which we may know we are in possession of this revelation? There ought to be tests that all could apply. If it required a metaphysical investigation, or a mathematical demonstration to determine its truth, the poor unlettered pilgrim, however sincere, would never know he was worshiping God through the channel of *his* word. Hence, we say, there ought to be such tests as all could apply; and there *are such* evidences.

1. The first requirement is, that it should answer all the important inquiries of the soul; should give us a true knowledge of God and his attributes; of our origin; and if fallen, how fallen, and how to regain our standing. And in this blessed book, and in no other, do we find all that information which is suited to our wants. And if this be not the revelation from heaven, we ask where and

what it is? Where shall we look for it? Among the legends of Pagan mythology? Or shall we say it is buried beneath the rubbish of fallen nations? This would be as preposterous as the fables themselves; for if God has given a revelation for the benefit of mankind, he would certainly protect and preserve it from destruction. In looking over the history of Pagan mythology, we may find many things bearing analogy to the historical parts of the Bible, but in every particular accompanied with such embellishment of romance as to give evidence that they were the production of man. But when we look into the Bible we find it stripped of all this embellishment and bombast; its diction pure, chaste, and elevated; coming down to the comprehension of the humblest capacity, and then soaring in strains too grand for mortal conception—just such as might be expected coming from the Almighty; at one time stooping to instruct mortals—worms of the dust—the alphabet of salvation, and then riding upon the storm, giving orders to the universe of worlds; as in creation, at one time stooping to make a pebble by the ocean's side, then a world, now an insect, then an angel, now a few dew-drops to sparkle in the sun's beam, then a myriad of worlds to deck the canopy of heaven.

Such we find in his works and his word—a perfect resemblance, that stamps the impress of the same Author upon creation and revelation.

2. A second test is, that it must not only answer all the important inquiries of the soul, but it must produce contentment. In a word, the enjoyment must make the soul happy. In proof of this I need only appeal to the believer's heart. What inward joy, what peace, what unearthly rapture has he often experienced while worshipping God through the channel of his word! This sensation is felt to be the same in all ages and by every generation

who have enjoyed vital godliness. The Psalmist says, "O come and see what the Lord has done for my soul!" Now, he must have experienced a great change on his heart, or he could not, as an honest man, have called upon the world to come and witness what did not exist. Again, he says by way of exhortation: "Taste and see that the Lord is good." He not only felt the benign influence on his *own* heart, but he could recommend, yea, urge it upon others. A similar expression is found in Job. When in deep affliction, and his friends could not prevail on him to acknowledge that he had sinned, he broke forth in language highly sublime, "O that my words were now written! O that they were written in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever!" It would be difficult for words to express a sentiment any stronger. Now, what was it of so much importance, in the estimation of this great and good man, that he wanted indelibly written and eternally preserved? "*I know that my Redeemer liveth!*" The words may differ, but the sentiment is the same with all. Call up from the shades of the grave a Paul, a Peter, a Stephen, and ask them what they enjoyed. Ask the dying martyr at the stake. And while the flames, preying upon his vitals, are carrying his spirit to the skies, he will exclaim, "I am happy; Jesus is with me!" Paul, after having passed through the deep valley of affliction, when about to be offered, throws his mind back over the scene and says, "I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." And then looking upward, with that confidence with which the reality of his religion inspired him, he says, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

Approach a Calvinist, an Arminian, a Baptist, and you will find many things in their creeds in which they will differ; yet upon one theme they will agree, provided they

enjoy what they profess; that is, the religion of the Bible affords them peace and contentment under every vicissitude of life. Ask the young convert, who has just been brought from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan unto God, and he will exclaim, "I am happy!" The sensation is the same in all ranks and conditions of men, from the king on his throne to the beggar that bows at his footstool. And this is not only felt in the commencement of the believer's journey, but through life and in the hour of death.

3. Another test is, if this be a revelation from heaven, there must be evident marks of its authenticity throughout the whole book. In looking into the Bible, we find a strain of fine morality running through the entire volume. And although the several books composing the volume were written at different times, by different persons, and in different languages, embracing a space of fifteen hundred years, yet so well do they agree, that they can be embodied in one volume, and they make one entire history of events, all presenting the same great truths and aiming at one great end—to make man better and happier here, and prepare him for an eternity of happiness beyond the grave.

4. A fourth test is its effect upon community. If this is revelation from heaven, wherever it is received it must make society better. A community of individuals, embracing it and having their lives regulated by its precepts, will become better members, better citizens, better parents, and better companions. A nation that is characterized as Christian, will exhibit a marked difference from that nation that is not. Look at infidel France, under the reign of Robespierre, when the best blood of that nation was caused to flow down the streets, and the guillotine daily groaned under its human sacrifice, occasioned by deep-stained infidelity.

Christianity and civilization go hand in hand, and without the former the latter, in its proper sense, is unknown. Experience has taught the world that the happiest way of civilizing a savage people, is by first endeavoring to Christianize them. The Moravian missionaries labored for years, in Greenland, to prepare the minds of that savage people to receive Gospel truth, by first introducing natural religion. But as well might they have expected to melt the icebergs with a moonbeam, as to warm their hearts with so cold a doctrine. But no sooner did they introduce the religion of the Bible, and tell them the story of Jesus, than their icy hearts began to melt.

5. The style of the Bible is an evidence of its divinity, as no other writings equal it in sublimity. The holy character ascribed to its Author, and the grand descriptions of him, all appear real. The description of the gods in Pagan mythology fall infinitely short of the high character of the God of the Bible. The very first description we have of him is characteristic of his matchless power and glory throughout. "He said, Let there be light, and there was light." He only spoke and the earth appeared. He spoke, and the mountains rose and the rivers flowed. He spoke, and darkness disappeared, and the sunshine of worlds burst upon the new-born earth. He spoke, and life, from the chaos of confusion, appeared under a myriad of forms. He spoke, reason dawned, and man walked forth in the likeness of his Creator. And when he saw fit to reveal himself to man, he appears in like majesty. And it may be doubted if there is a spot upon the globe so calculated, of itself, to inspire sentiments of the awful, as in the deep solitude, the unbroken stillness, in the midst of those craggy mountains, upon whose summit God wrote the law. Contemplate the scene: the Israelites standing in solemn awe, while a deathlike silence pervades the whole host, with the firm belief they had of his

real presence, beholding the manifestations of his power, while the lightning flashed and the mountain groaned under his awful presence. In the midst of this grandeur, God Almighty descended, and cried audibly, "I am the Lord thy God," etc. Throughout this entire volume is the same dignity maintained. Isaiah says that he saw, in vision, the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple; and above and around him were seraphim crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." Job represents him as speaking out of the whirlwind. Another, as "sitting upon the circle of the earth." Another, "as riding upon the storm." And one of the lesser prophets says, "God came from Teman, and the holy One from Mount Paran: his glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise."

6. The last thing we mention as evidence of the authenticity of the Bible, is the great work of redemption through the Son of God. Man, though pure and holy by creation, had become unholy and rebellious by the fall, and the penalty, with all its weight, was about to descend upon him. The heavens frowned, the earth groaned, and the sword of eternal justice was unsheathed and ready to cut down the offender of God's law. Just at this time, when despair was about to settle down upon the unhappy pair, the heavens glowed with a pure, a glorious light. A ray dawned upon man. Hope sprang up in his heart, for the Son of God had thrown himself between the offending and offended parties, and warded off the impending blow.

This feature, which is the leading feature throughout the Scriptures, proves, beyond doubt, that it is of God. "Greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life for his friend." Some few isolated cases, ill authenticated, have come down to us, where individuals have laid down their lives for their friends. But when man has

done this, he has done all he can do. He can not lay down his life *voluntarily* for his enemy; but Christ, while we were yet sinners—*enemies*—died for the ungodly. Man, therefore, never could have forged the Scriptures; for this great feature of them is infinitely above his highest conception, and beyond his most extended imagination. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

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## SERMON XXII.

BY REV. DAVID A. DRYDEN.

CHARACTERISTICS AND DUTIES OF MAN.

“Shew thyself a man,” 1 KINGS II, 2.

KING DAVID was near the close of his eventful life. He had gained great distinction as a military chieftain, as a legislator, as a servant of God, and, from his proficiency in sacred poesy, had received the title of “sweet singer of Israel.” But his span of life was almost gone. Increasing years had wasted his manly frame. It was on the verge of the grave. Around his dying couch were assembled his royal family and friends—among them his favorite son, Solomon. He was about to take the honored place of his father. Upon him were soon to devolve all the responsibilities of Church and state. To him the aged father gave his dying charge, and connected with that charge the words of our text, “Shew thyself a man;” as much as to say, “You are but a youth. Upon you are about to devolve all the cares and management of this mighty kingdom; but meet your responsibilities like a man; exhibit the tact and judgment befitting one of riper years.” Behold that youth just entering upon the great theater of life—young and without experience, destined to

act a part in the drama of life! How important the position he occupies! What advice more proper to be engraved upon the tablet of his memory? what more appropriate for his motto through life than the dying words of King David, "Shew thyself a man?"

I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MAN.

II. HOW THESE CHARACTERISTICS ARE TO BE IMPROVED AND PARTLY ACQUIRED.

I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MAN.

1. *What is man?* Man is familiarly and properly denominated, "Lord of creation"—the climax of all God's terrestrial works. He is superior to, and holds empire over all creation. But at present we purpose speaking of man under his distinguishing characteristics only, as a physical, intellectual, and religious being. By physical man we understand the body, the tabernacle of the soul. Of this we need not particularly speak. It will suffice to remark that man's physical powers—their construction, arrangement, and wonderful operations—make him the most interesting and noble of all created beings. True, there is beauty, much wisdom, much wonder in the organism of inferior beings. The naturalist, in studying and analyzing the mechanism of animals, or even in observing them externally, beholds wonderful exhibitions of skill and wisdom. Who does not love to penetrate the forest, to observe its native songsters, clad in all the beauty of nature, and the myriads of other interesting beings which inhabit its solitude? The world is replete with beings, all physically wonderful and to be admired; but none will compare with man. As he walks forth, with a body erect, "fearfully and wonderfully made," and skillfully arranged, he wins for himself the acknowledgment, that physical man is the wonder of physical creation. Not any thing in all the field of vision so pleasant to look upon as a human countenance, radiant with intelligence, innocence,

and love. Yet the body, however excellent and beautiful, does not constitute the man. With this alone he is no more than a superior animal. This, however powerful, is marked with decay, and will perish as the fragile flower. To estimate the character and dignity of man by the beauty and superiority of his physical person is most unwise. He is possessor of higher and more noble characteristics; he is an intellectual being. By the *intellect* is meant the superior powers of the mind or soul. Without entering into a disquisition on mental philosophy, we simply remark that man is a compound being; not compounded of soul and mind, or mind and spirit, but body and soul. The terms soul, mind, spirit, or heart, are synonymous, or, at least, mean parts of the same thing; namely, the immaterial, immortal part of man. It is one as the body is one, though composed of various parts or faculties. The intellect comprises the faculties of reason, judgment, perception, memory, etc.; such as constitute man a sentient being, as distinguish him from the lower order of beings. With regard to the intellect we remark, it gives man great superiority over all other creatures. Contemplate man as an infant, at his first entrance into the world: he is the most helpless, defenseless of all beings. All other animals are provided by nature with coverings of wool or fur to protect them from the storm; with instruments for self-defense and to provide for their wants; and have withal a remarkable degree of native instinct. Man is destitute of all these; has no means of defense; no instinct; is even unconscious of his own existence; and, if left to himself, would inevitably perish. But "a change comes over the spirit of his dream." Soon he emerges from this helpless, unconscious state. From the helpless infant, he becomes the active, sentient youth. Mind begins to dawn. From youth he changes to manhood. The powers of intellect, once latent and inactive,

are now manifest and active; the world around him is no longer unintelligible; he learns the names and properties of things; drinks largely at the fountains of knowledge; rises still higher and higher in the scale of intelligence, till, like a Clarke, he stores his mind with the lore of ages, or, like a Franklin, dives into the arcana of nature, and becomes familiar with her profoundest mysteries; like a Herschel or Dick, leaves these terrestrial scenes, and, on the wings of science, soars into infinite space; visits the revolving planets—the worlds hung in air; admires their harmony; notes down their magnitude; lingers amid their beauties; and even pauses to reverently adore before the eternal throne of the God of nature. O, to what heights of excellence man may rise! Contemplate a number, a nation of these intellectual beings: from infancy they have grown to vigorous manhood, from helplessness to great strength, to absolute dominion over all creatures; even the most powerful, that could crush them in a moment, are made to cower in their presence and crouch at their feet; from ignorance they have risen to great knowledge; have sounded all her “depths and shoals;” have become masters of the elements; ride with comparative safety upon the mighty ocean; bound with alacrity over her boisterous waves, and visit the most distant parts of earth; have even turned the lightning of heaven to their own use; made it the medium of communication between distant points; have taken away the forests and wilds of nature, and made the earth to smile with the beauties of civilization; and, not content with beautifying the physical world and richly storing the mind with the knowledge of sublunary things, but, “leaving earth at pleasure, they have soared to the skies, intelligently listened, and gazed far back into the awful depths of Deity.” By what power have they accomplished these wonders, thus exalting themselves above the myriads of

physically superior beings around them? By the power of the intellect, and that alone. Robbed of this, they would grovel in the dust in common with the lowest of animals. Here is an important characteristic of man—intellectual excellence. He that is destitute of this is shorn of the true dignity of a man.

2. *The intellect affords to its possessor true and exalted enjoyment—an enjoyment peculiar to man.* The ox and his kindred tribes may crop the verdant grass, drink from the clear stream, and experience a momentary gratification. Thus it is with all animal, sensual enjoyment. They may look out upon the flowery fields, the lovely forest, starry heavens, and all the sublime works of nature; but to them all is unintelligible—affords no delight. Man is not thus circumscribed. With a cultivated intellect, he contemplates nature intelligently; understands her most mysterious phenomena. This knowledge is the source of indescribable delight, exalted enjoyment. Who can fathom the enjoyment of the mind that holds intelligent converse with nature and science? In short, he that has a cultivated intellect has found the “philosopher’s stone.” It converts every thing upon which he looks, not into gold, but, what is incomparably better, into exalted, continued enjoyment. He that is destitute of this source of enjoyment, who has no pleasure but what is found in gratifying the passions, is *minus* one important characteristic of a man, and is in close affinity with the most sordid animal.

3. *The intellect is susceptible of constant and unlimited development and progression in knowledge.* Many men in this world have lived to acquire great strength of intellect; have made vast acquisitions of knowledge and mental development; but no one ever found a terminus to the onward growth of his mental powers; no one could ever say he had exhausted the treasures of knowledge; had learned all that mind could acquire or comprehend. Such

a being would be an anomaly in this world. No; the intellect is ever expansive. From its early dawn throughout all the periods of life, where proper means are employed, mind is constantly expanding, growing; is constantly receiving large draughts from the fountains of knowledge, and as constantly increasing its powers. To this march of intellect time sets no bounds. Death will not arrest it. On the contrary, it will but enhance it. When disenthralled from its "prison and its clay," emancipated from its earthly bondage and fetters, which have kept it in darkness and forbid its rise, the mind, the intellect will advance, will expand, with an alacrity unconceived by finite thoughts. It is not credulous to believe that the mind, in its eternal state, will expand more, gain greater and more correct acquisitions of knowledge in one moment of time—so to speak—than it does in long years of toil in its present state of existence. Nor will eternity set bounds to this advance of mind. When millions of its measureless cycles have passed, still the mind will be expanding. The fountains of eternal wisdom will still be unexhausted, and the soul enlarging to take in their stores. Who can tell what minds may be in eternity? It is not inconsistent with intelligent faith to believe that some time in the cycles of eternity the sanctified intellect that is now most feeble, most ignorant, will arrive at the astonishing development and vast acquisitions of the highest intelligence or inhabitant of the heavenly world. How cheering this reflection to the mind now thirsting for pure knowledge—for intellectual greatness; but is foiled in all efforts by a feeble, languid body! How delightful for such to be instructed in the school of eternity! Viewing man thus as an intellectual being, how wonderful he is! and how careful ought he to be to secure this excellent characteristic!

Lastly: we remark, man is a *religious being*. This

might be stated differently by saying, he is a *moral being*; but this term is not expressive enough. To leave man with nothing more than morality, even of the highest character, is to leave him marred—robbed of his crowning excellence. By man's being a religious being, we understand his being like God in the composition of his moral nature, and being entirely conformed to the will of God in all his actions. This was the crowning characteristic of the prototype or common parent of all men. He was created in the *likeness* of God—was created upright; that is, was a copy, a transcript, of the divine Mind; *was like God*; and he had the ability to love God *perfectly*; was in all things conformed to his will: *did* as God would have him do. But he fell from this exalted state by doing what God would not have him do; was consequently banished from God's presence; spoiled of his upright or god-like nature, and disqualified for yielding obedience to his will; but qualified for all disobedience. In this deplorable condition by *nature* are all his children. Now, by man's being religious, in his present lapsed condition, we understand, as the term *religo* implies, his being re-bound, bound back, or restored to his former condition. It is his being *born again*, or re-created in the moral image of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and receiving, through grace, the ability to obey God, to love him supremely, and in all things to conform to his holy will. For man to be religious in this sense is to bear the restored image or likeness of God, and to exhibit in life, in conversation, and action, that excellence, that purity and holiness which becomes and characterizes a *son of God*; then, to pass from time to eternity, from a world of probation and sin to one of perfect freedom and unsullied purity, there to shine forever and ever, with increasing glory, among the highest ranks of heaven's inhabitants! O, what a characteristic of man is this! How does it exalt him in the

scale of being! And this is his *crowning* characteristic. Destitute of *this*, no matter what may be his physical superiority, his intellectual excellence, he may seek the highest state of intellectual cultivation; drink largely at every fountain of earthly knowledge; pluck the fairest flowers of science, and decorate his brow with a wreath that a world of scholars might envy. No matter what his *own moral* excellence, he is by nature a child of the devil; his character, in the sight of Heaven, is marred; and dying thus, he will launch into eternity, to beam "a wandering star, to which is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." His will be an eternity of rayless, hopeless night. Such are some of the characteristics of man. To be a man, then, is to be a being of intelligence—of intellectual excellence, purity of heart, and uprightness of conduct. It is to be a being worth his high origin and exalted destiny. It is to be, alas! what few are who bear the title of *man*!

## II. HOW ARE THESE CHARACTERISTICS OF MAN TO BE IMPROVED OR PARTLY ATTAINED?

We come now to notice the practical part of our subject; namely, the part that man must act in forming his own character; or answer the question, "How is he to shew himself a man?" This is a question of thrilling interest to every immortal being, but especially to young men. Its importance to them is great from the fact that young men are very prone to answer it superficially, to form improper estimates of what constitutes a *man*; and, if permitted to judge from the conduct of a vast number of our young men of the present day, we would think their estimate of a man was low indeed. It would seem their highest conceptions, their *beau ideal* of what a young man ought to be, is to wear a fashionable dress, smoke cigars, swear, play cards, tipple in the fashionable dram-shops, and, in short, be an adept in all the forms of vice

so prevalent, so popular at the present time. And so extensively does this groveling estimate of a man obtain, that, go where you will, into any city or village in our land, and you meet *herds* of these idle, *starved-up*, shaggy-faced, addle-headed creatures, who seem to have no higher ideas of what they ought to live for than to gratify the libidinous passions of a depraved heart. Gracious heavens! what pursuits, what characters for rational, accountable beings! What more calculated to make the heart bleed than to see so many young men forming characters that will only fit them for shame in life and for hell at death! Others there are who have scarce a higher destiny for man: it is to be what the world calls a man of *pleasure*. They see no beauty or fitness in intelligence; take no delight in books, in study; no pains in improving their minds or hearts. Their highest aim is to secure personal embellishments, assume a false dignity, put on lofty airs, pay deference to all the whims and caprices of modern etiquette, and be an expert gallant—the master spirit in the ball-room or pleasure party. Thus they fritter life away in pursuit of these vain baubles. O, what an ambition is this to animate mortal beings! beings who might be stars in the intellectual world, blessings to their race, and an honor to themselves! It is an ambition that devils would be ashamed of! They would blush deeply to spend their time in pursuit of objects so worthless, so contemptible. Young man, would you be a *man*? Then you must set your mark higher than this. You must seek intelligence; a cultivated intellect. There are three ways in which this can be done: the study of books, intercourse with men, and reflection. 1. From books. Not all kinds of books. Many, instead of imparting intellectual strength, will disorder and effeminate the brightest mind. The literary world is deluged at present with just such books, in

the shape of novels, romances, etc. This may be called emphatically the age of novel reading. To have a cultivated mind, you must avoid this trash. As well might you think to have a healthy body, fitted for manly exercise, by feeding on the offal from the shambles, or trash from the public sewers and gutters, as to secure a cultivated intellect by studying such productions. We might here particularize, but the truth is, you must eschew *all* works of fiction. They will enervate and ruin any mind. But we have *good* books, perhaps a better selection than the world ever saw, and in the reach of every one. No one can plead want of books as an extenuation of his ignorance and want of intellectual cultivation. No; the general cry is want of time. "We have no time to read; to study. Other duties demand all our attention." This *may* be so; but before we admit it let us inquire what objects in life justly demand all our time and effort, to the neglect of improving the mind? Will the desire to adorn the body in rich apparel do it?—to hoard up a goodly portion of earthly treasure do it?—to secure distinction in society and goodly possessions for ourselves and children do it? Surely not. To starve the intellect for any of these purposes, is most wicked. Then what will justify us in failing to secure this high, this necessary characteristic of our being? Nothing but *absolute necessity*. If we are so situated that it demands all our time and effort to secure an honest livelihood, then we are, to some extent, *excusable*. But how many are thus situated? How many can plead this necessity in extenuation of their want of intelligence? At least young men can not. Let them be ever so indigent—ever so much taxed with toil; yet they can find time to read, and improve the mind. Let them but properly husband their leisure hours, long evenings, Sabbath days, and other time usually spent in idleness, or in vicious practices, by the perusal of good books.

The fact that the brightest examples of men in our day—those of greatest eminence and usefulness in the cabinet, at the bar, and in the pulpit—were once in just such circumstances, and have arisen to what they are by their own industry, should fire the breast of every young man with a laudable ambition to imitate their example.

2. To be a man intellectually, there must be reflection—much thought. One of the worst evils of society, at the present time, among the young, is a disposition to drown reflection. The youth who mingles freely in society, becomes intoxicated with a spirit of levity—is measurably disqualified for sober reflection. Young man, if you would have a cultivated mind, you must avoid this. You must turn aside from the giddy throngs, shun their frivolous amusements, and commune with your own heart. You must reflect seriously. Think deeply; think of your own heart; what you are; whence and where you are going; what you ought to be. Ten thousand things there are to profitably employ your lonely thoughts; and rest assured that never will you have a cultivated mind till you can rob time of its loneliness, by holding interesting converse with your own heart. From hours of loneliness you must derive your richest stores of intellectual excellence.

3. Observation. Intercourse with society is an essential means of intellectual cultivation. No mind was ever truly developed merely from the study of books, and reflection. But here, as in the use of books, it is necessary to discriminate. Intimate intercourse with all kinds of society, is most prejudicial to intellectual improvement. There is positively no hope of any young man ever doing his duty, in this respect, who mingles promiscuously in all grades of society. As well might he think to wallow in the mire and not become filthy, as to associate with the vulgar and vicious and avoid contracting their habits. If you would rise, young man, in true manhood, you must

avoid the society of the low and vicious. Seek the society of the learned, the intelligent, the pious. Let your intimate companions be few, and all your superiors, so that you can learn from them. Attention to this simple rule will always make your intercourse with men profitable. True, it may subject you to the envious assaults of the groveling mass, who would fain have you like themselves; but remember it is always better to *bear* the contumely of fools than to *share* their folly.

Lastly. In conclusion, we remark that man should be careful to secure his crowning characteristic—*religion*. We do not say, that to be truly a man he must cultivate and attain a high state of morality. That is not sufficient. He must have the image of God reinstamped upon his heart, and live in the discharge of those high obligations to God and man which morality never taught. In short, he must have his depraved, sinful heart changed by divine grace, and his life and character adorned by the graces of the religion of Jesus Christ. Where, in all the annals of biography, will you find a *true* example of a man without religion? How was it with Solomon, to whom the words of our text were originally spoken? He had great physical excellence and intellectual superiority—had more wisdom and knowledge than all the philosophers who have lived since his day; yet his character was tarnished: his sun went down in clouds. And why? Because he lost the only badge of man's true greatness—RELIGION. So it has been with all examples of human greatness since his day; no matter how exalted, how intellectual, how influential, if destitute of the graces, and reckless to the duties of our holy religion, they were destitute of the true characteristics of manhood. If time does not fully develop this truth, eternity will. Thus it is, thus it will be with all who slight religion; thus it will be with you, young men. You may have every physical

accomplishment, may make profound researches in science, gain great stores of knowledge, may rise to fame and distinction in the irreligious world; yet, if destitute of religion, you will wear, in life, the moral image of Satan, be shorn of your true dignity, and, dying thus, your earthly greatness will be "a garment too short to hide your moral deformity;" you will be clothed with "shame and everlasting contempt." O, you must have religion—must have clean hearts and right spirits. You must forsake all your sins, be cleansed from them, and made holy. This you can not do yourselves. Thank God! he does not require you to do it. He will do it himself; has opened up a fountain for sin and uncleanness—the blood of a crucified Savior. All he requires of you is to come with broken, contrite hearts, with unfeigned sorrow and repentance of your sins, and to throw yourselves unreservedly upon his mercy. He will receive you, will pardon you, cleanse you from all your pollutions, and clothe you with that purity and holiness of heart, without which every other accomplishment is worse than nothing. Will you come? Will you come *now*? Will you bow those proud knees, permit those eyes to weep tears of penitential sorrow, those lips to make confession of your sins to God, and plead for his pardoning mercy? Without this your character will be incomplete in time and in eternity; you will never find your proper sphere in the society of the other world. The Lord inspire you with a laudable ambition to fulfill your high destiny!

## SERMON XXIII.

BY REV. JOSEPH H. CREIGHTON.

LAW AND BETTER HOPE CONTRASTED.

“The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did,” HEBREWS VII, 19.

CHRISTIAN perfection is a subject so high and purely spiritual, that we can only arrive at the truth of the doctrine by a careful attention to what is revealed in the Scriptures. Words represent ideas; but some ideas seem to be almost indescriptive, so that the best-chosen words appear to be equivocal, not that there is any doubt of the fact, or any ambiguity in the doctrine itself.

Some have thought that “*perfection*” is not the best word to express the doctrine, as some other might be as applicable, and yet give less offense; but we think no Scripture term should be objected to, whether it be “election” or “perfection,” only let us get the true meaning, having a conscientious regard for what the Spirit intended.

We never contended that wherever the word *perfection*, or sanctification, is used in the Scriptures, entire holiness of heart and life is meant, though it may be sometimes. Neither do we found this great and important doctrine upon a few doubtful and isolated texts.

“The law made nothing perfect,” nor did any man enjoy Christian perfection till after Christ was glorified, the promise of the Father verified, and the holiest of all stood unveiled to the victorious faith of all that will seek for the “riches of his glory.” But the Old Testament saints enjoyed a high state of grace, which was even called *perfection*. “The Lord said unto Abraham, walk before me, and be thou perfect;” “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was

perfect and upright;" "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations; and Noah walked with God."

The prophets well knew that there would be a brighter light, and a greater glory than they had ever seen. Zechariah says, "He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them." St. Peter says, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into," 1 Peter i, 10-12.

The glory that should *follow* the sufferings of Christ could not be an outward display, for there was more outward splendor under the old covenant than the new; therefore, it must mean the glory of the Spirit's brighter manifestation. Again: Paul shows the internal superiority of the new covenant in the tenth chapter of Hebrews, where he quotes from Jeremiah: "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." And now mark the comment the apostle gives on this prophecy: "Now, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, the flesh."

Again: Christ says that "among them that are born of woman, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." From which, it will be seen, that though John was "more than a prophet," he did not enjoy the clear sunlight of the better covenant—the mighty baptisms of the Holy Ghost, new from the holiest of all—from under no vail—mystified by no ceremony—darkened by no law. But he pointed to it, and rejoiced in being permitted to witness the closing day of one dispensation, and die amid the dawn of another. But his own words are more expressive: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." This is such a cardinal point in the riches of God's glory, that all the Evangelists insert it; and that it did not take place till Christ was glorified, is evident from his own words, when he refers to the same glorious blessing just before his ascension: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." This is Christ's richest gift, even that especially asked of the Father; and is a greater blessing than was enjoyed by those who had the personal teachings and company of the Savior while on earth; for he says, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world can not receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," etc. Therefore, we conclude, that though the law could not make the comers thereunto evangelically perfect, being weak through the flesh, yet the glorious Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, can make us perfect and complete in all the will of God.

From what we have now stated, it may be seen that

Christian maturity is far above that of the Jews; and no one will expect us to prove that it is below the perfection of the saints in heaven.

We are now prepared to state the doctrine more particularly.

1. *Negatively.* It is not absolute perfection; for that only belongs to God. It is not Adamic, angelic, or of the glorified saints in heaven; for that is not the subject under consideration. It is not a perfection in knowledge, wisdom, or power; for these are not necessary to entire purity, and were not enjoyed by Adam or the angels. It is not a perfection that carries us beyond peccability; neither are we to be in a state from which we can not fall. Adam was sinless, and yet was tempted and fell. Christ was tempted; and an angel fell. It is not a perfection wherein we can not grow more; for although a man is entirely emptied of sin, he may be more and more filled with love, and the knowledge of the glory of God in this world, and that which is to come.

Now, if any man places the standard of Christian perfection higher than this, let him not say, the Methodists so teach. But,

2. *Positively.* It is to love the Lord with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. It is to be emptied of all sin. It is to dwell in God, and to have him dwell in us. It is that glorious state prayed for in the third chapter of Ephesians: "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, *that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.* Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,

according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church," etc. It is a deeper work than justification, and subsequent to it, as we may infer from what St. Paul says to the Corinthian brethren—who surely enjoyed the blessing of justification—"Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Again: when Paul is speaking of babes in Christ, he says, "Let us go on unto perfection," etc.

It is, ordinarily, a gradual work, as well as instantaneous. It begins with regeneration, and advances, not as we grow in years, but as we mortify the deeds of the body, and increase in faith, and become more and more transformed into the image of Christ. This will not be disputed. But is it an instantaneous work? I answer, if it is not instantaneous, it is not at all; for if there is not an instant when sin ceases, it must continue. This is one of the most important features of the doctrine. We should set it before the mind as a mark, on Scripture authority, definitely to be sought for, with a rational expectation of success, the instant we have the faith. There is no point that Mr. Wesley guards better than this, in the numerous places where he treats of it. He says, "If any speak otherwise, he is the person that brings new doctrine among us."

The doctrine now being stated, we proceed to notice the Scripture grounds on which it is founded, and decide some questions at issue.

1. It is *commanded*: in the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength;" "Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect;" "Put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness;" "Awake to righteousness, and sin not."

2. It is *promised*. God's commands are never higher than his promises; for though we are commanded to love him with all our hearts, here is a promise corresponding in greatness: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Again: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" "He is able to save them to the *uttermost* that come unto God by him."

3. It is the *subject of inspired prayer*. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is heaven," [perfectly;] "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Paul bowed his knees to God and prayed, not only that the Ephesians might be strengthened by his mighty Spirit, but that they might be filled with all the fullness of God. What God fills can not contain sin of any kind. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." This text is very clear, being an inspired prayer followed by a promise no less inspired. But some will say that this prayer is only to be answered at death; to which we answer, that, then he prayed for the preservation of the dead—"preserve you blameless"—which is not reasonable. Others say that we have sinful bodies and carnal minds; that, though we be sanctified, in some sense we are sinful till death. But the text says, *wholly, soul, body, and spirit*, and that is all there is of a man; then preserved in that state "blameless," which must be without sin; for sin is blamable.

We now proceed to notice some objections that are

very frequently, and by different persons, urged against the doctrine.

Paul's experience—so called—in the seventh of Romans, is one of the first and strongest objections we hear: "I am carnal, sold under sin;" "When I would do good, evil is present;" "In captivity to the law of sin;" "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

The first inquiry to be made here is, what is the *subject* in these three chapters? I think any one will agree that it is the superiority of the Gospel over the law, or freedom from the law by the body of Christ—salvation, by grace, through faith, and its glorious privileges, in contradistinction to the law of carnal commandments, "which could never make the comers thereunto perfect." "The law made nothing [no persons] perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." The doctrine is first clearly *stated* in the sixth chapter. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! how shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? . . . Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. . . . Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body. . . . For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. . . . Being, then, made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

After *stating* the doctrine of freedom from sin, he anticipates and answers any that might yet adhere to the law; for no common reason would make them leave the established religion. He gives the law of husband and wife as an illustration. The woman is bound to the husband as long as he lives, and no longer. They were bound to

the law of Moses as long as it lived; but when the better hope was brought in, they became dead to the law by the body of Christ. Now he describes their state under the law: "For when we *were* in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work by our members to bring forth fruit unto death," verse 5; and, in the next verse, contrasts it with the deliverance of the soul: "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." But does he not use the present tense as well as the past? He does; but it was under the same subject, and was a manner of speech common to the Jews, Greeks, and Romans, when the intention was only to highten the sense and give energy to the language; the apostle not intending to include himself in his present state any more than did St. James include himself when speaking of the tongue: "Therewith bless we God, and therewith curse we men." And if these texts must be applied to Paul, they will contradict others, of whose meaning there is no dispute. We propose, therefore, to contrast those others found in the same chapters, and for the sake of perspicuity we will fix the word "LAW" to the former, and "BETTER HOPE" to the latter.

LAW. "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me *all manner* of concupiscence," verses 7, 8.

BETTER HOPE. "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body," verses 6-12. "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are *not under the law*, but under grace."

LAW. "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin."

BETTER HOPE. "To be carnally-minded is death; but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace; because the

carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

LAW. "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not; for the good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do."

BETTER HOPE. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death." "But now we are delivered from the law," etc. "But *now* being made *free* from sin," etc.

LAW. "Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

BETTER HOPE. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God," etc.

LAW. "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me."

BETTER HOPE. "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."

LAW. "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members."

BETTER HOPE. "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

LAW. "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

BETTER HOPE. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Very many other clear texts might be quoted; but we choose to take none but from these disputed chapters, that they may be seen in contrast. Many persons have followed the Calvinistic interpretation of these chapters, from the impression made on their minds by hearing them constantly quoted in that way, or that meaning always attached to them, without considering the *subject* or comparing chapters and verses. The most striking contradiction in their interpretation is in the twenty-third verse of the seventh chapter, compared with the second verse of the eighth chapter. Who can believe that the great apostle Paul was a captive—slave—to sin, while in the next chapter he says, “The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me *free* from the law of sin and death?” How could a man live under a law that had made him free, and yet, by that same law, be a sold captive? Even Dr. Stewart, though a Calvinist, tells us, in his Commentary, that the being brought into captivity to the law of sin is a military phrase, and means the most absolute bondage, being controlled entirely by the captor. “This,” says he, “is too strong to be applied to the apostle, though he uses the pronoun *me*; and especially when we compare it with the twenty-third verse of the eighth chapter.”

Galatians v, 17, is often quoted as proof against freedom from sin: “The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye can not do the things that ye would.” This text does not apply to Christians at all, as any one may see by reading the verse before it and a few after it: “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say, then, Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.”

Now, read a few verses after, and then, if you will persist in applying that text to Christians, “by their FRUITS

ye shall know them:" "But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now, the works [or fruits] of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like." What spirit must such Christians be of, if the above is a true description of their fruits! Not of Christ, surely; for, in this same chapter, we have the true fruits of those who are really Christians, yea, in the very next verse, and that connected by a disjunctive conjunction: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering," etc.; "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts."

Again: it is said, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." Written where? In the fourteenth Psalm. And what else is written in that Psalm, yea, in that same verse? "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." But Paul quotes it; and what for? Let him speak for himself, Romans iii, 10-16: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways." Surely this is quoted to prove the total depravity of the wicked, and not the *present* state of all those that have "passed from death unto life." But, lest some will still contend for the universal application of this text to saint and sinner, we will accumulate our testimony both from the Old and New Testament: "The Lord said unto Noah, Thee have I seen **RIGHTEOUS** before me in this

generation," Genesis vii, 1. It is said of Zacharias and Elizabeth, "And they were both *righteous* before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord *blameless*," Leviticus i, 6. Abel obtained witness that he was "*righteous*." Peter mentions Lot's "*righteous*" soul. Many more might be added.

Again: it is said, "No man *liveth* and sinneth not." The Scriptures say no such thing. The true reading is, "For there is no man which sinneth not." This is in the permissive or optative mood, as may be inferred from the first clause, "If they sin against thee:" the true sense is, "There is no man that may not sin." So our translators understood it, and rendered other passages accordingly, even the thirty-first verse of this same chapter, "*If* a man trespass." But if we admit the most literal interpretation of this text, it will have no weight in disproving the doctrine of Christian perfection. What if there was not a man in Solomon's day that lived without sin, does that fix the standard for the whole New Testament Church? Hear John's testimony: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;" "Whosoever committeth sin is of the devil." But Solomon says, "There is not a *just* man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." Perhaps not at that particular time; but there were some before and many after. Proof: "Noah was a *just* man, and perfect in his generation;" Joseph, John, Simeon, Cornelius, and Lot are called *just*, in the New Testament.

Again: 1 John i, 8, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." We have often heard this eighth verse quoted as a capital proof text in favor of inbred sin in believers, yea, in John himself. But surely it is a great discription of language; for you never hear them quote the verse before it or the one after it, in connection; no, hardly on the same day of the week; for the seventh or ninth would positively

contradict that interpretation. What is the *subject*, in this chapter, but the blood of Christ, instead of the ceremonial sacrifices. Now, let us read this text in connection, beginning with the seventh verse: "If we walk in the light, as he [Christ] is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, [to be cleansed *from*,] we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Many of the persons to whom John wrote did not believe that they had sin to be cleansed *from*; especially the Jews, who trusted in the *sacrifices* of the law. How natural, then, for John to anticipate that objection to his doctrine, as he did in the eighth and tenth verses: "If we say we have no sin;" "If we say we have not sinned." Therefore, instead of teaching that they must continue in sin, he declared that, although they had sin, the blood of Christ would cleanse them from it. But why does he use the word "we," if he does not include himself? Because it was customary in those times, as it is yet, to use the pronoun, first person, when the speaker is not included in the *sense*, but merely in the form of expression, as we have already mentioned in the case of St. James. We have but one remark to make on this objection, and that by way of interrogation. What more could the devil do for his kingdom than persuade Christians that they can not live without sin? On the other hand, what more for Christ's kingdom can be done than to persuade men to "awake to righteousness, and *sin not*?" This is the object of St. John in his epistles. Hence he says, "These things write I unto you, that you *sin not*."

Again: if we were cleansed from all sin, what would become of Christian warfare? According to this notion,

a little sin is necessary to "fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold on eternal life." A fort that would contend successfully must have some of the *enemy* within. Strange doctrine, to say nothing of the logic! Who is so easy led captive by the devil at his will as he that has sin in his heart? On the other hand, who goes forth more than clad in coat of mail, his eye flashing terror and his hand dealing death to his foe at every onset? The pure in heart. O, that all the Church of God might be delivered from that weakening, stupefying, soul-deceiving, devil-pleasing, God-dishonoring monster, sin! Who will plead for it? Though Satan may be transformed into an angel of light, it will be more difficult to show that sin is necessary to Christian warfare.

Again: if a man is perfect, how can he grow any more? This objection is easily disposed of by reference to another doctrine that is held by all orthodox denominations—total depravity. Who would say that a man who is totally depraved is as bad as he can be, or that he can grow no more in sin?

Finally: it is said that no one in the Scriptures professed the blessing. But John and others could and did say, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." "But," says the objector, "that is not till after death." We answer that the remaining part of the verse shows that it is before death: "Because as he is so are we in this world." Again: "God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." Again: "We rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." These are as clear professions as are necessary for the good of believers, and farther than this was not intended. God delights to astonish his creatures with the glorious manifestations of himself. Who, therefore, will cry to God, "Show me thy glory?"

## SERMON XXIV.

BY PEARL P. INGALS.

LIFE AND CHARACTER OF JOSEPH.

## I. THE LIFE OF JOSEPH IS EMBRACED IN THREE PERIODS OF TIME.

1. Joseph was born in Padan Aram, seventeen hundred and forty-five years before Christ. He was six years old when his father Jacob returned to his own country. His mother died, and was buried in the way from Bethel to Bethlehem—a good place to die! She journeyed from Bethel, “the house of God,” and looked toward Bethlehem, the future scene of our Lord’s advent. Joseph was “seventeen years old” when his estimable character, securing, as it did, the affection of his father, together with the visions which God gave him, spread before him promises of the future. Jacob felt some solicitude for his sons, and said to Joseph, “Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren.” He went; and when he did not find them where he expected, he persevered till he did find them. While in this manner giving evidence of his worthy character as son and brother, his brethren, “moved with envy,” sold him, for twenty pieces of silver, to a company of Ishmaelite merchants, who were going down to Egypt.

2. The second period of his history commenced with his being bought by Potiphar, who was, probably, the chief officer of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. For two years the Lord prospered him greatly, and blessed the house of Potiphar for his sake. When Potiphar saw this, he “made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.” By the shameful calumny of his mistress

he was cast into prison. In Canaan he had preludes of future greatness. And now, in this instance of virtuous integrity, there was a pledge, an indubitable assurance of his ultimate, his best destinies. And as, in the last test of Abraham's faith, Heaven was satisfied, so now, in relation to Joseph's character, God could have said, "Now I know that thou fearest me," since thou hast not failed to regard thyself, thy master, and thy God. He was cast into prison; but God was with him; and from thence he rose to dominion over Egypt. This period of his life embraced nearly twelve years.

3. The third period commenced with his standing in authority before Pharaoh, at thirty years of age, and embraced eighty years of prosperity. "And Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old." His name was significant—encouraging the remark, that "from human nature Joseph has taken away much reproach." It further signifies, "future favors and prosperity."

## II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF JOSEPH'S HEART AND LIFE.

1. *His filial affection.* To this the Scriptures attach great importance. The first commandment with a promise is, "Honor thy father and thy mother." This duty and obedience to God are intimately associated; so that the latter can not be without the former; and where the first is the latter is likely to be. Joseph's filial character is traced in relation to his father; for he was young when his mother died. When Rachel died Jacob loved Joseph more than all his children. The father's affection was warmly reciprocated. Joseph's obedience was prompt and cheerful: "Here am I." He had been absent from his father twenty-two years, when his brethren appeared before him in Egypt. "Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him." His inquiry was, "Is your father yet alive?" The second time he inquired, "Is your father well? The old man of whom you spake, is

he yet living?" When he tested *their* feelings, who had sold him, by detaining Benjamin through stratagem, Judah entreated him for his brother: "His brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him." He then recounts the reflections of his father when they took Benjamin away. He loved the two sons of Rachel: "The one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces, and I saw him not since. And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." It was more than Joseph could resist. A merciful Providence had veiled from his meditations the feelings of that father; but now they break in upon his mind; his will gives way; the great deep of his heart is broken up; his father's *name* and his father's *words* are in the entreaties of Judah. "Joseph wept aloud;" made himself known; and the first inquiry, with his heart full and his eyes weeping, was, "Doth my *father* yet live?" He hastened to have him brought down; went to meet him; "fell upon his neck and wept a good while;" he provided for his comfort in Goshen; watched by his death-bed; embalmed his body; and mourned seventy days. Then, with the "elders of Israel, servants of Pharaoh, chariots and horsemen, a very great company," he proceeded to Canaan, and buried his father in the grave of Machpelah, where Abraham was buried. Doubtless, while there, he meditated upon the providence of God, the predictions made to Abraham, and then returned to his duties in Egypt.

2. *The early piety of Joseph.* This we infer from the fact that God graciously manifested himself, and revealed the future to Joseph in his youth. From that time his faith never failed him. There was evidence of calm resignation in all his troubles. . . . When in the deep pit, with the prospect before him of death by cold and hunger, without

doubt he prayed, and trusted in God. When carried forward as merchandise of the Ishmaelites, he journeyed by faith. There were particular and wonderful interventions of Providence in his advancements. But the elements of his prosperity were found in his early piety, and his regard for his father. This shows the basis of his *uniformity* of character, and without which uniformity in goodness is scarcely secured. There is a point beyond youth, in the lives of many persons, at which they turn and pursue a truly Christian course. Then all pure principles which they have cherished will come to their aid, and fortify their position. There may have been a wildness in the youth; but if it has not been identified with the vile, it will pass away as the morning cloud. Where youth has submitted to the base and vile, whatever may be future attainments in *grace*, there is yet an *abiding* danger. In some of the Scripture histories of righteous men, we find foibles and errors; and we may well exclaim, "O, their youth! their youth!" It is not so with the history of *Samuel*: "And the *child* Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli." The most perilous act of Obadiah's life showed that his firmness was built up like a strong tower. It was when he hid from their enemies one hundred of the Lord's prophets, and fed them. He accounts for that firmness when he says, "I, thy servant, fear the Lord from my *youth*." The same is true of Daniel, Timothy, and many others; and the least of this number is not Joseph.

3. *The most noble magnanimity of Joseph.* He occupied a high position in all moral excellence, as is evidenced by his humility, clemency, and moral heroism. In humility he is an example. "Joseph was a goodly person and well-favored;" "beautiful in his person and beautiful in his countenance;" but he had also a good mind, and feared God. He possessed the highest honors of a people

in whose sight "every shepherd was an abomination." His friends came to him in that character, and he was not ashamed of his ancestry, his kindred, or the home of his youth.

His clemency was altogether unique, and without a precedent. Soon as he had made himself known to his brethren, he hastened to soothe their troubled minds: "And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt; now, therefore, be not *grieved* nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither." He assured them that God, in his providence, had arranged it all well. After the death of Jacob, they feared that Joseph would requite them all the evil they did him, and entreated him to forgive. He answered them, "I will *nourish* you and your little ones; and he *comforted* them and spake *kindly* unto them."

"How beautifully falls from human lips  
That blessed word, *Forgive!*"

Consider his moral integrity and intrepidity. Temptation, with all the aid of a degraded condition, could not overcome him. Not three years before, he was associated with his father's family—a distinguished family; now he had been sold for twenty pieces of silver, and was a slave in the house of Potiphar. He had been made a common commodity of trade, like an article of merchandise, or a dumb beast. But all the change of circumstances could not bring down the moral greatness of his soul. Clamorous entreaty besieged him when the walls of his protection seemed leveled by the degradation of his bondage; but he would not bow to take upon him the cloak of infamy. Dr. Durbin says of him, "The most favored, most generous, most continent of men."

### III. THE ENEMIES OF JOSEPH.

1. *His ten brethren were his enemies.* In the beginning of their enmity "they hated him, and could not speak

peaceably unto him." They designed his death. At the suggestion of Reuben, they cast him into a pit, that he might perish with hunger: "*And they sat down to eat bread.*" Reuben thought to save him. It was a contrivance of Judah to have him sold. Twenty-two years after this these brethren appeared before Joseph, begging bread.

Joseph treated them as spies, retained Simeon a prisoner, and required them to bring their youngest brother. When they came, and Benjamin with them, he had them dine at his own house; and when he arranged the table in the order of his father's house, they greatly "marveled." After they had left, he had them brought back, it appearing that Benjamin had stolen his "silver cup." Now, it seemed that Joseph wished to try them, to know whether they did regard their father and Benjamin; for how could he have confidence in them who had sold him a slave, and permitted their father to mourn, with the image of Joseph torn to pieces by wild beasts before his eyes, for twenty-two years? He could not have confidence till he tried them, which he did most severely.

Joseph did not afflict his brethren with a retaliative spirit. He took no pleasure in their troubles, but felt the tenderest sympathy for them. When they stood before him the first time, chiding themselves, "he turned himself about from them, and *wept.*" When they came before him with Benjamin, "his mother's son," he said, "Is this your younger brother of whom you spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son! And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there." Who can look upon Joseph and not think of him who "doth not afflict willingly?"

2. *Joseph had one hideous enemy.* Infamy, deep and

dreadful infamy, the lot of all such, has spread its dark mantle over her life.

#### IV. THE DISTINGUISHED HONORS AND PRIVILEGES TO WHICH JOSEPH ATTAINED.

1. *God honored him with the spirit of prophecy in the interpretation of visions.* The first was for the chief butler and baker in prison. Pharaoh was warned of God in visions of the night. He sent for all the magicians of Egypt and all the wise men thereof; but there were none who could interpret his dreams. Joseph was honored by being able to confound the then most profound wisdom of the world.

2. *From this he rose to preferment in the kingdom.* Pharaoh placed upon him ensigns of royalty; "took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, put a gold chain about his neck, made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt." The Psalmist says of Joseph, "Whose feet they hurt with fetters; the iron came into his soul; the word of the Lord tried him, till the king loosed him, and made him lord of his house, and ruler of his possessions: to bind his princes at pleasure, and teach his senators wisdom." That country where he had authority was Egypt: "Most renowned school of antiquity for wisdom and politics. The illustrious men and legislators of Greece sought to complete their studies there." In that country—then the most distinguished in the world—Joseph was next to the king in authority.

3. *Joseph and his family were highly favored.* He married the daughter of a priest. The priests in Egypt held the second rank to kings. His two sons were Ephraim and Manasseh; so named, the first because Joseph had "forgotten his toil and affliction;" the last,

because "God had prospered him." By faith, Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both these sons, giving them a place among the twelve patriarchs, "making them equal in all the temporal and spiritual blessings of the covenant." This honor, conferred upon the family of Joseph, may be traced in the division of the promised land.

4. And now his work in Egypt is accomplished. The duties of the great legislator, the son, the brother are finished. His settlement with Time is made. He contemplates the future, the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the dead. "By faith, Joseph, when he died, gave commandment concerning his bones." His body was removed from Egypt by Moses. He now rests in Shechem; but he will not sleep long. The night of death will, to the body, seem short. When you awake from a calm sleep, the night seems brief. A thousand years will be to the happy dead as one day. Joseph will arise and pass, as if *immediately*, from his high and good career, in this life, to the rewards of heaven.

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## SERMON XXV.

BY REV. WILLIAM YOUNG.

THE CHRISTIAN'S POSSESSIONS.

"Therefore let no man glory in men: for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours," 1 CORINTHIANS III, 21, 22.

NEVER was there a man more fully divested of motives of personal aggrandizement than was Paul, the great "apostle of the Gentiles." Had he aimed at any thing like this, ample opportunity served to gratify his ambition.

On the contrary, he studiously sought not his own, but his "Master's glory." The grand motto of his Christian and ministerial life was, "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." What he did not tolerate in himself he deemed inadmissible in others, to whom he ministered, and over whom "he watched as those who must give an account." Hence the text: "Therefore let no man glory in men," etc. We shall attempt a brief, practical discourse upon the subject-matter of the text, as follows:

I. WE SHALL NOTICE THE EVIL AGAINST WHICH ST. PAUL HERE GUARDS THE MEMBERS OF THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH.

"Let no man glory in men." To glory in men simply means to boast in, to be proud of men. There were those, in this Church, who thus gloried in their ministers. They did this

1. *By awarding them that degree of deference which belongs to God only.* This we infer from a reprimand which Paul gives them in the first chapter of this epistle: "Is Christ divided, or was Paul crucified for you?" "God is a jealous God; his glory will he not give to another." The Church, it is true, should properly respect and love her ministers. This the author of the text elsewhere specifically enjoins: "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and to esteem them very highly for their work's sake." To do this is both rational and religious. An enlightened and holy ministry is an invaluable blessing to the Church, and also to the world. They should, however, be esteemed as men—as ministers of Christ—not as superhuman beings; not as gods. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us;" "We, also, are men of like passions with you." It is the assumption of this claim of

undue deference that forms one of the distinguishing traits of the character of Antichrist, against whom stands recorded the blighting curse of heaven: "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." And the Church, or the world, by awarding such an impious claim, rob God of his glory, pervert the institution of the ministry, and incur the charge of idolatry. "Render unto God the things that are God's;" "Make not the arm of flesh your trust;" "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

2. *By extravagantly overrating the talents of some, and by disrespectfully undervaluing the talents of others.* Paul, as a preacher, was a clear, cogent, and profound logician. Apollos "was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures." Cephas, or Peter, was a "Boanerges"—a bold, zealous, and powerful declaimer. Some of the Corinthian Church were extravagant in their awards to Paul; so much so as to elicit from that holy man a kind, but prompt rebuke: "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Others of this Church were in raptures with the eloquent efforts of Apollos. Among this class, perhaps, were those who spoke deridingly of Paul, thus: "For his letters," say they, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible." A third class in this Church greatly applauded Peter, and, perhaps, cared but little about either the logic of Paul or the eloquence of Apollos, so that they might but enjoy the soul-stirring, overwhelming discourses of this "son of thunder." It is very natural, and, to a prudent extent, admissible, that the members of the Church should entertain partialities

in reference to their ministers. Many causes conspire to effect these, and it would be improper to attempt to suppress them entirely. But when the spirit of partiality is carried to the extent to which it seems to have been carried in the Corinthian Church, it becomes offensive in the sight of God, embarrassing to the ministry, and detrimental to the prosperity of the cause of religion.

3. *By arraying themselves against each other for the sake of their leaders, thus producing factions in the Church.* This the apostle alleges against them in the preceding context: "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there were contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, and I am of Christ." Their extravagant partialities very naturally engendered these factions, which seem to have existed among them to an extent that seriously affected their claims to the Christian character: "For whereas there is envying and strife among you, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" They had well-nigh lost sight of the Creator in the creature. Some, indeed, separated Christ from all these: "I am of Christ." This was also improper. "Is Christ divided?" "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Ministers of themselves are not "sufficient for these things;" their "sufficiency is of God." "Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase;" "Therefore let no man glory in men;" otherwise the cause of religion will be injured more or less, as the ends of a faction will always be consulted in preference to the general good of the whole. Brethren, let us "walk by the same rule, and mind the same things," and "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace."

II. WE SHALL NOTICE THE GOOD WHICH ST. PAUL DECLARES IS GUARANTEED TO THE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS IN VIRTUE OF THEIR UNION WITH CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH.

“For all things are yours.” This good is given in detail.

1. *All the ministry are yours, “whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.”* Our blessed Lord, in the order of his providence and grace, supplies his Church, on earth, with the ministry of the word. It is his prerogative alone to do this, “and no man taketh this honor unto himself but he that was called of God, as was Aaron.” This supply of the ministry is wisely adapted to every peculiarity and exigency in the Church. “Wherefore, as he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Men of various peculiarities of talent, of different degrees of ministerial abilities, are called, commissioned, and sent forth to serve the Church: all, however, with the same view—“for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Some may be more particularly benefited by the labors of Paul, others by the labors of Apollos, and a third class by the labors of Cephas; yet they are all the property of the Church—“ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.” The services of all are necessary to the interests of the work; and if the Church will love and pray for them, by the blessing of God, they will all be made to contribute more or less to her prosperity. God sends “by the hand of him whom” he will send. It matters not how humble and unpretending may be the abilities of many who are thus sent by him; if faithful, “their labor shall not be in vain in the Lord.” God will make them instrumental in the awakening and conversion

of sinners, and in building up believers in the principles of the faith. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence."

2. *The world is yours.* If by the term world here is meant the people of the world, in which sense it often occurs in the Scriptures, it would seem that not only the ministry, but men in general, are held under contribution to subserve the interests of the Church. "But as for you, ye thought evil against me," said Joseph to his brethren, who sold him into bondage: "God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive;" "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain." In view of this, how ardently and assiduously should the Church, in turn, labor for the conversion of the world! If, however, by the term world is meant the things of the world, these also belong to Christians, and administer to their comfort. The wicked belong to the world; that is, the world of wealth, of honor, of fashion, of pleasure holds them in a state of perfect vassalage. It compels them to do its bidding. It exerts such an absolute control over them, that they seem to have no time to attend either to the interests of their souls, to prepare for a dying hour, or to make provision for the future state. And unless, through the mercy of God, this spell is broken, and they are emancipated from this tyranny, their final and utter ruin will be certain and irretrievable. On the contrary, the world belongs to Christians. It is their servant and not their master. They hold it in safe subordination, "This is the victory that overcame the world, even our

faith." Christians are "they that use this world as not abusing it." Through grace they stand ready, at any time, to balance their account with the world, and go to meet their judge. Moreover, "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." Christians shall, therefore, share in this "fullness," more or less, as, in the judgment of infinite Wisdom, it may be deemed best for them. Hence the promises: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed;" "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

3. *Life is yours.* Life is a momentous thing. It is the brief term of man's probationary existence here, preparatory to the future and eternal state of being. Upon its issue turn consequences of inconceivable importance. It is then that immortal beings enter upon an endless and an unchangeable career, either of happiness or misery. Life is the Christian's in its object, which is "to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." It is his in its means, which aid in the accomplishment of this great object. Hence, it may be said that Christians only make a proper use of life, and they alone will share its primary object. "To them, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality," God will render "eternal life."

4. *Death is yours.* Death, in itself, is a solemn thing. It is "the last enemy," and human nature instinctively revolts at its approach; yet, appalling to our nature as is death in itself, in virtue of the provisions of the atonement it is turned to the Christian's account. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." This last enemy is so subdued by the power of grace, that he is compelled to act toward the Christian the part of a servant or a friend. "Death is yours." Death performs for the Christian an

act of service, which it would be unlawful for him to do for himself, and which results in the acquisition of eternal life above. See, with what fortitude and calmness he meets it! "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." Death, to him, is divested of his sting; "the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" A few years since a pious minister of an eastern conference, when dying, said to his weeping wife, who, with her children, had approached him to bid husband and father a last adieu: "I feel that the cradle of death is fast rocking me into eternity; but, I bless God, it rocks easy." Happy man! death was yours! How true the sentiment of the poet!

"Jesus can make a dying bed  
 Feel soft as downy pillows are;  
 While on his breast I lean my head,  
 And breathe my life out sweetly there."

That pious and devoted man—Professor Caldwell, of Dickinson College—while yielding up his spirit to God, said to his companion: "You will not, I am sure, lie down upon your bed and weep when I am gone. You will not mourn for me, when God has been so good to me. And when you visit the spot where I lie, do not choose a sad and mournful time. Do not go in the shades of the evening, or in the dark night. These are no times to visit the Christian's grave. But go in the morning, in the bright sunshine, when the birds are singing." Brethren, "why should we start and fear to die?" Let us live right, and in death we shall, with others, realize that "all is well." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

5. *Things present are yours.* Among these we notice that *honor is yours.* "If any man serve me," says

Christ, "him will my Father honor." *Peace is yours.*  
"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." *Happiness is yours.*  
"Blessed are they that know the joyful sound. They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance; and in thy name shall they rejoice all the day." *Joy is yours.*  
"Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." *All necessary good is yours.*  
"For the Lord God is a sun and shield; he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." All God's providential dispensations shall be so conducted as to subserve your good. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

6. *Things to come are yours.* "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." But, brethren, who, on earth, can comprehend or compute these "things to come?" It is enough to say, that heaven, with all its possessions, is yours. Are there "many mansions" in glory? You shall dwell in them. Is the "vision of God" there? You shall enjoy it. "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me, that where I am they may behold my glory." Are there "crowns" there? You shall wear them. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Are there "palms" there? You shall wave them in triumph before the throne. Is there "a new song" there? You shall sing it. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever! Amen." Yet how inadequate the computation! "As it is written, 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." The eye has beheld beautiful and enchanting sceneries. The ear has heard sweet and melodious sounds. The heart has conceived grand and noble thoughts; but after all, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man" these "things to come," which God holds in reversion for Christians in the heavenly world. Yet, "all are yours." "In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." "All are yours," and yours forever. How rich are Christians! "O, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and his wonderful works to the children of men!"

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever! Amen."

# SERMONS

AND

## SKETCHES OF SERMONS

ON

*Familiar and Practical Subjects,*

FROM THE

MANUSCRIPTS OF DECEASED MINISTERS OF THE  
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

### PART II.

“Tell my brethren of the Ohio conference, if they think my name worthy of being mentioned, I have not preached an unknown and an unfelt Savior. Tell them that, although unworthy and unfaithful, the Gospel which I have preached to others SUSTAINS ME NOW. Tell them, my only hope, my only foundation is in the blood of the cross—PRECIOUS BLOOD! O the fullness, the richness, and the sweetness of that fountain.”—DYING WORDS OF THE LATE REV. WILLIAM B. CHRISTIE, OF THE OHIO ANNUAL CONFERENCE.



THE  
OHIO CONFERENCE OFFERING.

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SERMON I.

BY BISHOP WILLIAM M'KENDREE.\*

FUNERAL DISCOURSE.

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,” 2 CORINTHIANS VII, 1.

PERMIT me, in imitation of holy men of former days, to enforce the doctrine contained in the text, by worthy example. For this purpose St. Paul produces a “cloud of witnesses,” and for similar purposes the examples of Abel and Stephen are recorded. In order to illustrate and enforce our doctrine, I will introduce the example of our highly-esteemed friend and brother, the late Governor Thomas Worthington, whose funeral obsequies we are this day called upon to mournfully attend. This is done, not only to recommend and enforce the doctrine of the text, but also to present some traits in the character of this excellent man, and to express the respect which is felt, in common, by many thousands of his Christian friends, over whom he has presided as Governor of the state, and rendered important aid in framing laws in the national and state legislatures.

\* This is only a sketch of the concluding portion of a discourse delivered at the funeral of the late Governor Thomas Worthington, near Chillicothe, Ohio, on the — of October, 1827; written out by himself at the request of his friend, Samuel Williams, Esq., of Mt. Auburn, who still retains the original manuscript.

Of his natural and acquired abilities; the manner in which they were exercised, as a man, a husband, a father, for the benefit of his family and his country; and his conduct as the servant of the people in the discharge of the duties of the various offices to which he has been called, I need say nothing, as, in these respects, his fellow-citizens of Chillicothe, in public meeting, have given us a view of his character, too well drawn to need any addition. It only remains for me to add his Christian character to what is already before us.

It is said of Moses, the legislator of the Jews, that he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; namely, to inherit the Egyptian crown. And it may be said of our beloved Worthington, that when in the meridian of life, in possession of wealth, surrounded by a large and amiable family, crowned with the highest honors the state had to confer, and highly esteemed, both by his constituents and his associates in office, for his able and effective services, he deliberately chose the advantages of the Christian religion, with its privations and self-denial, before all the honors and pleasures of the world. The circumstances under which he made this choice necessarily preclude all suspicion of either mental weakness, enthusiasm, or unworthy motives. His choice was calmly, deliberately, and decidedly made. When he presented himself for membership in the Church of Christ, he was reminded of the probable consequence of the course he was about to take: that the contumely of the world would be heaped upon him, and his name "cast out as evil." But he had anticipated these things, and was prepared to meet them; and, having avowed his faith in the doctrines of the Church, and his determination to walk by its rules of discipline, he was received as a brother. Having added the duties of religion to those of the various relations of life,

I am informed he withdrew from the world, and devoted himself to the service of Christ, and so lived as to die in the blissful hope of everlasting life.

His manners were plain, unostentatious, generous, and frank. He had a high sense of justice, of punctuality and promptness in all his dealings with others. If he occasionally mixed with men of the world in a public manner, it was in conformity to the duties of official station, and it was his cross and not his pleasure to do so. That he was sentimentally opposed to pomp and in favor of sincerity and simplicity of manners, appears from his own deportment through life, and is farther evinced by a clause in his will, expressive of his desire that his family and friends should use no badges of mourning for him after his death. To the credit of his afflicted widow and children, his wish in this particular was as punctually attended to as was the command of Jonadab to his children.

I have had the pleasure of being with this servant of Christ at his own hospitable mansion, and in his neighborhood. I have occasionally seen, and frequently heard from him, in other and distant sections of country, and have seen nor heard of any thing unbecoming the Christian.

Thus lived and thus died our lamented and much-esteemed fellow-citizen and beloved brother in Christ; and, although dead, he yet liveth, by his example, to recommend religion and enforce the all-important doctrines of our text.

Let us, therefore, dearly-beloved hearers, consider the importance of the doctrines, the authority with which they are supported, the awful consequence of persisting in our own ways, and the everlasting happiness of submitting to the Lord's way. Let us adopt the choice and follow the example of our beloved brother Worthington, if haply we may escape the punishment which our conduct deserves,

obtain pardon for all our sins, and find our way to everlasting happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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## SERMON II.

BY REV. EDWARD TIFFIN, M. D.\*

### THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST.

"Let us now go unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass," LUKE II, 15.

THIS day the anniversary of the Savior's birth greets the Christian world. It comes to remind us of that sacred era which the holy Jesus hallowed by his advent to our earth and his assumption of our nature. The calendar of the saints registers no epoch so dear to memory. History records no event so momentous to man. Through the vista of eighteen hundred years, the eye of faith still sees the unfolded radiance of the halcyon morning whose

\* DR. EDWARD TIFFIN was a local deacon in the Methodist Episcopal Church, to which office he was ordained by Bishop Asbury, in 1792, in Virginia, in which state he then resided. He was a native of England; studied medicine in that country, and came to the United States, and settled in Charleston, Berkeley county, Virginia, where he commenced the practice of physic before he had reached the age of twenty-one years. He there married a sister of the late Governor Worthington, of Ohio, and, in 1796, removed to Chillicothe, where, for several years, he continued his practice as a physician with great success.

He was early a member of the territorial Legislature of the North-Western territory, president of the convention which formed the first constitution of Ohio, and was elected the first Governor of the state, and chosen a second term to the same office. He was afterward, successively, senator in Congress several years; Speaker of one of the houses in the state Legislature; the first Commissioner of the General Land-Office, at Washington City; and afterward Surveyor-General of United States public lands, which office he held fifteen years, in Chillicothe, and from which he was removed by President Jackson, when the Doctor was on his death-bed, in 1829. He died in joyful hope of everlasting life.

As a preacher, his talents were very respectable. He was methodical in

orient beams were the first dawning of an immortal day, and over which the lapse of ages has thrown no obscurity. It was an era which time can never blot from the recollections of man—which eternity can not expunge from the archives of heaven. Then it was that the great scene of redemption opened, and the stupendous scheme of mercy, projected in the sublime councils of heaven, began to be developed. Then the great prophecy of ages was turned into history, and the Shiloh of early promise stood revealed. Then were promulged those “glad tidings of great joy” which first cheered to ecstasy the shepherds of Bethlehem, and which were soon to be “published to all people.” Then “the morning stars sang together,” and the arches of heaven rang with the hosannas of angels. Vain were the attempts to portray the glories of the auspicious day, which filled the earth with shouts of jubilation, and lighted up new lusters in the skies. The pens, the tongues, the language of mortals are impotent in the effort. Eloquence may array all its tropes and figures; the muse may combine all her imagery, and soar on her sublimest wing; and, without the promptings of inspiration, leaves the lofty theme all untold.

the arrangement of his discourses, and always presented his subject with great clearness and force; and his appeals to the hearts and consciences of his hearers were usually pointed, energetic, and effective. His language was somewhat florid, yet plain, and adapted to the comprehension of all. His manner, his action in the pulpit, was impulsive, yet natural, and his countenance expressive; and his discourses were delivered with great animation, and often with eloquence and power.

In person, Dr. Tiffin was rather below the middle size and stature; but, till impaired health and the infirmities of age came upon him, he was remarkable for his activity and the quickness of his movements. Whatever he did, he did with his might; and it was his rule never to put off till to-morrow what could be done to-day. In company and conversation, his vivacity and animation were no less remarkable than his physical activity.

To the active labors and influence of Dr. Tiffin and his excellent lady, the Church is more indebted than to any others for the introduction and establishment of Methodism in Chillicothe and the surrounding country. This and the two following discourses were written in 1817.

But, although we can not portray the scene, we love to dwell on the portrait already drawn in the Gospel, by more than mortal pen. We love to go back, in imagination, to the long-lapsed period of his nativity; to linger around the hallowed spot; to witness the train of wonders evolved in the process, and to ponder the auspicious sequel. The scene spreads itself anew before the eye, and a solemn awe gathers around the heart. The mighty birth is proclaimed in our ears. We see the infant Immanuel "wrapped in swaddling-clothes," and him to whom "is given all power in heaven and in earth," pillowed upon the rude manger of a stable! We see the "star in the east" stand gleaming in the heavens to guide the footsteps of the wise man. We hear him, while yet a child, confounding the wisdom of sages, and baffling Pharisaic subtlety. We follow him into the great scenes of his labors and toils, and behold acts of godlike benevolence circling his path, and miracles of mercy sealing his divine mission. We see water blushing into wine at his volition, and a few loaves and fishes swelled into profusion for thousands by his blessing. The eyeballs of the blind are unsealed at his touch; the sick are healed by his word; and the dead start into life again at his summons.

We pursue him in his sufferings, mingle in his sorrows, and weep over the woes which beset his path to the cross. We see him treading the wine-press alone, and whelmed under waves of guilt not his own. We weep with him in the garden of Gethsemane, in the hour of agony, when the bitterness of anguish drew blood from every pore. We behold him betrayed by the kiss of a perfidious disciple; arraigned as a felon; tried in solemn mockery, amid the vociferations of a mob; and doomed to death by malice and perjury. We hear the declaration of his innocence and the sentence of his condemnation together, from the same mouth. We see the crown of thorns twining

around his sacred head, the last vial of wrath poured out, and the great tragedy of the cross closing the scene.

Closing, did I say? Does the scene close here? O no! It only changes. A day of joy breaks upon this midnight of sorrows. The hour of triumph is at hand. Though he could not come down from the cross, he could break the seals of death and the inclosures of the sepulcher. He arose, "the first-fruits of them that slept," and taught us that sleeping millions shall, one day, burst their tombs and spring to life—the life of gods. If angels shouted at his birth, what notes of holy rapture should warble forth from human tongues at his triumph over the grave! This is the great theme of human exultation. Here our human nature puts on immortal robes, and virtue dresses up for heaven. This great fact sweeps away at once the dreams of heathen speculation, and disperses the cloud that veiled the brightest pages of early philosophy.

Yet, strange to tell, the anniversary of the day which gave this Savior birth, and led to these momentous results, is permitted, with a few exceptions, to pass unheeded in a Christian community, with scarce any other memorial than a registry in our calendars. Were a stranger to our religion to read, for the first time, the Gospel history of the Savior's advent and its merciful purposes; his suffering life and tragical death; that all his toils and sufferings were a voluntary and vicarious sacrifice; that he is now confessed to be our atonement, and our redemption from bondage and death; how would he expect the day which gave him birth to be commemorated and honored? what signs of gratulation with which to greet the first dawning rays of this anniversary morning? what notes of joy to echo back the songs of transport which once gladdened the plains of Bethlehem? Would not he expect to see this day set apart as the jubilee of nations; a solemn abstraction from secular concerns; the doors of

sacred temples thrown open ; their walls verdant with the emblems of immortality ; throngs pressing around the altar with oblations of gratitude ; and adoring devotion pouring forth incense of prayer and praise to the God of so great salvation ? Well, blessed be God ! we hope the period will ere long arrive when all who assume the name and wear the badges of Christianity will unite in celebrating, as a holy jubilee, the anniversary of a Savior's birth. They will, like the shepherds mentioned in the text, "go even to Bethlehem, to see this thing which is come to pass." The shepherds did as they proposed ; they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. They believed before they came ; but now their faith is confirmed by sight. They were both gratified and edified by the view, and they returned glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had seen and heard.

Let us, then, imitate these happy men ; let us "go to Bethlehem"—the name signifies "the house of bread ;" there, in the contemplation of the Savior of a fallen world, may we find bread for our souls ! To excite your attention to this divine subject, let it be observed, you may there see,

I. THE DEITY DISPLAYED.

II. MAN REDEEMED.

I. Let us, then, go to Bethlehem, and see the Deity displayed.

The first promise God made to fallen man was, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Jesus Christ, as to the flesh, is "the seed of the woman." But he is infinitely more. St. Paul says, "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman." It was necessary for our redemption that the Savior of men should himself be man ; for the same nature that sinned must bear the punishment of sin. Yet

the Man, that holy thing which was born of the virgin, was to be called "the Son of God," holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; fit to become sin for us, because he knew no sin.

In what manner the human nature was united to the Divine we can not tell. It is enough for us that such was the fact. Let the following inspired witnesses testify, and confirm our faith. St. Matthew says, "His name shall be called Immanuel, which signifies, God with us." St. John says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;" "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." St. Paul assures us that, "without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness;" namely, "God manifest in the flesh." This is a glorious and pleasing truth: God is manifest in the flesh. Man could not ascend to him, and lo! he comes down to us!

Deplorable darkness has long covered the earth, and the wisest of men bowed down to an "unknown God." But, glory be to his name! he who was "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;" the image of the invisible God, "who, being in the form of God," and who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," condescends to become a man—a poor man—"that we through his poverty might be rich." By his heavenly doctrine; by his astonishing miracles; in his lovely and spotless life; and especially in his divine person, God was manifested to man. "Shew us the Father," said Philip to him, "and it sufficeth us." Jesus, in a way of gentle rebuke, replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" and then follow these remarkable words, fully proving that God was manifested in the flesh: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and

the Father in me?" "Henceforth ye know him, and have seen him;" for "I and my Father are one."

Let us, then, go to Bethlehem, and see this great thing which angels desire to look into. Glorious mystery! we can not fully comprehend it. Men may speak and write of it; but it can not be described. We may speak of it; but the most we can say about it is, that it is unspeakable; and the most we know is, that it passeth knowledge. Suffice it, then, that we believe and adore. Let but the light shine into our hearts, to give us "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," and it is enough. We will dwell at Bethlehem all our days, till he shall remove us to Bethel above, where we shall no longer "see through a glass darkly," but "face to face."

II. Let us go to Bethlehem and see man redeemed.

The redemption of fallen man was the grand design of the Savior's birth. "God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." He was named Jesus, because he came to "save his people from their sins." There is something delightful in the name, Savior! Cicero, the Roman orator, said that, when traveling in Greece, he saw a pillar inscribed with the word, "Savior." He admired the fullness of the name; but he knew not its Christian import. How much more may we admire it! for it is

"JESUS! the name that charms our fears,  
That bids our sorrows cease;  
'Tis music in the sinner's ears;  
'Tis life, and health, and peace."

It was in this character that the saints of old expected his appearance. "To him gave all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him should receive remission of sins." About the time of his coming the godly people in Jerusalem were looking for redemp-

tion, and, with Simeon, "waiting for the consolation of Israel." Our Lord himself declares this to be the chief design of his coming: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

Here, then, we see the grace and love of the blessed Jesus. He, the Most High God, blessed for evermore, consented to become man! He who was life, and gave life to all, became a mortal man. He was born to die; because we were partakers of flesh and blood, he, also, himself took part of the same, yet without sin. Every victim under the law must be perfect and without blemish. It was, therefore, necessary that the Lamb of God should be so also. Hence, says St. John, "He was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin." Being thus pure and holy, the sins of the whole Church were laid upon him; for "he bare our sins in his own body upon the tree." "The Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all," that, by his stripes, we might be healed. Here is displayed to our view the redemption that is in Jesus. He has redeemed us from the curse of the law; he hath redeemed us from the power and dominion of sin; he hath redeemed us to God, body, soul, and spirit. But, in order to avail ourselves of this redemption, we are called upon, by his Spirit and by his Gospel, to unfeignedly repent of our sins and believe in his holy name. This faith or belief, if genuine, will produce a supreme love to God; and this love will associate to itself love to all mankind. The soul thus under this divine influence will render a cheerful and willing obedience to all the Divine commands; and when it has served God during its probationary state here upon earth, it will, at the close of life, be enabled to say with the apostle of old, "I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life, which God, the righteous

Judge, will give me in that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

APPLICATION. Having been to Bethlehem to see this thing which is come to pass, let us now, like the shepherds of old, return glorifying God for all the things we have heard and seen. We learn, that in the incarnation of the Son of God, we may see the Deity displayed and man redeemed. How vast and glorious are these designs of a Savior's birth! The angels knew this when they sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men!” But are these purposes of his appearance answered as to us? Does God, in all his glorious perfections, manifested in the person of Jesus Christ, so attract our notice as to cause us to adore, and love, and praise him—magnifying the God of Israel, and saying: “The Lord hath visited and redeemed his people?” Are we among his redeemed? or are we seeking to be redeemed from the guilt and power of sin; from the follies and vanities of this world, in order to be translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son? If so, we have abundant cause of joy. We will find that the Church of God is still a Bethlehem—“a house of bread.” God will feed our souls with “the bread which cometh down from heaven,” and which endureth to eternal life, our purposes of repentance and amendment will be strengthened, our virtues will be abundantly increased, and we shall grow in grace, and in the knowledge and love of God, till the great Head of his Church shall fulfill his last promise, of calling us up higher, “that where he is, we may be also.”

## SERMON III.

BY REV. EDWARD TIFFIN, M. D.

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me,” JOHN v, 39.

THE Scriptures are certainly an inexhaustible fund of matter for the most delightful and ennobling employment. When we consider the Author of these sacred books—that they came originally from heaven, were dictated by divine Wisdom, having the same consummate excellence as the works of creation—it is really surprising that we are not always searching, by study, by meditation, or converse, in one or other of these grand volumes. Are we eager to hear, and impatient, often, to purchase what proceeds from the eloquent tongues and masterly pens of men? And can we be coldly indifferent when, not the most accomplished of mankind, not the most exalted of creatures, but the adorable Author of all wisdom speaks in his revealed word? Strange that our attention does not hang upon the venerable record, and our talk dwell upon the incomparable truths! Strange that we do not always imitate the noble conduct of the citizens of Berea, in receiving the word with more readiness of mind, and obey the admonition in the text, by searching the Scriptures daily, and more especially so, when it assures us that they are a display of the divine perfections of the Savior of a fallen race, and abundantly testify, or bear witness, to this glorious truth! For would you wish to see history, in all her simplicity, and all her force, most beautifully easy, yet irresistibly striking—see her, or, rather, feel her energy, touching the nicest movements of the soul, and triumph-

ing over all our passions? Look, then, at the narrative of Joseph's life; the representation of Esau's bitter distress; the affectionate but afflicting intercourse between Jonathan and his gallant friend; the memorable journal of the disciple going to the village of Emmaus; and there you will find finished models of the impassioned and affecting: and yet there is nothing studied—no flights of fancy, and no embellishments of oratory.

Are we pleased with the elevation and dignity of a heroic poem, or the tenderness and perplexity of a dramatic performance? In the book of Job they are both united, and both unequaled. The language glows and the pathos swells, till, at last, the Deity himself makes his entrance. He speaks from the whirlwind, and summons the creation: summons heaven and all its shining host; the elements, and their most wonderful productions, to vouch for his providential dispensations. His word strikes terror and flashes conviction, decides the momentous controversy, and closes the august drama with all possible solemnity and grandeur.

If sometimes we choose a plaintive strain, such as softens the mind, and soothes an agreeable melancholy, where can we find any thing equal to David's pathetic elegy on his beloved Jonathan; to his most passionate and inconsolable moan over his lovely but unhappy Absalom; or to that melodious woe, which warbles and bleeds in every line of Jeremiah's lamentations!

Would you wish to be entertained with the daring sublimity, the expressive delicacy, or the rapid excursions of the most celebrated authors of antiquity? Behold them joined, yea, excelled, in the odes of Moses—the eucharistic hymn of Deborah—in the exalted devotion of the Psalms, and the glorious enthusiasm of the prophets; but with this difference, that the former are tuneful triflers, and amuse the mind with empty fiction, while the latter

are teachers sent from God, and make the soul wise unto salvation.

Are we admirers of antiquity? Here we are led back beyond the universal deluge, and far beyond the date of any other annals. We are introduced among the earliest inhabitants of the earth. We take a view of mankind in their undisguised, primitive plainness, and when the days of their life were but little short of one thousand years. We are brought acquainted with the original of nations, with the creation of the world, and with the birth of time itself.

Are we delighted with achievements? Where is any thing comparable to the miracles in Egypt, and the wonders in the fields of Zoar; to the memoirs of the Israelites passing through the depths of the sea, sojourning in the inhospitable deserts, and conquering the kingdoms of Canaan? Where shall we meet with instances of martial bravery equal to the prodigious exploits of the Judges, or the adventurous deeds of Jesse's valiant son, and his matchless band of worthies? Here we behold the fundamental laws of the universe, sometimes suspended, sometimes reversed; and not only the current of Jordan, but the course of nature controlled. In short, when we enter the field of Scripture, we tread, shall I say on enchanted, shall I say, rather, on consecrated ground?—where astonishment and awe are awakened at every turn, and the whole presented with all the precision and sanctity of eternal truth?

If we want maxims of wisdom, how copiously may our wants be supplied, and how delicately our taste gratified, especially in the book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and some of the minor prophets! Here are the most sage lessons of instruction, adapted to every circumstance of life, formed upon the experience of all preceding ages, and perfected by the unerring Spirit of divine inspiration—the

whole like a profusion of pearls, each containing, in a very small compass, a value almost immense, all heaped up—as an ingenious critic speaks—with a confused magnificence beyond all order.

If we look for strength of reasoning and warmth of exhortation, the insinuating arts of genteel address, or the manly boldness of impartial reproof; all the thunder of the orator, without any of his ostentation; all the politeness of the courtier, without any of his flattery, let us have recourse to the Acts of the Apostles, and to the epistles of St. Paul. These are a specimen, or, rather, these are the standard of them all.

Are you fond of pastoral, in all its graces? Never have we seen such exquisite touches of rural painting, or such sweet images of endeared affection, as in the song of songs, which is Solomon's. All the brilliant and amiable appearances in nature are employed to delineate the tenderness of *His heart*, who is love itself, to portray the beauty of His person, who is the chiefest among ten thousand, and describe the happiness of these souls, whose fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

Perhaps some of my hearers may be ready to conclude there has been enough said to recommend the admonition in the text, "Search the Scriptures." But there are other and great considerations connected with the subject.

They afford the most awful and the most amiable manifestations of the Godhead. His glory shines and his goodness smiles in these divine pages with unparalleled luster. Here we have a satisfactory explanation of our own state. The origin of evil is traced, the cause of all our misery discovered, and the remedy—the infallible remedy—both clearly shown and freely offered. The merits of the bleeding Savior lay a firm foundation for all our hopes, while gratitude for his dying love suggests

the most winning incitement to every duty. Morality—admired morality—is delineated in all its branches, is placed upon its proper basis, and raised to its highest elevation. The Spirit of God is promised, to enlighten the darkness of our understanding, and strengthen the imbecility of our wills. What a blessed provision is made in these blessed books for all our spiritual wants; to lead us to the Church of Christ militant here on earth, and train us up in that Church, for the glories of the Church triumphant in heaven!

Is any one convinced of guilt, or provoking heaven and ruining the soul? This blessed charter of his salvation assures him, that God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He is not left, then, to the uncertainty of conjecture; but is assured that the truly-penitent soul shall obtain forgiveness, and that his sins shall be remembered no more.

Are we assaulted by temptation, or averse to duty? These sacred pages assure us, that sin shall not have dominion over us; that the grace of God is sufficient for us, and that he will be both a sun and a shield to all who confide in his mercy, and will work in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Should we be visited with sickness, or overtaken by calamity, these enlightening pages declare, that tribulations are fatherly chastisements, tokens of our Maker's love, and fruits of his care; that they are intended to work in us the peaceable, fruitful fruits of righteousness, and to work out for us an eternal weight of glory.

Should we, under the summons of death, to which all are exposed, have recourse to all the most celebrated comforters in the heathen world, they would increase our apprehensions rather than mitigate our dread. Death is represented by the great master of their schools, "as

the most formidable of all evils." They were not able positively to determine whether the soul survived, and never so much as dreamed of the resurrection of the body; whereas the book of God strips the monster of his horrors, or turns him into a messenger of peace—gives him an angel's face and a deliverer's hand—ascertaining to the souls of the righteous an immediate translation into the regions of bliss, and assuring to their bodies a most advantageous revival at the restoration of all things. Inestimable book! It heals the maladies of life, and subdues the fear of death. It strikes a lightsome vista through the gloom of the grave, and opens a charming, a glorious prospect of immortality in the heavens.

Well did the Redeemer of the world know the blessed consequences that would flow from an attention to his divine injunction: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." And how forcibly did the apostle Paul second his gracious designs, by exhorting his brethren "to let the word of Christ dwell in them richly!" The advantages to be derived from a discharge of this duty, we are assured will be a full confirmation of our faith. They testify of the Redeemer of men. They bear witness to the truth of his divine mission. All the ancient prophecies obtained their full accomplishment in him. Every prediction was abundantly verified: his birth, his life, his miracles, his heavenly doctrines, and his death, all testify, or bear witness, that the desire of nations was come, and that the Lord had visited and redeemed his people. And let it be observed, that these Scriptures which we are exhorted "to search," contain every thing necessary for us to know, in order to obtain everlasting life and happiness; that no other revelation is to be expected from heaven to man. "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them," was observed to an anxious desirer for a different

mode of communication. "And if they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead," was declared to be a fact by one who had the best means of knowing human nature.

But we should be wanting in duty to our hearers, did we not admonish them, that a proper disposition of heart is necessary to be brought to this exercise. "Search the Scriptures." Our Lord said to the Jews, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself;" which is as much as if he had said, "Sincerity of heart is indispensable to a right understanding of the Scriptures." If, there ore, we bring to this important duty, a heart sincerely disposed to be enlightened, instructed, and benefited by the truth, we have the promise of infinite Truth itself, that we shall not be disappointed. We shall be both benefited and blessed to the utmost extent of our desires. We shall enjoy all the blessings promised to the members of the Church militant here on earth, and, finally, when our pilgrimage is accomplished, we shall be translated to the Church triumphant in heaven.

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## SERMON IV.

BY REV. EDWARD TIFFIN, M. D

THE CHOICE OF MOSES.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward," HEBREWS XI, 24-26.

THAT we may have a right understanding of this subject, it will be necessary to revert to the early history of

the Jewish people. The sacred records inform us in what manner the patriarchs were planted in Egypt, during the seven years' famine that afflicted that and the surrounding country; how these people retained their national peculiarities, and were united to each other; how they grew and multiplied till their numbers excited the jealousy of Pharaoh and his court. In the first chapter of Exodus we are told that "the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them." So that the king said unto his people, "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land." Therefore they reduced them to slavery, and set cruel taskmasters over them, and afflicted them exceedingly. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. An edict was passed to destroy every male child as soon as born, which the providence of God overruled. Another was enacted, commanding all the people to throw every male infant into the Nile, that they might be destroyed. While this cruel and unnatural law was in force, Moses, the hero of the text, was ushered upon the great theater of human life. Exodus, chapter ii: "And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done with him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the

river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side: and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go, and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away and nurse it for me and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, because I drew him out of the water." In this beautiful and interesting relation, we see how Moses became, and was considered as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and the propriety with which the apostle in the text informs us, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Let us consider

I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN MOSES'S REFUSAL.

II. WHAT HE CHOSE IN PREFERENCE; AND,

III. WHAT DETERMINED HIS CHOICE: "HE HAD RESPECT UNTO THE RECOMPENSE OF THE REWARD."

I. We have seen in what manner Moses became, and was considered the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

It is said the fundamental laws of Egypt did not suffer women to ascend the throne, and that Pharaoh had no male issue; that he had confirmed and adopted Moses as his daughter's son, and had given him an education suitable to his rank and dignity; for in the Acts of the Apostles we are informed, "that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in wonders and deed." His prospects were, therefore, great and flat-

tering. He was the presumed heir-apparent to the throne of Egypt. In refusing, therefore, to be considered any longer as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he relinquished the honors and the pleasures of a splendid court, and, as the latter part of the text strongly implies, all the treasures of Egypt. In despotic governments, such as Egypt then was, the wealth of the nation is too much at the disposal and under the control of the monarch. There, eastern magnificence, with all its alluring splendor, opened to the youthful mind of Moses all its glittering charms. Every object that could dazzle the eye, charm the heart, or captivate the affections, was opened in prospect to his enjoyment; and yet, at the command of his God, he nobly determined to make a sacrifice of them all. This determination was not an indiscreet sally of youth; for it was made after he had come to years—after his understanding had ripened to maturity. His mind, highly gifted by nature, had been improved by a liberal education, and he was fully capable of reflecting on the course he was now called upon to pursue. He made a choice—a choice dictated by his best interests, and refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, which brings us to the second consideration.

## II. HIS CHOICE.

He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

The affliction mentioned in the text, includes mental as well as bodily affliction. And when we consider what a wayward people the Jews were; how often they rebelled against, and disbelieved their God; and how often they grieved the soul of this good man, who had manifested so much disinterested benevolence for them, we may, then,

have a view of his sufferings and afflictions. Notwithstanding God had so often appeared in their behalf, at the earnest entreaty of Moses, from his first application to Pharaoh for their deliverance; in opening a passage for them through the Red Sea, for their escape, and miraculously overthrowing Pharaoh and all his host; in providing food from heaven, and water from the rock in the wilderness to sustain them; directing their course by night and by day, and other numberless instances of divine goodness, all apparently through the intercession of Moses; yet his life was a continued scene of sorrow and affliction. He was afflicted on their account, and he had to suffer reproach from them. And why? Because he believed his God, and had respect unto the recompense of the reward. God had appeared unto him in the burning bush, and laid his commands upon him. The mode or manner of this communication was such, that Moses could not doubt, for a moment, but that it was the voice of God. Moses hesitates, but resolves to obey. By faith it was he made the resolution. He believed his God, and he determined to obey him. He looks through the vista of time. He considers the short course of all sublunary things. He consults his best interests, and the glorious recompense of reward that awaits all who are obedient to their God. Thus he set a noble example to future believers, established a character for faith and piety, and his name is handed down to future generations as one worthy of imitation.

It only remains for us to make a suitable application to ourselves. We are all individually called to a life of faith and piety, and the same recompense of reward awaits every obedient soul. We may not be called upon to make a sacrifice equal to Moses; but we must all deny ourselves of all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and we must live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present

world. The Christian religion does not require any sacrifice of rational enjoyment; it only restrains us in the temperate use of all the blessings of life. It calls upon us to glorify God in all things. And if we will seriously reflect upon the obligations we are under to Heaven; that every blessing we have, or do enjoy, flows from infinite Goodness, and that all our future hopes depend upon the same source, what rational man can refuse to render that obedience the Gospel enjoins, and more especially so, when he is assured that in this life he will enjoy the approbation of his own mind, and, what is of infinitely-greater importance, he will also enjoy the smiles of Heaven. Neither power, wealth, nor influence can save him from affliction, or secure him against the stroke of death; and how lamentable will be his condition, at the close of life, to look back upon a misspent life, and forward without hope! Whereas, on the other hand, should he be so happy as to have believed and obeyed his God, how serene and peaceful will be the closing scene to him! Faith in Christ and hope in God will enable him to triumph over death, and suffer the last pangs of dissolving nature in all the majesty of woe. Blessed in life, blessed in death, and blessed will he be forever and forever.

## SERMON V.

BY REV. WILLIAM B. CHRISTIE,  
OF THE OHIO ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

## A PLEA FOR THE MOURNERS' BENCH.

"In those days and at that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah, together going and weeping they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten," JEREMIAH L, 4, 5.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," JAMES V, 16.

THE question has been often asked, and not always captiously, why do the Methodists arrange their seats and invite, as they call it, mourners forward, to receive the prayers of the Church? Is it because they think they can renew them in the spirit of their minds, and turn them from Satan to God? We answer, No. We never thought we could change the heart, or make alive the soul dead in trespasses and sins.

What, then, is it done for? Do they imagine a penitent soul can only pour out its desires acceptably at the mourners' bench? Not so. We think a penitent may, wherever found, make known his wants acceptably to God, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

For what, then, is the invitation given? I allow prayer is one of the ways in which man may "avail much" for his fellow-man. Do they imagine the people of God can only lift up their prayers in faith for the broken-hearted when before them around the altar? Still we answer, No. We believe most fully that they who love our Lord Jesus Christ, may engage in supplication for those of a

contrite spirit, *in general*, when none are personally before them.

Well, I am more perplexed than ever to imagine the reasons upon which this, to me, strange practice is founded. I have thought sometimes it was without any. By some means it was introduced in the first instance, and has been continued without examination, and with strong and obvious objections to its retention. It may be, however, they have taken up the strange notion the penitent sinner can only be converted in this way, and there, and there only, must he expect redemption, even the forgiveness of sins. Neither is this the reason. We not only believe they may be, but that thousands have been converted, who were never seen *formally* at the altar.

If, then, they have no power to convert; if the penitent can lift up his heart in acceptable prayer elsewhere; if the people of God can intercede in behalf of the heavy laden; and if they may, and often do, find pardon and peace at another place than the mourners' bench, I am entirely at a loss to know why the practice is continued, and what can be gained on the part of the penitent desiring salvation; more especially when it is known that many persons entertain strong prejudices against this practice, and the profane scoff at it as ridiculous. Persevered in under such circumstances, it should have strong reasons to justify the practice.

Let us, then, calmly consider the practice, and inquire into its reasons. Put, then, the case in the most unfavorable light. Let it be supposed that he who kneels at the altar, asking the prayers of them that believe, is never converted at the altar, but elsewhere. Has he gained nothing, and is there no reason to sustain and bear him out in the step taken? He who thinks so has reached his conclusion by a process different from that which I have been accustomed to pursue, and must have studied the

principles of human action in a light different from that in which they have presented themselves to my mind. To the intelligent and judicious, there need be no fear in presenting the views in favor of, and the reasons upon which this practice is founded, and to do so without reserve. Let us, then, consider this practice in the influence it will have upon the irreligious friends of the man who kneels at the altar; in the influence upon his own convictions and awakened feelings; upon the sympathies and prayers of the Church. To begin.

Has he gained nothing in the influence this step will have upon his unawakened friends? So long as the convictions of the heart are unavowed, and no decisive indication of a desire to flee the wrath to come is given, the irreligious associates of the man will exert themselves to divert his mind from seriousness, from salvation; but when they see his tearful eye, and see him kneel at the altar, in impressive action asking the prayers of them that believe, a new relation is presented—their power over him is weakened. They know, they feel it; and they say, "He has left us; he is seeking religion; let him go."

How often has the case occurred, under the ministry of the word, while the preacher described the sufferings of Christ, and opened up "the great and precious promises" of grace, that the young man has felt conviction fasten upon his conscience, and the tear drop down his face, while he saw rise up before him his own sinful danger, and revolved the half-formed purpose to seek salvation! In the midst of "this unwonted tenderness of heart," the doxology was sung and the benedictional amen pronounced; the multitude, pressing for the door, began to retire. He fain would then have passed silently away, and mused with his own thoughts, or lifted his wounded spirit in prayer toward heaven; but *friends* of other feeling, beholding his "serious mood," gathered round him, and by

their arts, which all, whether learned or ignorant, know too well how to practice, they began their essays to divert his mind from seriousness. This step led where he wished not to go, and imperceptibly they strove to turn his thoughts from himself, from mercy, from "the hope set before him." If in these covert attempts they failed, how often was raillery resorted to! They charged him with melancholy—with having been scared by the preacher. To avoid their taunts and reproaches, how often has he done violence to his own feelings, affected a cheerfulness he did not feel, and drowned all in a false independence! Suppose, now, for illustration, before he retired from the Church, he had presented himself at the altar as one convinced of his sinful danger—as one determined to seek an interest in the blood of sprinkling; and then poured out his soul in prayer; would it have no influence to deter those otherwise ready to assail him? They would have beheld it at first with surprise; and finally turned away with pity and contempt, saying, "He has joined them; let him go." To have assaulted him under such circumstances, and after such a declaration of his purpose, requires a hardihood in wickedness not always found. Their power over him is lost to a great extent, and their taunts and reproaches fail to produce their former effect; for he has thrown off the fear of man, which bringeth a snare, and often death.

If this were all, it would be a great positive gain. But is it all? He that thinks so knows but little, very little, of the principle of human action.

Let us, then, consider the influence this step will have in giving strength to the man's convictions, and arming him against himself. Such is the corruption of the human heart; its resistance to the drawings of the Holy Spirit; its proneness to evil; the facility with which it invents excuses for delay and indecision in the things

which belong to peace and reconciliation with God, that almost every thing is gained when the convictions of the heart are aroused. How many are there who "see the right and approve it," who "abhor the wrong," and yet remain only almost persuaded, not practically choosing Christ! "They resolve, and are slain;" are drawn, but do not yield; live for months, perhaps years, in indecision, and finally lose their convictions and perish. But while in this state of "trembling upon the turning point," how different might have been the result, if they had taken one effective step, which would have armed them against themselves, and cut off their retreat again into the world! Let us again recur to our former illustration, and, as before supposed, let the man retire from the house of God with a wounded spirit, but without any manifestation of it, except what is read in the tear which swims in his eyes; without any public declaration of the desires which struggle in his heart; will his convictions not be more liable to grow weak and die away by contact with the world? Will he not feel himself more at liberty to yield to temptation; to pursue his former course? Certainly he will. Instead of this, let him kneel at the mourners' bench, saying, in action, "Pray for me;" let the children of God lift up their prayers in his behalf; his convictions will strike deeper into his heart; the influence arising from the fear of man will be weakened, if not destroyed. Having, in this expressive act, said he would seek salvation, he has made difficult his retreat again into the world, and taken that step which gives decision to a long-doubtful purpose; a step which, while the Spirit draws, leads him on to grace and salvation. Historians tell us of a certain king who intended to invade and lay waste a neighboring state, who resolved not to return without prosecuting a successful campaign. In the execution of this purpose, that he might supply his soldiers

with every motive, and destroy all thoughts of a return, he caused the bridges to be broken down and the way laid waste as they passed. So with the man who approaches the altar and kneels as a penitent seeker of salvation: he has broken down the bridges, torn up and laid waste the way behind him, increased the difficulties of return, and placed himself in a new relation to the world and the Church. Thus he is supplied with a new motive, while the Spirit draws, to press onward—to lay hold on the hope set before him. Our fondest, strongest expectations for our friends—how often are they blasted! We saw them weep, and half turn toward their Father's house; we thought them just ready to enter the kingdom. But, after months of solicitude and painful anxiety, we see them decline by degrees, and fall back into increased hardness of heart. Once it wanted but one decisive act; now the threatening storm of fiery indignation can not move them. At that eventful hour when tenderly drawn, had they cast themselves before the mercy-seat, saying, "I yield, I yield!" and to those around, "What must I do?" how different might have been the result! For want of this, many that once were nigh are now far from the kingdom of God.

Again: if man may be profitable to his fellow-man; if prayer is one of the ways in which that profiting may manifest itself, and one of the forms of its communication, is there not a decided advantage when that man is before us in the character of a seeker of salvation?

That the believer in Christ may lift up his heart in acceptable prayer, asking deliverance for the captive, comfort for the mourner, and when none in that character is *personally* and formally before him, has been already admitted, and will not by any be controverted. But, from the very nature of the case, it must be *general*, and not that deep-felt, specific aid of the prayer of faith which

seeks mercy and deliverance for the captive, the binding up the broken heart of the friend before him.

That a present object of misery strikes deeper into and more powerfully moves the heart than a distant one, is a truth, apart from a particular application, no where controverted. That the interest which it arouses, and the practical effort which it calls forth are different, is equally allowed. That this principle is not discarded, but admitted by all the different sects of Christians, is plain from the pressing nature of their exhortations for such to discover their convictions to friends, and seek advice. And how it comes to be inapplicable in the case we are now considering, I can not imagine. There is a strong Christian sympathy, which enters into the feelings of another's heart, and weeps with him that weeps; a sympathy this, when rightly moved, which exerts itself powerfully in another's behalf. No one doubts but this passion not only may be, but often is aroused, and pours itself forth in strong cries and tears for the weary and heavy laden, when none are formally around the altar. Still it is and must be general, and not that direct act which lays hold upon its present object, and holding up before, pleads at the mercy-seat in its behalf, the blood of sprinkling. A distant object may be described till it fills the imagination and moves the heart; but it is not that intense, active feeling awakened by a present object in all its affecting realities. This I take to be one of the plainest principles of our common nature. Suppose I were to describe the conflagration of a house upon the St. John's; tell you the man's property, yea, more, his children had perished in the flames. I might talk till the heart would melt, and the tear passed down the face. But how different the strength and intenseness of the feeling when I point you to the flaming mass, and let you hear the unavailing shrieks for help; yea, when I show you a friend, a relation, a father, robbed of his hopes,

and a mother frantic with grief! Can any man doubt the difference? Surely not. Bring, under the influence of religion, this same principle of our nature to bear upon the subject we are trying to illustrate. Let it not be prayer for penitents in general, but for the contrite spirit pleading for mercy in our presence.

How often have we seen the man rise up bathed in tears, and make his way toward the altar! The very sight moved every pious heart, and before he could make half his way through the crowd every feeling was united with his in sympathy, in prayer for him; faith, pleading, held him up before the throne of grace—struggled for an application of the atoning blood in his behalf; their exhortations encouraged his hopes, while they entered into all his feelings, and opened before him promises—great and precious promises. Thus they sustained his self-despairing spirit, and strengthened his hand to lay hold upon the sacrifice of the cross. They knew, they felt they had no power to change his heart, to bind the strong man and cast him out. But they were like men who knew the God whom they served could do what their hand was too short to reach; a God who delighted to hear prayer, and had taught them, “The fervent, effectual prayer of the righteous” for his fellow-man “availeth much.” Depending upon the promise of Him *who is faithful*, they were strengthened to look up, to struggle, to agonize for him. Thus supported by the prayers of the Church, he, burdened, groaned, “O, wretched man! who shall deliver?” and when almost overwhelmed with despair, he did not sink, but rose with new purposes and new expectations.

Let us now sum up. On the supposition the man is never converted at the mourners' bench, but receives the witness of the Spirit elsewhere, has he gained nothing by the step taken; and is there no sufficient reason to justify

the Church in giving to the weeping penitent such a pressing invitation?

We have endeavored to trace the influence this step would have upon the man's unawakened friends, in giving strength to his own wavering purposes, in arming him against himself; its influence upon the sympathies and prayers of the Church, in strength and encouragement to his own sinking hopes. In all these views he has gained. Many other particulars might be adduced which would further develop and illustrate this subject. But we hasten.

There is, however, another point of light in which this subject should be presented—in which the supposition with which we commenced is changed by an appeal to the facts often presented. We should wrong our own convictions and do injustice to this subject, if we did not look at it for a few minutes in that stronger, brighter light shed upon it by the facts. Why should we stop with the supposition the man is never converted at the altar, when thousands who knelt there weeping, broken-hearted, mourning, have returned rejoicing, giving glory to God!

If I am not mistaken, it is the great maxim of the modern philosophy, that whatever is not sustained by an appeal to facts should be discarded from the list of philosophic writers; and whatever is supported by such appeal, and proves itself by the practical result, should be embraced, our prejudices to the contrary notwithstanding. Adhering closely to the true spirit of our philosophy, let us pursue this subject, and, at the last place of which you would think, turn philosopher, examine the development, and mark the result. Nor will we turn contemptuously away because it is the mourners' bench; nor cry "Enthusiasm!" before we have scrutinized the matter. Still let the inquiry be made in that spirit which embraces truth wherever found. Here they are around this altar. Now

listen to their sighs; behold their tears; the children of God melt into tenderness, and, gathering round, "weep with them that weep." Who are they? Our parents, our children, our friends. With every indication of a broken heart, they confess themselves sinners, and plead for mercy. Now guard your heart; do not let your sympathies be moved. The minister descends from the pulpit, and begins to sing,

"Stay, thou insulted spirit, stay,  
Though I have done thee such despite."

The singing ended, they get upon their knees, and he pours out the fullness of his soul in prayer, in intercession for them, till thoughts and utterance fail. The prayer ended, they remain upon their knees, and sing,

"Father, I stretch my hands to thee,  
No other help I know."

Again they unite in prayer. See, the devotional spirit embodies itself, and puts forth new energies; faith, with stronger hold, seems to grasp the promise sprinkled with atoning blood—to hold up the wounded spirit before the throne. The prayer is occasionally interrupted by the heart-felt "*Amen!*" or by the sighs of a heart whose feelings are too strong to be combined in words, to be expressed in language. Yet hope makes beyond utterance an effort, and agonizes for deliverance. The prayer closes; they rise, the mourners still kneeling, and in a voice tender and inviting, begin to sing:

"Arise, my soul, arise;  
Shake off thy guilty fears;  
The bleeding sacrifice  
In my behalf appears;  
Before the throne my surety stands;  
My name is written on his hands."

While they are singing, the Spirit, which had all the while mingled with the penitent's tears, and encouraged his sinking, seeking hopes, now aids the self-despairing effort

of faith, by which, out of himself, and beyond all his fears, he lays hold on Christ only for salvation. The seraph touches his lips "with the live coal from off the altar," and says, "Thy sins are all forgiven thee." The Spirit seals the pardon to his heart; his fetters fall; his prison opens; the day-star rises in his heart. So powerful the change, while the light of Christ breaks and shines round him, he looks up, and half involuntarily exclaims, "O Lord! I will praise thee; for thine anger is turned away, and now thou comfortest me!" While they continue in singing and prayer, another and another claims the promise, and feels the blood applied, and breaks forth in songs of deliverance. See how the influence spreads—how they gather in groups of love, and rejoice together! The father, rejoicing, cries, "My son was dead, but is alive again." Something elevates them; they seem to have lost sight of the world. How they joy together! All this is but a faint sketch of what we have seen hundreds of times. Now guard your heart; harden it against every feeling, but the one desire to know the truth; draw your mantle closer round you, and let us examine this further development. Just now you saw their tears, heard their struggling prayers; every expression, every act, indicated the anguish of spirit, the grief too great for utterance. But now all is changed; how changed! Where there was only the voice of distress, we hear the voice of praise, the song of deliverance; the very countenance beams with a peculiar expression of joy and gladness; the face shines. All shows the strong convictions of a heart delivered from its fears, its sins.

This, say you, is strange. It I do not exactly comprehend. There is certainly a great change; but I have often heard it asserted that all this was the effect of imagination, of strongly-excited animal sympathy; and I am the more inclined to favor this opinion from the fact that

most persons I have seen at the altar were either young or those of an excitable make. And I now conjecture, when the present feeling shall have spent itself, these persons will be where and what they were before. I am glad this is only suggested. To affirm it, as many do, is in the spirit of the Sir Topplings of the day, and is unworthy an inquirer after the truth. It is to throw aside the philosopher, and turn *witling*. Let us, then, still adhere to our principles. It is as repulsive to our philosophy to ascribe effect to an inadequate cause as to deny their dependence upon a cause. Every effect, says our philosophy, must have a cause; and a cause, when exerted, sufficient to produce the result. Let us apply these principles to the point we are now considering. If all this is imagination and animal feeling, it will soon "go off in empty, airy nothingness," and leave the individual in his former state. But let us not leap to this conclusion. If we make it, let it be by regular steps, not by the cry of "Enthusiasm!" From this place let us follow the man in the struggles and dangers of life. If the principle which now inspires his joy remains with him; if it lifts his soul in prayer to heaven; if it sustains his spirit, rejoicing in hope amidst the dangers and afflictions of this world; if it keeps him humble in prosperity; and, making allowance for the weakness of human nature, presents him the altered man, the living Christian; will all this be charged to imagination? will it be put down to the account of animal feeling? If so, it must be happy imagination—potent animal feeling. Is this a cause adequate? Is it sufficient to produce the effect? If yes, what more would have been done had the man enjoyed the spirit of Christ, and been led by that spirit? The fact can not be controverted; it is sustained by thousands of living examples. Who, then, is the enthusiast? the volunteer in faith? he who charges to imagination that which belongs to the vital

principle of faith, or he who refers to its time-adequate cause—the power of Christ?

Further: if this principle gilds the darkness of death with the light of immortality, the rejoicing of hope; if, while death drowns his spirit, steals his breath, he still triumphs in victory, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" will this all be accounted for and explained by crying out, "Imagination, imagination?" Surely not. Did you ever stand at the bedside of the dying Christian? Did you mark his calm, undaunted spirit? Nature sunk under disease, and perhaps tortured with strong pain, yet he looked up and said,

"Jesus can make a dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are."

When the world began to recede, to disappear, his countenance lit up with an unearthly light. He said, in dying whispers, "Heaven opens on my eyes; mine ears with sounds seraphic ring;" "Lend, lend your wings; I mount, I fly!" He is gone; he is safe, housed at last at home.

Thousands who have loosed from time, who have won the victor's palm, have gained the crown, the crown of life, first felt the sprinkling of atoning blood at the mourners' bench. And while thus owned and blessed of Heaven, shall we throw it away, as without reason or utility? No; let the profane scoff, and call it ridiculous; we will still maintain the ancient landmarks, clear our altar, arrange our benches, and invite as many as we may to present themselves for the prayer of the Church, not doubting in the day of eternity but thousands will bless God they were ever invited to the "mourners' bench."

## SERMON VI.

BY REV. JOHN FERREE,  
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PROSPERING OF GOD'S WORD.<sup>2</sup>

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it," ISAIAH LV, 10, 11.

IN this passage the prophet compares the wonderful operations of grace to the more mysterious operations of nature. The illustration is apt and beautiful.

I. THE GOD OF NATURE IS ALSO THE GOD OF GRACE, OR SALVATION.

He made this earth for the habitation of man and ordained the laws by which it is governed. After the destruction of the antediluvian race, God promised not to "curse the ground any more for man's sake;" for "while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease," Genesis viii, 22. As God has established certain unalterable laws for the government of the physical world, so he has established certain laws in the moral world, or kingdom of grace. God is the author of *mind* as well as *matter*. The operations of grace may be frequently illustrated by the way that God is pleased to operate in the earth, or natural world.

<sup>2</sup>This sermon is the substance, or outline, of an excellent discourse, preached at my third quarterly meeting, in Fulton station, in 1839. The reader must bear in mind, this sketch is from brief *pencil notes*, taken at the time of delivery. This will account for any want of unity, or connected chain of argument, for which our departed brother was characterized. It is inserted in the "Offering" at the request of many friends.

The "*rain and snow*" are the means employed by God to beautify the face of nature and produce sustenance for man; "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Now, as the rain and snow, which come down from heaven, make the earth fruitful, or, in the language of our text, cause "it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater," so shall my word not return *without success*. It shall have the desired effect. It shall be fulfilled in the way and manner before *expressed*. It is God that furnishes the mind with ideas and thoughts, and the heart of man with suitable moral feeling. "*The preparation of the heart is,*" etc.

"By my word," we are not merely to understand the Gospel, but any way in which God is pleased to work, or operates on the mind and souls of men. "And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all," 1 Corinthians xii, 6. He spoke to Moses, in the land of Midian, in the "*burning bush*;" to Israel on Sinai, in thunderings, and lightnings, and earthquakes; to the fathers in dark speeches; but in these last days God speaks to us by his Son, in the Gospel of peace, and by the still small voice of the Holy Ghost. Is the rain and snow of *heavenly origin*? So is the word of God. Does it soften, cheer, revive, and make the earth fertile and fruitful? What these are in the natural, God's word is in the moral world. The Psalmist says, "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. Thou

waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing," Psalm lxxv, 9-13. How striking, truthful, yea, beautiful! This is God's way in the *natural world*. Now let us listen to his voice in the *moral world*. "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God," Deuteronomy xxxii, 1-3.

If there is any good done on the earth the Lord does it. "Nevertheless he left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our *hearts* with food and gladness," Acts xiv, 17. As the earth would be barren and unfruitful without the snow and rain from heaven, so would the heart of man, without the "*word of God*," or the grace of Christ. "Without me ye can do nothing." The Scriptures constantly assert, it is God that worketh in you, both to *will and do*. A Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but "God giveth the increase"—makes it fruitful. It is by grace, through faith, that we are saved. St. Paul, in speaking of the saints at Colosse, remarks, "And bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, *and knew the grace of God* in truth," Colossians i, 6.

## II. ITS CERTAINTY.

"So shall my word," etc. We sow in hope, confi-

dently believing that God will bless our labors and make them successful. His word shall not return void; it shall accomplish its design; *it shall prosper*. "He that goeth forth weeping, bearing the precious seed, shall come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

We are too easily discouraged in laboring for the conversion of sinners and the reformation of the world. We may learn a lesson from the husbandman, who waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, till he receive the early and latter rain. We should be patient and established, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

How sad and dreary would be our earth without the rain from heaven in its season! How doubly wretched and miserable the moral world without God's word or Gospel! The golden harvest is gathered, the summer flowers decay and die, then comes dreary autumn, and winter's chilling blast. How gloomy and melancholy the scene, and what a striking representation of man's moral condition without the grace of God! But wait with patience the opening of spring. The warm rain descends upon the earth, the snows gradually melt away, the ice-bound streamlet becomes a running brook, nature is cheered, revived, vegetation springs up, the forest puts on her beautiful livery, and the vernal season is ushered in with the appearance of "flowers again upon the earth." "The time of the singing of birds has come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." So it is under the administration of the Spirit of grace.

The heart once congealed, barren, and fruitless, is quickened into life, and then appears first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear. The blossoms of hope and buds of grace are soon brought to maturity; the wilderness becomes a fruitful field; the solitary heart glad; the desert soul rejoices and blossoms like the rose;

yea, it glows with the freshness of Eden and rejoices with joy and singing.

We have the oath and promise of God, "it shall not return void." So it always has been, and will continue till the whole human race is regenerated; for

"What his mouth in truth hath said,  
His own almighty hand shall do."

But there are difficulties in the minds of some. We pause to answer an objection. "If," says one, "the God of nature waters all the earth and makes it fruitful, and operates the same way *in grace*, and his word will prosper and can not fail, then salvation will be universal; all will finally be saved." We answer, the earth is not now what it was when it came from the hands of God. It is defaced by sin; its beauty marred. God said to fallen Adam, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground." Now, he that will not sow shall not reap in harvest. The rain will fall, but the earth will not produce the smiling harvest without the co-operation of the husbandman. So God's word and Gospel will go out, the rain of mercy and dews of grace will fall; but unless received in *good and honest hearts* it will be unfruitful. "*Behold, a sower went forth to sow,*" etc. It shall not return void; but to some it will be a savor of death unto death, and to others, of *life unto life*. Some will not believe—"receive grace of God in vain." All of God's blessings may be abused. The rain is designed as a blessing; but water *drowned the old world*. So the river is a blessing; but if you jump into it you will be drowned. God's word and Gospel is a blessing; but it must be believed and obeyed. If we fight against it we are ruined eternally. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Amen!

## SERMON VII.

BY REV. RUSSEL BIGELOW,  
OF THE OHIO ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

## DISSOLUTION OF THE EARTHLY TABERNACLE.\*

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,” 2 CORINTHIANS V, 1.

THERE is one event which happeneth to all men—to the rich and to the poor, to the high and to the low, to the learned and to the unlearned, to the old and to the young, to the wicked and to the righteous—from which event neither riches nor poverty, learning nor ignorance, age nor youth, honor nor dishonor, wickedness nor righteousness can save or deliver the sons of men. All must die! “It is appointed unto men once to die;” and “there is no discharge in this war.” “The earthly house of this tabernacle must be dissolved.” Man must go to his long home, and the “mourners go about the streets.” It may be inquired, “If the righteous must die as well as the wicked; if they must feel the agonizing throes of death; if they must be torn away from mourning, weeping friends by the relentless hand of the King of terrors, where is the advantage of being righteous? What privileges do the righteous enjoy that the unrighteous do not realize?” My text, which expresses the confidence, and presents to view the bright, the pleasing, the opening prospects of a man of God, is a sufficient answer. Fancy before your eyes the afflicted, the dying pilgrim. See his fever-scorched,

\*This sermon is the substance of a funeral discourse on the death of Rev. Alexander Cummins, preached in the old Stone Chapel, Cincinnati, September 28, 1823.

his pain-racked, his weather-beaten, his age-worn, his much-diseased and wasted system! Behold the face which has turned so pale, and view those eyeballs roll with deathly glare; yet see the heavenly smile, and hear, in accents sweet, yet firm and weighty, "I know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved!" etc.

In the discussion of this subject on this occasion, I shall

I. CONSIDER THE EARTHLY HOUSE OF THIS TABERNACLE AND ITS DISSOLUTION.

II. CONSIDER THE KNOWLEDGE EXPRESSED IN THE TEXT.

III. THE CHARACTER, LIFE, AND DEATH OF OUR BELOVED BROTHER.

I. CONSIDER THE EARTHLY HOUSE OF THIS TABERNACLE, AND ITS DISSOLUTION.

By the earthly house of this tabernacle, we are to understand *the body*, in which the soul is represented as dwelling or sojourning.

1. It is called *a house*,

(1.) In reference to its peculiar workmanship. What symmetry! what order! what a manifestation of heavenly skill!

(2.) Because it is a place of habitation. It is there the soul, the better principle, dwells in a way unknown to us.

2. It is called an "*earthly house*,"

(1.) Because it was formed out of the dust. "And the Lord God formed man out of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."

(2.) Because it derives its nourishment or support from the earth.

(3.) Because it tends to earth. "Dust thou art, and unto dust," etc.

3. It is called the *earthly house of this tabernacle*. This implies that it is a temporary establishment, of short continuance in its present form; that it is easily taken down, and its parts separated. It is probable the apostle alludes

to the ancient *Jewish tabernacle*, which was dissolved, or taken to pieces, when Israel moved or journeyed. And the ark of the covenant, covered with its own curtains, was carried by itself, and when they came to the place of rest the dissolved parts were put together again.

(1.) The tabernacle was formed of different materials ; so the body is composed of different elements.

(2.) The tabernacle was of limited or short duration ; so are our bodies.

(3.) The ark of the covenant subsisted by itself, when the tabernacle was taken down ; so will the soul when separated from the body.

(4.) The tabernacle was but a representation of the established temple, or house, that was to be built, in which the ark should have a stated residence ; so the body is but a representation of the *glorified body* with which our souls are to be united, and in which they will rest.

#### 4. *The dissolution of this tabernacle.*

(1.) The nature of this dissolution.

First. The union existing between the soul and body shall be done away.

Second. The body itself shall be decomposed, and molder to its mother earth.

(2.) Its certainty. We must all die.

First. The Scriptures declare it: "Unto dust shalt thou return." We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground. "It is appointed unto man once to die."

Second. The death of all the preceding generations, and of many of the present generation, proves it.

(3.) The pains and changes we feel in our own systems are portentous of our approaching dissolution ; and let it be remarked and kept in mind, that no age nor situation is exempt. Where are the rich who lived in the lap of plenty—who heaped up shining dust beyond the power of computation? Have their riches saved them? No; they

have left them all behind; it may be to be wasted by the hand of prodigality. Where are the men of honor and renown, who swayed their scepter, and at whose nod surrounding thousands bowed and trembled? Where is he who wished a second world to conquer? or he whose fury blazed in flaming volumes from the plains of Moscow, while surrounding kings began to tremble on their shining thrones? Where are the scientific, who soared among the shining stars and marked the distance from world to world? or where the wise philosopher, whose philosophic skill has written his name on rolls of fame? or where the wise ontologist, whose metaphysical researches have placed him high in rank? or where the wise anatomist, the ingenious linguist, and the famed historian? Where are the poor and ignorant, who groveled for a little time and passed away? Where are the men who saw nine hundred passing years? or where those noble youths, whose blooming cheek and sparkling eye did seem to whisper immortality? Where are your husbands or your wives, your parents or your children? O where, I say? Methinks the stretched-out arm, the pointing finger, direct my eye to turfey graveyards, or places of deposit, while the starting tear, the solemn look, the unutterable groan conspire to tell me they are dead. And must we die? Yes, die we must! In vain do weeping friends attempt to stay the hand of Death by groans and tears. Ah! could the tears of a bereaved companion, the groans of children now made fatherless, or the sorrows of the Church now clad in mourning, have moved the monster, Death, to pity, I should have been saved from the painful task I now perform.

*But why must we die?* What is the procuring cause of death? Did God create man mortal? Did he design we should feel the agonizing throes of death if man had never sinned? We answer, *no!* Such an assumption

would cast a shade over the character of God. It is true that some, who even profess a belief in revelation, subscribe to this absurd idea. But with such, let the voice of God's unperverted truth decide. It was not till man sinned that the decree went forth, "Dust thou art," etc. The language of St. Paul is unequivocal; its force can not be evaded: "By man came death." Again: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;" so death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Here, sin is presented as the *procuring cause* of death, and death as the *effect* of sin.

No effect can exist without the cause which produced it. It can not exist prior to such cause as produced it. It is certain if sin had never existed, death would never have been known in our realms.

But some who have become wise above what is written, have argued that we can take nothing from its fountain but what must return to it again. Man was taken from the dust, and hence must have returned to dust if he had never sinned. But see how much more there is here in the conclusion than in the *premises!* The premise is, that we can take nothing from its fountain but what will return to it again. What is the conclusion? *Therefore God can not.* How absurd and illogical! It was not man that took man from the dust, nor is it man that is to keep him from returning. *It is God.* To make this argument a sound one, it should be stated thus: God can take nothing from its fountain but must return thither again. God took man from the dust, and, therefore, to dust he must return. But who possesses effrontery to admit the *premises?* To argue that man would have died had he never sinned, would be to argue that God has changed, or that his present design concerning the same character is entirely opposed to his former design, or that he purposed two designs at one and the same time, in opposition to each

other—a design to create and a design to destroy. It may be urged that he does not design the death of the same person he created. True, but they are not in the same situation. An immutable principle may change its relations and dealings with a mutable object. The sun now shines upon our earth; but in a few hours darkness will surround us. But what will be the cause? Will the sun change its nature or its position? No; it is the earth that changes. Were the earth to cease to move, and then the light cease to shine, it would argue a change in the *nature* or *position* of the sun. God's change of dealings with us demonstrates no change in him. It is man that has changed. It was *holy man* that God created; but it is *unholy and sinful man that must die!* . . . Death, how solemn! How affecting the thought! Nothing can prevent its approach or save us from falling victims to its power. But amid its gloom and desolation, how consoling the doctrine of the text: "For we do know," etc.

## II. THE KNOWLEDGE EXPRESSED.

What is implied?

### 1. *The immortality of the soul.*

The phraseology implies the existence of a principle superior to the *tabernacle*. Revelation declares and *reason* admits it. The origin of the soul; its mighty powers, noble faculties; its *activity* when the body lies inactive; the insufficiency of earthly objects to supply its wants; its joys and conscious fears, all conspire to prove its future and eternal existence.

"Whence this pleasing hope? this fond desire?  
 This longing after immortality?  
 Or, whence this secret dread and inward horror  
 Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul  
 Back on herself, and startles at destruction?  
 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;  
 'Tis heaven itself that points out a hereafter,  
 And intimates eternity to man.  
 The soul, secure in her existence, smiles

At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.  
 The stars shall fade away, the sun himself  
 Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years;  
 But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,  
 Unhurt amidst the war of elements,  
 The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds."

2. *The resurrection of the body.*

When we consider this simile in connection with the resurrection of the body, which St. Paul treats of in these epistles, we shall see that he looks forward to that glorious period when this natural body shall be raised a spiritual body, and this mortal shall put on immortality. How consoling the thought, that although death may gain a present victory over our bodies, we have a certain hope of future conquest! He who bound the monster to his chariot wheels, proclaims to all his saints, "O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction!" Death shall one day lose his sting, the grave her boasted triumph; "for we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

"To be clothed upon," etc. Some think that this refers to a certain celestial vehicle with which God invests holy souls on their dismissal from the body. Others suppose it relates to the resurrection body. And some imagine that it relates merely to the state of blessedness which the saints shall possess in the kingdom of glory. A learned commentator supposes that "to be clothed," signifies to be surrounded, covered, or invested with any thing. Therefore, "to be clothed upon with our house" may signify any particular qualities of the soul. When St. Paul speaks of "earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," he certainly means that the great concern of every genuine follower of Christ should be to be fully prepared to enjoy the beatific vision of their Redeemer, that durable and excellent state of

glory which shall be enjoyed by all the faithful followers of our Lord.

3. *It is a building of God.*

4. *It is in the heavens.*

5. *It is eternal in the heavens.*

It is a building of God fitted up for the reception and enjoyment of his faithful children. It is in the heavens, the kingdom of eternal glory, where angels dwell and God resides. It is a country where health abounds. The inhabitants are never sick. No poisonous gases float in the atmosphere of heaven. The waters are not impregnated with the seeds of death. They are truly the waters of life, and flow from under the throne of God clear as crystal. There the wicked cease from troubling and the weary be at rest. Death and poverty never enter that glorious city. All tears shall be forever wiped away by the hand of Zion's Prince. But this house is not only in the heavens, but is "eternally" there. This completes the climax; this crowns the whole. O blissful thought! O heavenly prospect!

"When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun;  
We've no less days to sing God's praise,  
Than when we first begun."

Let us repeat *eternal in the heavens*, and pass to notice

Lastly. *The nature of this knowledge.*

(1.) A general or theoretical knowledge. "We know." We all know, or may know, from the united voice of reason and revelation, that there is such a state of blessedness prepared for all the faithful. But

(2.) This knowledge is particular and experimental. "*We know*," that is, you know, and I know. It is founded on a knowledge of our acceptance with God. We know that "whereas we were once blind we now see;" "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace;" "There is, therefore, *now* no condemnation to them who are in Christ

Jesus;" "And the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God;" "If children, then heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." Then "we know that we are of God;" born of God; accepted through the Beloved. We are assured, then, by the Spirit, that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God." We have an earnest of this glorious inheritance by the Spirit. It also assures our hearts "we have a building of God; a house not made with hands;" a "mansion above." And now we have a foretaste of immortal joys, and may unite to sing with the poet:

"This I do find, we two are so joined,  
He'll not live in glory and leave me behind."

III. I was to notice the character, life, and death of the Rev. Alexander Cummins, whose lifeless body now lies before us. Brother Cummins was a native of Virginia, and born in 1787. In early life he was married, and subsequently emigrated to Ohio, and settled near the Scioto river. While residing at that place, he was awakened by the Spirit of God, and, after struggling for some months, was happily converted at a prayer meeting. He was now in the twenty-first year of his age. Not long after his conversion he was called to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He saw the world lying in wickedness, and he also saw a fullness in the Gospel. He had tasted of its sweetness, and desired others to share the same rich blessings. Such was the nature of his exercises, his piety, and gifts, that his brethren soon perceived that the Lord had called him to the work of the ministry. They considered that the circumstances justified them in supposing that the Holy Ghost was now addressing the Church, saying, "Set apart Alexander for the work whereunto I have called him." He was first licensed as a local preacher, and in this capacity he officiated for about twelve months. In the fall of 1809 he joined the itinerancy at the first con-

ference held in this city, fourteen years ago. This was two years after his conversion to God. He traveled regularly for five years, during which time he suffered many inconveniences and endured many privations. He labored so faithfully and regularly day and night that he injured his constitution, and had to retire from the work for one year, during which time he employed his time in school-teaching. But as soon as he regained his strength, he returned to the field again, and was appointed as preacher in charge of the Miami circuit, which, at that time, was very large and laborious. The two following years he was stationed in this city, and the three following he was presiding elder on the Kentucky district. At the close of his labors in Kentucky he returned to the Ohio conference, and was appointed presiding elder on the Miami district, where he has spent the past two years of his ministry and ended his labors and his life.

Alexander Cummins was a man of sound and good judgment, especially in spiritual and divine things. He took great pains to improve his mind by "giving attendance to reading." He was a close student. As an acquaintance, he was agreeable and kind; as a husband, affectionate and provident; as a parent, tender yet strict and impartial; and as a Christian, humble, pious, sober, yet cheerful. As an itinerant minister, he was zealous, punctual, acceptable, and useful. His sermons, in general, were correct, pointed, and weighty. His talents were not of the *brilliant* kind. Hence, he did not shine in the *first* sermon like many who were his inferiors; but his stronghold was his *variety*. Such was his skill in handling the word of God, his uprightness and zeal, his success and usefulness, that at the close of the year, or even a longer period, few, if any, were more acceptable than brother Cummins. His success was more than falls to the lot of many during the first years of their ministry.

The first information I received concerning him was at the close of his third year in the traveling ministry. Nine years after this I traveled in the same region of country, where his praise was still in all the Churches, and where I also found many of his spiritual children still on their way to Mount Zion.

My personal acquaintance commenced with our deceased brother in the latter end of the year 1815, at which time we were appointed to labor together on the Miami circuit. I was young and inexperienced; but in him I found a father, an instructor, a governor, and a nurse. Long shall I remember his kind instruction and the pious example set before me by the beloved man of God, whose funeral sermon I am now trying to preach. He labored that year with zeal and success. His zeal, piety, and usefulness the two following years, while stationed in this place, I need not more than mention. You, my brethren, are his record. You can call to recollection his piety, his devotion, his fervor, his diligence, his zeal, his watchfulness, his anxiety, his pathetic sermons, his prevailing prayers. You can call to recollection the happy hours you enjoyed under his ministry; and many of you consider him the instrumental cause of your conversion. You view him as your spiritual father under God, and will have cause to praise God while eternity shall endure that you had the privilege of sitting under his ministry. The three years he labored as presiding elder in Kentucky he was, as far as I can learn, acceptable and useful—highly esteemed by preachers and people. His rides were long, and, in some parts, rough and mountainous, and his labors abundant, which proved highly injurious to his debilitated system. The district where he has traveled the past two years is also large and laborious. He performed his duties acceptably and usefully, but with great pain, often traveling and preaching when he ought to have rested, particularly for

the last six months, and when more frequent rest would have been beneficial.

I have already said considerable concerning our departed brother; but I can not forbear mentioning his wisdom and firmness as an administrator in the Church. It was here he excelled; here his true greatness fully appeared. He was not hasty or rash, but firm and fixed. He was mild and easy in his manners; but, when sure he was right, was always firm, and the more unmovable when severely opposed. He removed difficulties and delivered the Church from burdens under which it had long groaned. I have been acquainted with but few that I considered his equals in Church government.

His patience in affliction and perseverance through difficulties were remarkable. His weakly constitution, which was severely racked with incessant labors, was often attacked with wasting disease; but he bore it all patiently and without a murmur. He had a severe attack of measles about six months ago, which seemed to threaten his dissolution; but, by the Divine blessing, he partially recovered, and entered into the work; and I think it probable his exertion before he was entirely restored to health was one cause of bringing on the disease which terminated his earthly career. He visited the circuit of which I had charge a short time before attacked with his last sickness. He seemed as diligent and fervent as ever, although not able to labor much. He left our camp meeting on Sabbath evening, and came home, and on the following Friday rode out to Mechanicsburg, about eighteen miles from this, to attend a quarterly meeting, and on Saturday preached his last sermon, with his usual zeal and pathos, on these words: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." How appropriate! That night he was attacked with a fatal malady, which

severed the soul from the body. He was brought home in a wagon and laid on his bed, where he remained for eight weeks, a man of suffering. But he bore all without a murmur. He was very grateful for every kindness shown him, and appeared calm and resigned. He said but little about dying; neither did he shout and rejoice as some have done. It was not his way when in health. But what he did say was satisfactory. To one friend he said, while sick, he had no anxiety about living, but would like to live till he could settle his temporal business, if it was the will of the Lord. He could do it better than any one else, and this would save trouble; but he was willing to resign all into the hands of the Lord. I visited him one week before his death for the first time, and several times afterward. On one of my visits I conversed with him respecting the state of his mind. He appeared composed and resigned, and said that his peace was made with God. A brother who attended him inquired of him, a few hours before his death, if he was sensible that he would soon depart. He replied that he was, and should soon be in eternity. The brother asked him if he had any doubts or fears. He replied, "*Not any; my way is clear.*" The solemn hour drew nigh. His weeping companion, sorrowful children, and mourning neighbors surrounded his bed. His pulse beat slow and faint; his breath became shorter and shorter still, till twenty minutes before seven o'clock, when he ceased to breathe. Thus lived and thus died our beloved brother Cummins—a pattern of piety, a waymark to heaven. We do not mean to say he had no failings; but we do say, they were comparatively few. "He now rests from his labors, and his works do follow him." The toilsome strife is now over. His ransomed spirit is no longer clogged with diseased mortality. His better principle dwells with God in paradise; and it now remains for us to prepare to meet him.

We shall now make some application, and close.

1. We have seen that we must all die; that there is no exception; and that we must soon die.

2. We have seen that there is another state of things; that we possess immortal souls; and that there is a state of glory prepared for us; but we have also seen that, in order to enjoy it, we must obtain a preparation; we must form an acquaintance with our Redeemer. How important that we set about the work, and that we commence immediately! We have also had presented to our view the character, life, and death of a beloved minister, to encourage and stimulate us to pursue the path of piety. And suffer me now, in the close, to make some particular addresses.

(1.) *To the bereaved sister and fatherless children.* You, my sister, are truly called to mourn. Your loss is no ordinary loss. The companion of your youth, the partner of your joys and woes, has gone and left you. His important business has called him much from home; you have been deprived of his society. Rivers, hills, and mountains have frequently separated you; but you have always expected his return. The sound of his voice, or the joyful exclamation of a rejoicing child informed you of his approach. He will return no more; no gladdened child will proclaim, "Pa is returning!" But dry up your tears; your companion has gone to glory, to dwell with his Father and your Father. He awaits your arrival. Your separation will not be of long continuance. The same shining company that has conveyed his spirit to glory may soon be commissioned to come after you. Endeavor to be always ready. My young friends, you also have cause for mourning. Your father and friend has gone, never to return to you again. You will no more see his face nor hear his voice in this world; you will no more be favored with his advice or counsels. Call the past to your recol-

lection, and let them live in your minds and influence your future conduct. *Your* father has gone to his heavenly Father, to dwell in a better world. You must be good, and strive to meet him there.

(2.) *My fathers and brethren in the ministry.* We are also called to mourn and weep. Our beloved brother and fellow-laborer has gone and left us. We shall no more hear his voice in the pulpit nor in our conference. We shall be aided by his wisdom and firmness no more. His seat but few can fill. Let us pray that a double portion of the spirit of our departed Elijah may fall on some surviving Elisha. While we mourn, let us rejoice in hope. Our brother has exchanged the toils of the ministry and afflictions of this world for a crown of glory—for “a house not made with hands.”

(3.) *Brethren who are members of other Churches.* We ask you to mourn with us; for, although you may not feel the loss we have sustained as sensibly as we do, yet, without doubt, you all feel that a *fellow-embassador* has fallen from the walls of Zion. But while we ask you to mourn with us, we ask you to rejoice with us, in hope of that glory which shall be revealed when we shall see our departed brother again, and enjoy his society forever.

(4.) *Brethren of the laity.* You are not only called to mourn the loss of a minister, but a dearly-beloved minister—your former pastor, under whose ministry you have sat for a number of years with great delight. He has gone; your pastor is dead; your spiritual father has left you. You will no more see him stand in this pulpit; you will no more hear his voice in this world. Call to recollection the many sermons you have heard him preach, the many exhortations he has given you, the many prayers he has offered up for you, and strive to meet him in glory. Then shall those of you who have been awakened under his ministry “be stars in his crown of rejoicing” forever;

and you shall all unite with him to sing the wonders of redeeming grace forever.

(5.) *My brethren of other denominations.* You know how to feel for us. You have been called to mourn the loss of ministers to whom you were attached. Well, while we weep let us rejoice; we shall soon hail them and be crowned with them; we shall soon unite in one body to praise the "three-one" God, and part no more forever.

I look over this large and attentive audience, and I see sorrow depicted in almost every countenance; but it is mixed with joy. Methinks, while they mourn with us they are constrained to believe that the minister whose voice they have so often heard has gone to glory; and, while they thus believe, they indulge a wish to be with him when they die. I am happy to have it in my power to inform you, my hearers, that it is your privilege. Jesus, to whom your attention was so often directed by this deceased minister, still lives to intercede and to have compassion. Have you not been faithfully warned and lovingly invited by this departed minister? How often has he called after you, with tears, and bleeding lungs, and shattered voice, in vain! You shall see him no more; you shall no more hear his voice; he will never again direct you to the bleeding Lamb. And shall the sermons he has preached to you, and the exhortations he has given you, and the prayers he has offered up for you, rise to condemn you? Shall he who now sleeps before you witness against you? And will any of you be parted from him, and the saints and angels, and Jesus Christ forever? O, let me warn you on this occasion, and entreat you to seek salvation! Prepare to meet your God, that, when you come to die, you may be able to say, "We know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

## SERMON VIII.

BY REV. RUSSEL BIGELOW,  
OF THE OHIO ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

## THE FLOOD IMPROVED.

“And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord,” GEN. VI, 6-8.

THE Scriptures are a peculiar fund of instruction—an excellent source of information—from which we may obtain information respecting the *past*, the *present*, and the *future*. The things which were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we might understand the things which belong to our peace. From those Scriptures which inform us of God’s dealings with ancient nations and individuals, we may learn what course we ought to pursue in order to escape his wrath and enjoy his favor; and simply from the extraordinary event to which we are directed in the text, we may learn some very important and useful lessons. In the discussion of this subject I shall

I. ATTEMPT TO GIVE SOME EXPLANATION OF THE REMARKABLE EVENT SPOKEN OF IN THE TEXT AND SHOW ITS CERTAINTY.

II. CONSIDER THE CAUSE AND PROPRIETY OF THIS REMARKABLE DISPENSATION.

III. NOTICE SOME IMPORTANT LESSONS WE ARE THEREBY TAUGHT.

1. (1.) The way the flood was created. The foundation of the great deep was broken up, and all the aqueous vapors which were suspended in the whole atmosphere were precipitated. The water seems to have covered the

earth at the first, and was separated from the earth that the dry land might appear. The waters returned to their places. "God," says the Psalmist, "has laid up the deep in store-houses;" and now he broke up those stores. God had "set bars and doors to the waters of the sea that they might not return to cover the earth;" and now he removed those bars and doors. "God binds up the waters in his thick clouds; the thick cloud is not rent under them;" but now the bond was loosed; the cloud was rent; and such rains descended as were never known before or since.

The progress of philosophical knowledge has greatly weakened the objection urged by infidels. "Philosophy has found out," says a learned writer, "that there is sufficiency of water in the ocean. The mere raising the temperature of the ocean to no greater degree than that in which marine animals live in the shallows between the tropics, would so expand it as more than to produce the hight above the mountains stated in the Mosaic account.

(2.) Its remarkable and destructive character.

(3.) The preservation of Noah in the ark with one pair of unclean beasts and seven pairs of clean beasts. The ark was three hundred cubits; that is, four hundred and fifty or five hundred and forty-seven feet long, seventy-five or ninety-one feet wide, and forty-five or fifty-four feet high.

2. *The certainty.*

(1.) The Scriptures give an account of it.

(2.) Traditions of the heathen nations confirm it.

First. Josephus says, in his book against Appion, that the barbarians admitted the deluge, and that Berous, the Chaldean historian, relates, in a manner similar to Moses, the history of the flood.

Second. In Abydeni's History of Assyria mention is made of an ancient who was forewarned of a deluge.

The ship, the birds, the abating of the waters, and the resting of the ship on the mountains are all mentioned.

Third. Lucian mentions the Syrian tradition of the wickedness of the antediluvians, the piety of Noah—or Deucalion—the ark, and the bringing into it the beasts of earth by pairs.

Fourth. The ancient Persian traditions, as Dr. Hyde has shown, though mixed with fable, have a substantial agreement with the Mosaic account.

Fifth. In Hindostan the ancient poem of the Bhagarut treats of a flood which destroyed all mankind, except a pious prince.

Sixth. The Chinese writers also make mention of a universal flood.

Seventh. In the legends of the ancient Egyptian Goths and Druids striking references are made to the same event.

Eighth. The natives of Otaheite believed that the world was *torn* to pieces by the anger of their gods.

Ninth. The inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands have a tradition that the Etooa, who created the world, afterward destroyed it by an inundation, and recollections of this event are preserved among the New Zealanders.

Tenth. When the Spaniards first visited America they found a tradition among the natives that the world had once been destroyed by a flood, and that the present race of men had sprung from four women.

(3.) There are various traces of the flood in different places. Philosophy acknowledges that the present surface of the earth must have been submerged under water. “Not only,” says Kirwan, “in every region of Europe, but also of both the old and new continents, immense quantities of marine shells, either dispersed or collected, have been discovered. The violent action of water has left its traces in various undisputed phenomena. Stratified mountains, of various heights, exist in different parts of

Europe and of both continents, in and between whose strata various substances of marine and some vegetables of terrestrial origin repose, either in their natural state or petrified. To overspread the plains of the arctic circle with the shells of Indian seas, and with the bodies of elephants and rhinoceroses, surrounded by masses of submarine vegetation; to accumulate on a single spot, as at La Bolen, in promiscuous confusion, the marine productions of the four quarters of the globe: what conceivable instrument would be efficacious but the 'rush of mighty waters?' These facts, about which there is no dispute, and which are acknowledged by the advocates of each of the prevailing geological theories, give a sufficient attestation to the deluge of Noah, in which the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and from which precisely such phenomena might be expected.

#### II. THE CAUSE AND PROPRIETY OF THIS REMARKABLE DISPENSATION.

1. Sin was the cause of the destruction of the wicked.
2. Righteousness was the cause of the preservation of Noah and his family.

3. It was right and proper to distinguish between vice and virtue.

- (1.) Sin merited punishment; it was just.
- (2.) It was calculated to teach posterity.
- (3.) The destruction of beasts was necessary in order to the safety of the few human beings who were preserved.

#### III. THE LESSONS WE ARE TAUGHT.

1. We may form some acquaintance with the character of God. He is merciful and just.

2. We are taught that God will preserve the righteous in every situation.

3. We discover the proneness of man to be emboldened in iniquity when sentence is not speedily executed.

4. Though God bear long with the wicked, he will ultimately destroy the incorrigible with a sore destruction.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Saints may derive abundant comfort from this subject.

2. Penitent mourners may derive encouragement.

3. But impenitent sinners should be greatly alarmed; for if God spared not the old world, but brought a flood upon the ungodly, surely the wicked of this age should be alarmed.

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## SERMON IX.

BY REV. ALEXANDER MORROW,

OF THE OHIO ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

### CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me,” GAL. II, 20.

1. *The nature of the crucifixion spoken of in the text.* Crucifixion was the ancient mode of putting to death the most flagitious offenders—a mode of punishment the most painful and shameful; and none but the worst of criminals and the vilest of slaves were put to death in this way. Thus, in the economy of redemption, our Lord Jesus Christ, by an infinite stoop of condescension, humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. So, in like manner, we are to be crucified with him; for, if we be dead with him, we believe we shall also live with him. The crucifixion which we must endure is not literal, or a putting to death of the body—for the apostle says, “I live”—but is to be understood in a moral sense, implying the destruction of the carnal mind, the *body of sin*.

Man, by nature, is very far gone from original righteousness. His whole moral nature is corrupt and unholy. Every property and quality of the soul is polluted and vitiated by sin, and all the attributes of the soul controlled by the power of sin. All rise up, in proud defiance, against God and his law. The apostle declares the carnal mind to be "enmity against God; not subject to the law of God, nor, indeed, can be." In this depraved condition he is unfit to enjoy communion with his God, or to associate with the pure and holy, either on earth or in heaven. Hence, in order to enjoy fellowship with God and be prepared for heaven, he "must be born again," and renewed in the spirit of his mind.

To effect this change, the Spirit of God visits him, discovers to him his sin and danger, awakens his slumbering spirit to see and feel its peril, producing that sorrow for sin that leads to unfeigned repentance. A fearful apprehension of danger pervades his whole soul, and he cries out, in the bitterness of his heart, "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

He now begins to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts. The keen arrows of conviction pierce his inmost soul, causing him to feel that it is a bitter thing to sin against God. In the hour of darkness, distress, and danger, he is directed to the cross as his only refuge; and as he gazes on the bleeding victim, his faith gathers strength; deep contrition humbles him; a flood of tenderness fills his soul; and he believes, and is saved. Days and weeks pass, and his peace flows as a river; but ere long, however, he feels the motions of inbred sin, "roots of bitterness springing up, troubling him," and he enters upon a warfare of extermination, resolving to *crucify* every carnal affection and lust. Thus the old man is to be crucified—the body of sin destroyed. He is now dead

to sin. Sin has no more dominion over him. The heart is renewed; the temple purged. The will is rectified; the conscience purged; the passions and tempers, sanctified, flow in their appropriate channels, and are directed to their legitimate results: "Their fruit is unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Christ now takes up his abode in that heart. Hence, says the apostle, "Christ liveth in me." Then have we light in our dwellings, and light on our pathway; light on all our duties; light on all the dispensations of Providence. If Christ lives in us, then have we wisdom to discover danger; we are wise to detect error and subtile temptations; wise in devising means of defeating our adversary and overcoming difficulties. He will give us a mouth and wisdom that all our adversaries can not gain-say or resist. In a word, we shall become wise unto salvation. If Christ dwells in us, we shall have peace; for he is the "Prince of peace;" peace with God; peace of conscience; peace with all men; peace in all the tribulations and conflicts of life, and in the hour of conflict with the last enemy. Then have we "joy unspeakable and full of glory;" "joyful in hope," and in possession. Can that man be unhappy who has in him an undying source of consolation? "The water that I shall give him," says Christ, "will be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

2. "*The life that he now lives.*"

(1.) A life of self-denial; cheerfully denying himself of all sinful pleasures, indulgence, or gratification, of ease and honor; cheerfully submitting to bear reproach and persecution for Christ's sake. The apostle "conferred not with flesh and blood," but counted all things but loss so that he might win Christ and a crown of glory. So we must imitate his example by a life of self-sacrifice.

(2.) A life of patient suffering. When the deep, dark,

and turbid waves of tribulation roll over us; when the gathering clouds of adversity frown upon us; when our circumstances present a cheerless and gloomy aspect; then we are to possess our souls in patience.

(3.) A life of prayer. As it is the language of dependence—an expression of want—and as it is appointed to convey the rich blessings of Divine consolation to the soul, so we must ask, if we would receive; we must call upon God “in the day of trouble,” if we would be delivered. Thus we must call upon God as long as we live.

(4.) A life of labor, of untiring effort. We must enter cheerfully into every department of Christian duty. Many inviting fields of usefulness open before us. The great work of evangelizing the world is committed to the Church—the great work of saving souls from death. Our children, our friends and neighbors have strong claims upon our Christian sympathies. Our own souls demand our unremitting attention: “Keep thyself pure.” Our life is a warfare to the end; we shall find no time to rest till our Lord shall say, “It is enough; come up higher;” and then it will be said unto us, “Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of thy Lord.”

3. *The principle by which we should be actuated.* “By the faith of the Son of God.” Not simply the faith of assent or credence alone, as this is ascribed “to devils” and nominal professors of religion, but faith in the sense of trust, or reliance amounting to confidence—a recumbency of a self-despairing soul upon the absolute sufficiency of the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This faith apprehends Christ as our only Savior, in whom is concentrated all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. This constitutes a broad and immovable foundation, upon which all our hopes and prospects for time and eternity may repose in security.

This faith must be personal: "He loved me and gave himself for me;" appropriating all the merits of his death to ourselves, just as though we were the only sinners in the world that stood in need of God's mercy. However, this personal claim on our part does not exclude others; for each individual may set up the same claim, and say, "He loved *me*;" "For he, [Christ,] by the grace of God, tasted death for *every man*." Thus each individual has the same motive to love and obedience. How beautifully does the poet express this sublime truth:

"O, for such love let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break,  
And all harmonious, human tongues  
The Savior's praises speak!"

"Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us." Here is an expression of love transcending all our conceptions. And shall not this exhibition of mercy and grace move our hearts to love him? Shall not the melting scenes of Calvary win us to the obedience of faith? Shall not the groans and tears of incarnate compassion move us to love him with an undivided heart, and serve him with a willing mind?

It is not to excite a vain curiosity or to gratify speculative inquiry that great and eminent characters are presented to our view in the records of inspiration. The admiration of greatness of character seems to be a natural sentiment. Yet eminent examples of moral greatness, deep and uniform piety, may call forth our admiration.

## SERMON X.

BY REV. CHARLES R. BALDWIN,  
OF THE OHIO ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

## THE REWARDS OF OBEDIENCE.

“O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea,”  
ISAIAH XLVIII, 18.

MEN are disposed to ascribe their misfortunes and misery to any thing but the right source; whereas, if they are unhappy, they need not go farther than their own inattention and mismanagement. It is too often with the people of God as with the men of this world: they make no proficiency in the knowledge of God; they are not blessed in his service, and are without any communications of his love; and too often they fail to examine, diligently and prayerfully, their past lives, to discover the real cause of their leanness and barrenness of soul. They ascribe their perplexed and unhappy condition to their great trials, sore persecutions, and heavy afflictions, and to any thing else but their own unfaithfulness. “O that thou hadst hearkened,” etc.

## I. THE OBEDIENCE THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN RENDERED.

“Thy commandments are exceeding broad.” God is addressing his people—to whom the holy commandments had been given. “They had known their Lord’s will”—what he required of them—as ye all do. To them a listening ear should be lent. *In relation to God, the great leading duty is, to keep in his love; that is, at the moment of conversion, when love is shed abroad in the heart. It is the first-fruits of evangelical faith, and is given before it can be rendered back to God. There are three great*

channels of communication to the understanding and hearts of believers, and to these the ear is ever to be open, catching the least whisper; for God does not always *thunder conviction*. It sometimes requires the closest and most exclusive attention.

1. *By the general instructions of his word.* God commands us. How the great leading moral, social, religious duties are clearly pointed out by God himself! They are of universal application. Not one of them ever has been or ever will be dispensed with. They are of the most binding and awful obligation; and to break any of them, the least of them, is sin; and "the wages of sin is death." There may not be an immediate forfeiture and sudden and entire loss; but it is as certain that the least indulgence in pride of dress, evil temper, love of money, neglect of duty, will bring death into the soul, as intemperance disease and death into the body. Hear, then, instructions in the *written word—in the preaching of the Gospel*. The end of preaching is to instruct out of the Scriptures; to apply, to enforce, and to save from sin; and nothing exceptionable in the manner or life of the preacher, prejudice or enmity to him, "if he be sent of God," can excuse you from obeying his instructions. If they are right, follow them; for the manner in which he discharges his trust he is accountable to God; but if he delivers God's message faithfully, on the peril of your soul, obey that message.

2. *By the reproofs and admonitions of conscience.* This is a faculty of the soul which, by the grace of God, performs various offices at one and the same time.

(1.) It manifests the real nature and quality of our thoughts and words.

(2.) The rule by which they are governed.

(3.) Their agreement or disagreement therewith.

(4.) It acts as a judge, and inflicts its own sentence.

If we do right, it passes the judgment of approval, and confers the reward of *inward satisfaction* and delight. If we go astray, it accuses and condemns, and inflicts its sentence of pain, guilt, anguish, and remorse. It acts instantaneously, and pronounces judgment in anticipation of the act. No sooner is it suggested or proposed to the mind, than conscience, if alive, and at its post, like a sentinel on the very outskirts of the citadel, raises the alarm, and warns off the meditated assault. Of this faculty, God, by his Spirit, early takes possession, enlightening, quickening, and making tender; *arming it with guilty terror*, awful dread and pain; and forming it to tell out the emotions of the soul; purging it from its guilty stains and inward impurity. It is a guide, a monitor, an inward witness of the sanctified affections and desires—the heavenly tempers and dispositions of the sanctified heart. It is none other than the true light, and by this God utters his commands.

3. *By the sweet influence of his Spirit.* The Scriptures offer general rules applicable to all, or adapted to particular classes of individuals, and conscience enables us to determine the moral quality of actions. But just as necessary is a *special providence* to our safety and happiness, and the *special direction* and assistance of the Holy Spirit given to our hearts. It is not enough to offer a general pardon to all that repent and believe; I want a personal application of the blood of Christ—a sensible manifestation of his love. *I must feel it for myself.* If God has any special "*office or work*" for me, he must tell me of it. I love that doctrine so universally received, that those who are called to preach are *specially* moved thereto by the Holy Ghost; and the messenger of God is no more left to himself, after his call, in the matter, manner, and circumstances of his work than before in making choice of it. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,

and ordained you," is not more clearly written than "Lo, I am with you;" "It is not ye that speak but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you;" "What we have received;" "The things we also speak;" referring, doubtless, not only to his epistolary writings, but to his ordinary preaching and religious conversation at all times when imparting instruction in righteousness. If not, how would his hearers know how to draw the distinction, and when to receive what he taught as coming from God, and when from himself, unless he was careful to tell them? If, like Barnabas, he was full, not at any particular time, but as a general endowment of God, of the Holy Ghost, out of the abundance of the heart he must speak the things the Holy Ghost taught. And, if all believers, full, perfect believers, are "temples of the Holy Ghost," when speaking in His fullness, and in the name of Christ, may they not thus be specially taught? As the Spirit works in us, and produces impressions upon our hearts of what God has done for us, so he guides and directs us in the pathway of duty; applies general instructions to our particular cases, and gives special directions when general ones are insufficient. So under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations; what more common than to inquire of God, in cases of sickness and danger, for future direction in the common as well as extraordinary affairs of life? And what does Christ promise to his disciples? Howbeit, not by imparting the prophetic office; but, when consulted, as one of his ordinary offices. "Be careful for nothing," (Paul.) "What things soever ye desire," (Christ.) "And this is the confidence," (John.) Thus does God, by his Spirit, command us; or we may learn his will, or have special directions what to do, and how to speak, and how to act; giving particular *impressions* of duty powerfully felt; giving no peace till obeyed; no rest till all our work is done.

## II. THE BLESSING THAT WOULD HAVE FOLLOWED.

“Then had thy peace flowed as a river,” had those admonitions of the word, conscience, and Spirit been obeyed.

1. “Thy peace had been as a river;” peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; a happy union; a loving, harmonious intercourse; not keeping at a distance from each other; that is impossible; for we “live of him,” and depend on him for every thing. It is said of Christ, “He is our peace;” makes us all one, and unites us to God. It is a calm, happy, and perfectly-balanced state of the soul; the affections all alive and in motion, but perfect harmony; the thoughts lively, active, quick, but pleasant; unruffled; in delightful succession flowing through the soul; not a stagnation of mind, a dullness of feeling, a torpor of soul; but a delightful current of intellectual and spiritual enjoyment. “Then had thy peace been as a river.”

(1.) A river flows from some lake or fountain of a permanent character. John saw a “pure river proceeding out from the throne of God.” The reviving and refreshing influences of the Spirit coming from the throne of grace in answer to prayer; or the fountain of our peace is the love of God fixed in the soul. “*The water that I shall give him;*” “*He that believeth,*” etc. Like a river fed by innumerable streams and swelled by showers, our tide of consolation is daily fed by communications of Divine grace. The closet, family fireside, class-room, baptismal font, sacramental board; the feast of charity; the preaching of the Gospel and written word, all pour in their constant supplies, and enlarge the current of our joys.

(2.) A river is a flowing stream, characterized by *depth*, *length*, and *breadth*. The peace of the believer is a living, moving current in the soul. It moves in a deep,

broad channel, through the whole vista of life, and mingles its waters with the ocean of eternity. It has depths; it is bottomless. Tempests may agitate it; and the bark that rides upon it may leave a temporary furrow; but it disturbs not its lower current. All is calm and tranquil deep in the soul. The agitation is soon over; the soul calmly stays upon God. It has *breadth* or expansion, and it has *banks*, though it often overflows them. Upon its deep, broad streams our hopes and treasures, yea, *our all* may float secure. Like the rivers of earth, it moves onward. Our peace becomes more deep, more expanded by the united supplies it is receiving from the smaller streams and fountains. It swells into a larger and more majestic stream, till it loses itself in the boundless ocean of love.

Again: a river is not uniformly of the *same depth*, breadth, and motion. Sometimes it is temporarily *obstructed*; yet it has the same increasing volume. It soon rises in strength, and overcomes every obstacle, and moves on and onward to the ocean.

2. *The further result of constant obedience.* "Then had thy righteousness," etc. By righteousness here we may understand the *progressive experience* of believers—justification to holiness—the little fountains along the river of peace to the boundless ocean of God's redeeming love. At first the fountain opens, begins to play, and sends forth its sweet and pure waters of life, furrowing its winding channels over pebbles, and among rocks, and beneath shady currents; but sparkling and murmuring on. Fed by other streams, it increases to be a mountain torrent; but, widening and deepening, it moves on through the peaceful vale, till enlarging and swelling to a mighty flood, it pours its mighty waters into the ocean. *Such is the experience of the faithful.* More and more abundant are God's mercies to them, larger and larger the river of his goodness, and deeper and deeper his love, and more

and more resistless the tide of salvation, till the soul finds itself upon a boundless and bottomless ocean of love—"an abyss of mercy." To the mariner on the ocean the liquid element on which he rides seems bounded by nothing but the skies. So is the full experience of the perfect believer in Christ. All is love and heaven; "God is love, and he that dwelleth in God dwelleth in love." Who can fathom the stretch of vision—can comprehend the boundless and amazing love in which the soul dwells? Mercy after mercy rises, "like waves of the sea," in endless succession. All is love beneath and around, and all is heaven and glory above. Evermore there is joy; every pulsation of the heart is prayer; like the wave, a lifting up of itself to God; and every successive event brings thanks to God. "O that thou hadst known," etc. Is this your experience?

#### IMPROVEMENT.

By way of conclusion, what is advisable to be done?

1. *Is this experience attainable?* What says St. Paul? "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed: because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us;" "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth,

and length, and depth, and hight; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." What says St. Peter? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you;" "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." What says John? "Whoso keepeth his word, verily in him is the love of God perfected." What is perfect love? "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love: and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

2. *Are there any that attain it now?* If ever, why not now? Wesley found six hundred and fifty-two in London, and a great number in other places. It is no uncommon thing in our day and country to find many *thus walking*. I know many who have passed into this sea of love. But says an objector, "I can see no difference between them and others. They have their infirmities, like other men." "The world knoweth us not;" "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Have you ever seen them when happy in

God—at least at peace with him? “I have seen them *angry.*” So was Christ. “Selfish.” *Prove it.* “They are, doubtless, *exact.*” *So is God.* “Strictly just; *proud* in appearance; *fond of praise.*” How do you know it? “*Of power.*” Perhaps it belongs to their office. “But I have tried.” *Had you faith?* How long? perseveringly? Obedience necessary; omit nothing. “O that thou hadst hearkened!” Try again; be diligent; give up your whole heart to it: “Then will your peace be as a river.” Amen.

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## SERMON XI.

BY REV. ELIJAH SPARKS.

THE LAW OF LIBERTY.\*

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed,” JAMES I, 25.

How certain it is that man has an inquisitive soul, a vast, capacious, and anxious mind, fond of variety and novelty! Our philosophy teaches us to believe that this mind is never still—that this soul sleepeth not. From an immeasurable thirst after knowledge and improvement,

\* This sermon was preached at a quarterly meeting in Cincinnati, on Sabbath, June 17, 1810, and written out by Mr. Sparks, and presented to Rev. Marcus Lindsey for his own private use. The manuscript was found among the papers of the late Rev. John Sale, by whose son it was handed to the Corresponding Secretary of the “Western Methodist Historical Society,” my highly-esteemed friend Samuel Williams, Esq., by whom it was copied for publication in this work. Mr. Sparks was a member of the Baltimore conference for more than twelve years. He resided, for some time, in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, and died while crossing the Alleghany Mountains, on a journey eastward, more than twenty years ago. From all that I can learn of his history, he was a very popular and useful Methodist preacher.

she is urged to range the fields of speculation; of speculative theories; of the arts and the sciences. But in her flights she too seldom lights down upon her *summum bonum*; her chief concern; that which should be the ultimate end of all her exercises, namely, to form an acquaintance with her God, to fear him, and to keep his commandments; for while inventing new systems or prosecuting old ones, this important duty is principally overlooked. But if, at any time, this subject should engage her attention, she detains it only to give it a slight survey, a superficial investigation; and the views thus obtained are better calculated to bewilder the thoughts and to lead into error, than to enlighten and instruct the understanding and improve the heart.

To guard against this mischief appears to be one leading object the apostle James had in view when penning his epistle, but more especially that portion of it which we have chosen for our present meditation. This passage points out to us, without any possibility of mistake, that course which it is proper for us to observe while sojourning in this present world, under all, even the most difficult stations and relations in which we can be placed. We are invited to give the subject a close, a practical examination; to do which we shall

I. CONSIDER THE SUBJECT ITSELF, AS PROPOSED FOR OUR INVESTIGATION.

II. SHOW IN WHAT MANNER A SUCCESSFUL INVESTIGATION SHOULD BE MADE.

III. POINT OUT SOME OF THE ADVANTAGES ARISING FROM ITS BEING MADE.

I. Resuming the established order, we are, in the first place, to consider the subject proposed for an investigation. It is the "perfect law of liberty." Some suppose the *moral law* to be here meant in opposition to the *ceremonial*. Others suppose the *Gospel dispensation*, while others *divine*

*revelation* in general. To this latter opinion I should give the preference. But why not consider it as pointing to that law at first written in the heart of man by his Creator, but now produced by a living faith in Jesus Christ, and having for its objects God and all intelligent creation—the *law of love*? Law is apposite or appropriate to love. What is law? Law is understood to be the command of some person or power, the precept of which carries with it the reasonableness of obedience. The command must flow from an authority sufficient to impose the obligation of obedience. Moral law, properly speaking, is a standard whereby to weigh moral actions—a rule by which to measure moral deportment. Love is such a law. Corrupt must be the man, and totally lost to serious reflection, and ignorant of first principles, who shall dare to question or challenge the supremacy or authority of the source or great Author of this law. He is “Lord of lords and King of kings;” he is “over all, and blessed for evermore;” he holds unlimited control and bears universal sway in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. This law is his command, clearly expressed and fully declared. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself,” is the language of the holy Law-giver. It is a law at first written on the heart of man by his Creator. We may well suppose that while man preserved his innocence, and stood correct before his God, before he apostatized into sin, love was the first impression on his heart, the ruling passion of his soul. It is a law paramount to all other laws, the fulfilling of all law, and the end of the commandments. It is the standard by which all moral actions shall be tested—the rule by which all moral conduct will be measured. And as it is a law which flows from a supreme authority, the precepts thereof carry the reasonableness of obedience. What

can be more reasonable than that creatures of a day should love their immortal Creator? Nothing. He is the heavenly Parent of all existence, the kind Protector of universal nature, and the provident Benefactor to man. Every argument urges and every obligation requires that man should love his God. It is also reasonable that man should love his fellow; derived from the same parent stock; partaking of similar natures, principles, passions, frailties, weakness, wants, guilt, and infirmities; inhabitants of the same troublesome world; sharing together its adversities and prosperities; holding the same dependence on their common Lord and upon each other; and probationers for the same awful eternity. Then

“Teach me to feel another’s woe,  
To hide the fault I see;  
That mercy I to others show,  
That mercy show to me.”

This is also a “perfect law.” It is perfect in its origin, flowing from the Legislator of all worlds. And his perfection, what mind can comprehend, what eloquence can describe? Should the first archangel that surrounds the throne of God take his stand in this pulpit, and address you on the perfection of the Deity; should he exhaust his store of heavenly eloquence in description, he might raise new ideas in your minds; he might please and charm; he might enrapture, astonish, and amaze; but he could not unfold the perfection of God. Nay; should we be so fortunate as to see him in heaven, in the fullness of his glory and perfection, we shall be constrained to say our ears had not heard the half, our hearts had not conceived but as a drop from the infinite ocean. This law, flowing from so high a source of perfection, is perfect, needing no amendment. While the wisest system of laws ever yet established by the most sage legislature ever organized, either in Asia, Africa, Europe, or America, however per-

fect or well designed in their passage, yet all-trying time has discovered them to be the works of fallible men, and that their acts, from necessity, must be either repealed or amended.

The perfection of *this* law sets at defiance the shocks and revolutions of time, descending through all ages and nations without sustaining any diminution, without needing any improvement or amendment; which, indeed, it could not receive without impairing, without endangering its very existence. And it is a law no less perfect in its essential parts, declaring what must be done and what omitted, and pointing out or declaring the punishment incurred by neglecting to do what is commanded, or attempting what is prohibited. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," etc., is its direction; and, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha," is its sanction; and an awful sanction it is. "Anathema"—let him be accursed from the Church; "Maranatha"—for the Lord will come and confirm the curse.

This is also a *law of liberty*. It discharges the obedient subjects from bondage, rescues them from captivity, and destroys or removes all fear that hath torment. Love is the essence of liberty. All those who have felt its soft influence know that it levels all restraint, opens an intercourse and freedom, and establishes a union among the subjects, unknown to others, and beyond the power of any other cause to produce.

Of what importance that we thoroughly comprehend, justly appreciate, and faithfully practice on the precepts of this law—a law so happy in its consequences, so equal, so reasonable, and so equally binding on all the sons and daughters of mortality!

II. The manner of obtaining a useful knowledge of this law will appear by considering the second thing proposed.

1. *It is by "looking into;" by inspecting and reinspecting it; by examining it closely on all sides, in all its relations; and by sifting it to the bottom.* This is something more than taking a superficial survey of its externals, of its letter, or the A's and B's by which it is expressed. Little, indeed, must that man know of law who looks nothing beyond these. To understand, he would look inside; he would dive to the foundation; he would examine the first principles; he would drink into its spirit. And in like manner this "perfect law of liberty" should be scrutinized; but not to find out its imperfections, could any be supposed; not to discover its motes or beams, could any appear; but to behold its harmony and fitness to himself; in fact, to learn his own true state and character; to enlighten the understanding, to improve the mind, and to instruct the heart; to learn the holiness of the law and the unholiness of the examiner; in fine, to see what manner of persons we are and should be. We must search therein, not for a day, or a few days, or months, or years; but

2. *We must continue to do so.* Otherwise, we shall be like the natural man beholding his face in the mirror of glass, who turneth away and immediately forgetteth what manner of person he was. We can see the reflection of our likeness no longer than we continue to view it in the glass. If we turn away, the prospect soon disappears. In like manner, if we do not continue to look into this Gospel mirror, we shall lose sight of the state of our hearts, which we should not do, although the sight be ever so frightful, ever so corrupt and degenerate; for, at the same view, we behold a "sovereign balm," an infallible remedy—the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." And, if we do not "continue therein," we shall lose our past labor; the "light that is in us will become darkness," and our liberty will become slavery;

we shall be brought again into bondage, "under the beggarly elements of this world;" we shall become "servants to sin," and subjects of the flesh and the devil; but to maintain our standing, we are

3. *Not to be "forgetful hearers."* We are to treasure up with care what we learn, and learn all we can. We should recollect the subject, and con it over and over. Like a faithful schoolboy poring over that portion assigned him by his preceptor, that he may have his answers at fingers' point, so we should often bring this great lesson in review before us, that the impression thereof may become deep and lasting; and, to effect this, we should

4. *"Be doers of the work," practicing daily, hourly what we learn.* We should be ever employed in the noble, the pleasing "labor of love:" first, to God, by honoring him in obedience; by admiring and adoring his inimitable character; by glorifying him in our bodies and our spirits; and, in full, by doing all things to the glory of God; and, secondly, to our neighbors, by doing to them all possible good, without respect of persons; relieving their wants as ability may empower and opportunity offer, to their souls as well as to their bodies; teaching and instructing them in the precepts of this law, by precept and by example; praying with and for them; but not only to our friends, but enemies, returning them good for evil, praying for cursing, and you shall be blessed in the "deed" or work.

III. These remarks lead me, in the third place, to point out some of the advantages arising from making this investigation. I say *some* of these advantages; for "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive" their full extent. He is blessed or happy—"is, inquam, beatior erit in opere suo." It is immaterial whether we consider him happy or blessed; for he that is one is proportionally the other; and blessed, thrice blessed, is the man who can bring his

moral deportment in review before this great standard, this grand criterion, without a blush; who can make the most exact comparison and measurement without apprehension; who shall hear the divine voice of this law, in melodious accents, pronouncing an acquittal, "I find no fault in thee." In Christ thou art approved and accepted. Conscience receives the healing sound and seals the plaudit home on the gladdened heart. Conscience commends.

"What conscience dictates to be done,  
Or warns me not to do,  
This teach me more than hell to shun,  
That more than heaven pursue."

Let tempests gather without; let the floods descend and the rains beat;

"Let cares, like a wild deluge, come;  
Let storms of sorrow fall;"

there is yet a calm within; conscience is still, and peace extends her olive branch; yea, Jehovah himself smiles; he reflects the brightness of his face, the shining of his countenance on that soul. Happy man! thou art blessed of thy God! Listen, O listen to his heavenly words! "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Blessed is the man who delighteth to meditate on and walk in this law. He is rooted in a most fertile soil; he is ever flourishing, and prosperity attends the work of his hands. All around him share in the fruit of his labor of love. The blessing of the poor, the needy, the widow, and the fatherless are upon him. Happy he lives; tranquil and resigned he dies; for in the valley of the shadow

of death he fears no evil, because the Lord his God is with him. Before assembled worlds, in the presence of his awful Judge, he stands unshaken, because the law is on his side, and the Judge is his immortal friend. In heaven he receives the blessing of his Father and God. He receives "an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." O, blessed man!

But "the ungodly," the sinner, the transgressor, "are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away." Light like the chaff and blasted off, they are "driven away in their wickedness." They are like the "briers and thorns," the useless branches which the husbandman cutteth off and gathereth together to be burned. God is angry with them every day. His curses are upon them; they can not "stand in the congregation of the righteous." The law condemns them, and the Judge pronounces the terrible sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." O, misery incomparable, tribulation indescribable must be the portion of their cup for evermore! Nothing can prevent this death and damnation but a return to duty, a return to rectitude, a return to the precepts of the perfect law of liberty.

Return, then; O, return! Arise, fathers, arise, mothers, and return! arise, sons, arise, daughters, and return! arise, brothers, arise, sisters, and return! The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace will interpose his mercy; will extend his pardon and forgiveness; will shield you by his graces; will fold you in the mantle of his love; will save you from the damnation of hell. Amen.

## SERMON XII.

BY REV. RUSSEL BIGELOW,  
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IMPROVEMENT OF NATIONAL BENEFITS.\*

“He hath not dealt so with any nation,” PSALM CXLVII, 20.

REVELATION and reason conspire to prove that there is a supreme Being, a great First Cause of all things, by whom and for whom all things were created and are upheld or preserved. Were it not for revelation, however, we should be left in the dark vale of uncertainty and doubt. Notwithstanding all that has been said of the plain lessons that are written in the book of nature and the information that can be gained from her fair pages, or however certain we might be of the existence of a God when arguing from effects to causes, the want of knowledge relative to the effects in question, the difficulty of embracing *spirit* in our conclusions when our premises are laid in *matter*, and the disorders in the natural and moral world for which we could not account without revelation, would plunge us into serious difficulties, doubts, and perplexities. But when the plowshare of Revelation has broken through, and her light has poured its effulgence into the minds of men, then Reason, which is the dutiful handmaid of Revelation, gives sanction to the truth her mistress has taught, and confirms the attentive and sincere in the truths they have embraced. When aided by Revelation, we see contrivance, great skill, and infinite wisdom manifested in all the works of God. We see him shine in the sun and blossom in the trees; while all the

\* Preached on the anniversary of American independence, July 4.

disorders alluded to are so rationally accounted for, that we are constrained to say,

“How passing wonder He who made him such!”

Embracing him as our Creator, we are led to acknowledge him as our preserver, and admire his wisdom and goodness in all his works of providence. The continued shining of the sun; the regular revolution of all the planets; the regular return of the seasons, with the great variety of circumstances accompanying each season, as much bespeak the continued wisdom of God as the formation of all things bespoke his wisdom when first they were formed.

As we were first formed by the hand of God, so now in him we live, move, and have our being. There is a remarkable connection and gradation in the works of God, from inanimate matter up to the highest grade of created beings, and all are governed by laws suited to their nature and rank. The great Creator has an undoubted right to give to one kind of beings ten talents and to another but half a one, and to one nation or individual of the same nature five talents and to another nation or individual but one. So he requires no more than the improvement of what he has given, in order to administer or execute the laws so suited to the different natures and capacities of his creatures in such a way that he may be glorified in all the works of his hands, and as many of the human race be saved as can be consistent with his plan and their agency. Jehovah exercises a special as well as general providence over all his works, so that “not a sparrow can fall to the ground without his notice;” so that we may safely say, “There is nothing takes place in heaven, earth, or hell without his notice and permission.” To deny the providence of God, is virtually to deny his existence. To believe in a general providence and deny a special providence, is to believe in a genus and deny its species; it is to admit

the existence of a *whole* and deny the existence of its parts, and, of course, to admit and not admit at the same time. We are not, however, to suppose that by a special providence we are to understand the regular movement of a great machine, made up of great and lesser wheels, all moving according to fixed design, without any power to deviate. God has created men moral agents, and deals with them as such. He governs them by moral laws, and has given them the awful power of violation, without which, as they would not be punishable, so they would not be rewardable. But this much we do understand, that God has a perfect knowledge of all things which do and will transpire, and that nothing takes place but by his permission, and that he permits nothing to take place but what he can overrule to his glory and the good of his saints; and, although he deals with men as moral agents, he reserves to himself the right of suspending their agency when they would do what can not be made to subserve his divine purposes, according to the following declaration: "He maketh the wrath of man to praise him, and restrains the remainder of wrath." If we have a correct view, it must be manifestly improper to ascribe any thing to blind chance. But, having this view of Divine providence, we are prepared to acknowledge that if there is any good done in the earth, "the Lord hath done it." We are prepared also to acknowledge either a causing or permissive providence in every thing that takes place; and, while we praise the Lord for the blessings bestowed on us, we are prepared to receive afflictions without alarm and without murmuring. As individuals, and as a nation, we have received abundant favors at the hand of God. Indeed, so great and abundant are the favors conferred on us that, with propriety, we may unite in saying, in the language of my text, "He hath not dealt so with any nation"—he hath not so freely and fully bestowed upon any people so great

loving-kindness and tender regard. In the discussion of this subject I design

I. TO GIVE A LITERAL EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT, OR NOTICE THE GREAT THINGS DONE FOR THE ISRAELITES.

II. CONSIDER GOD'S DEALING WITH OUR NATION.

III. SHOW THE RETURNS AND IMPROVEMENT WE SHOULD MAKE.

Resuming the order proposed, I shall

I. GIVE A LITERAL EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT, OR NOTICE THE GREAT THINGS DONE FOR THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES.

The Psalmist spoke these words with reference to the Jewish nation, and to the special and abundant blessings God had imparted to that people, by which he had distinguished them from all other nations.

1. *He had delivered them from idolatry.* Notwithstanding God had declared that he was the only God, and had made known his aversion to idolatry and sin by a universal and world-destroying flood, a very large proportion of the inhabitants of the earth sunk again into idolatry and wickedness; but that God who had determined the redemption of the human race, remembered his ancient promise, and selected Abraham, the son of Terah, a Chaldean, to be the progenitor of a peculiar people and of the promised Messiah. Abraham, being thus called to sustain a peculiar relation to his Maker, and to enjoy peculiar privileges, formed and cultivated an acquaintance with the Lord, and taught his posterity that the mighty God was the only proper object of worship, as he was the only source of happiness. Hence, while the heathen nations worshiped the sun and stars, the walking quadrupeds, flying fowls, creeping serpents, and growing vegetables, the Israelites, more enlightened and better informed, worshiped the God of the whole earth. They were provided for in the land of Egypt in the time of famine. When oppressed, the Lord espoused their cause,

and delivered them from Egyptian bondage with a high hand and an outstretched arm. The Red Sea divided to give them a safe passage and secure them from their oppressors, while the returning waters overwhelmed and destroyed their bloodthirsty pursuers. The limpid stream gushed from the flinty rock to satiate their thirst, while manna daily descended from above to save them from hunger and afford them nourishment. The opposing Amorites and gigantic Bashanites trembled and fled before them; for the Lord fought their battles; and, although the fathers left their carcasses in the wilderness, consequent upon disobedience, their children passed through parting Jordan in triumph, while the massy walls of Jericho came tumbling down, and surrounding nations, trembling, speedily retired or fell down dead. One chased a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight; and the Lord gave them an inheritance in the land promised to their fathers—a land flowing with milk and honey. They were blessed in their basket and in their store with wholesome laws and religious privileges, with prophets, priests, and instructors. In short, while they were obedient they were favored with rich and abundant blessings, temporal and spiritual, and with still brighter prospects; so that, with propriety, the Psalmist might say, “He hath not dealt so with any nation.” But we do well to recollect that the American nation was not at that time established. Had it been, or had there been any nation in existence like ours, David certainly would have made one exception. This will more fully appear when we shall have

## II. CONSIDERED GOD’S DEALINGS WITH OUR NATION.

1. *He has bestowed blessings on us in common with all other nations.* Life and being, etc.

2. *He has bestowed special blessings on us as a nation.*

(1.) He has saved us from British bondage, which embraces two things, monarchy and the English hierarchy;

and what an indescribable favor is this! How many incalculable blessings have been therewith connected! Who can read the history of former times without admitting this? A recollection of the severe oppressions our ancestors suffered; the heavy duties on them imposed, and the contempt with which they were treated, while their petitions were disregarded, their remonstrances slighted, their reasonable prayers unheard, and self-important lords endeavored to subject them at a blow, will influence us to exclaim, "What hath the Lord wrought! The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." But it may be inquired, "Has the Lord done this? Had he any hand in blood and carnage?" To doubt this would be to ascribe to blind chance one of the greatest deliverances modern history records. Who can contemplate the many circumstances connected with our Revolutionary struggle, and doubt a superintending Providence? Monarchy never was directly established by Jehovah. It made its first appearance in Nimrod, the mighty hunter. Afterward, a number of monarchies were established in the heathen world; but some ages passed away before there was such an establishment in the chosen generation, and then it was only suffered for the hardness of their hearts. The Psalmist says, "He gave them a king in his displeasure." It is not reasonable to suppose that the great Ruler of the universe designed a regular descent of power and dignity from father to son, whether he should be a wise man or a fool, an angel or a devil. The British nation had become proud and haughty. They needed chastisement, and God wisely chastised them in such a manner as gave birth to a powerful nation and a system of government which has astonished the world. Indeed, I will venture an opinion that such was their wickedness and pride that God gave them up to judicial blindness and infatuation that they might bring on themselves deserved chastisement, and

influence our nation to contend for deliverance, and enjoy the sweets of liberty. Who that reads the parliamentary speeches of those times can doubt this—especially the speeches of Lord North—a man renowned for wisdom? But what blind zeal, what strange infatuation are manifested in his speeches of those times! One would be ready to suppose that his mind was absent, or that his tongue refused to be governed by the deliberations and decisions of the mind. The sagacious Pitt clearly discovered and plainly predicted the consequences of such a course as was proposed and contended for. Again, the number of men of astonishing talents who arose in America at that time, by whom plans were contrived and carried into successful operation, is indicative of the peculiar care and providence of God. We might speak of Franklin, and Henry, and others, as well as of the famed statesman and hero, whose praise is in all countries where liberty is not entirely banished. But we forbear, in order to remark that when we consider the character and preservation of the celebrated Washington, we can but discover a special providence exercised toward our nation. What difficulties and dangers did he pass through unhurt! How many fell on either hand while he remained untouched! How many times were instruments of death pointed at his heart! but their life-destroying contents were turned aside by an unseen hand! “Every bullet had its billet.” The sagacious man of the woods, the barbarian of the forest, who had taken deadly aim at the sterling youth no less than sixteen times in vain, was at length constrained to exclaim, “He was not made to be killed by a ball!” Many of the circumstances attending our Revolutionary struggle equally evince a special providence. Witness the detection of the gallant and enterprising yet lamented Major Andre, at a time when a large division of the American army seemed doomed to de-

struction or captivity by the treachery of the detested Arnold. But time would fail to enumerate all the special deliverances wrought out for our nation. Suffice it to say that, though the Lord suffered their enemies to gain some partial victories, that they might more fully realize their dependence on him, and thereby be prevented from becoming proud and haughty, he delivered them time after time, and finally gave them a complete victory, to the great mortification of their oppressors.

(2.) He has blessed us with good and wholesome laws; that is, speaking on general principles; so that, by uniting in compact under our present economy, we obtain many more advantages than we surrender.

(3.) He has blessed us with a land of plenty, a fertile soil, and agreeable climate.

(4.) He has blessed us with religious privileges and ordinances.

### III. THE RETURNS AND IMPROVEMENTS WE SHOULD MAKE.

1. *We should give the Lord all the praise and glory.*

2. *We should observe those measures calculated to continue our independence as a nation.*

(1.) Economy; have good and wholesome laws; preserve good order; avoid extravagance and expense.

(2.) Defense. Though war is to be deprecated and shunned, defense is right.

(3.) We should impress the rising generation with a sense of their obligation to God, and the importance of acting wisely. We should acquaint them with the history of our nation. We should inform them of our sufferings, and tell them of our deliverances. It is very proper to keep or celebrate the day on which the sun of liberty arose, to keep it as a kind of memorial, and tell our rising progeny the great design. I do not mean that we should keep it as it is usually kept. The common course is disgusting to every considerate man, and highly offensive to

Heaven. How inconsistent, because God has given us liberty, to get drunk, fight, sport and play, and spend the time as if we were never to die! Methinks if the pious Washington could put his tongue in some thunder-mouth he would make us hear, "My children, do not so wickedly!"

(4.) We should be particular in electing our rulers.

(5.) We should perform the duties connected with our stations.

(6.) We should avoid and suppress intemperance and immorality.

(7.) Promote morality and religion, and render each other happy.

(8.) Pray much to God, and strive for heaven.

#### INFERENCE.

1. Our obligations and accountability to God.
2. Our ingratitude and wickedness as a nation.
3. We may discover the continued goodness of God.
4. Our future glory and greatness, if we improve.
5. We may infer our awful destruction, if we are rebellious.

THE END.

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