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J. Adams

S E R M O N S

ON

V A R I O U S S U B J E C T S.

BY

THE REV. JOHN WATSON ADAMS, D.D.

LATE PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SYRACUSE, N. Y.

WITH

A Biographical Sketch of the Author.

BY

THE REV. JOEL PARKER, D.D.

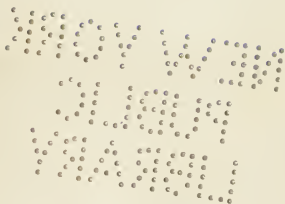
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## P R E F A C E.

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Who reads a preface? Scarcely any one. Why indite one, then? No very urgent reason can be given, especially since the Biographical Sketch contains nearly everything that is of any consequence in explanation of the character and design of the volume. Yet, a few words may be addressed to those who, from a peculiar interest in the author of these Sermons, may think it worth while to read everything which may be printed in a book so full of the "fragrant memory" of a dear friend.

The editor has regarded his task as one of peculiar difficulty. He has reason to believe that not one of all these discourses, except the two which were previously published, were composed under the least impression that they would ever be given to the public in a printed form. Some of the best sermons were so hastily written, and left in so unfinished a state that they could not be properly brought out without numerous corrections; he was compelled, therefore, to select from those which were more complete, though often possessing less intrinsic merit.

Perhaps it is scarcely necessary to say that it cannot

be expected that all should be pleased with the selections made by the editor. Some sermons are omitted which individuals will esteem as far superior to others that have been inserted in the volume. This must necessarily be so, since the effect of a spoken discourse depends greatly upon the circumstances which gave it origin, the peculiar state of mind with which it was listened to, and the tone of the preacher's feelings at the time of its delivery. Yet reference has been had in all the selections to what would probably be most acceptable to the community among which Dr. Adams lived, and laboured, and died.

One of the sermons, that on "Christian Baptism," was placed in the collection, not without thought that some of Dr. Adams's best friends, and many of those who are kindly aiding in the issue of this book by a generous patronage, belong to the denomination from which he differs in respect to this ordinance. But it seemed due to others that his words of counsel and his reasonings on this subject should be preserved, because he said little in respect to it while living. This is the only discourse touching the mode of baptism which I have found among the manuscripts of twenty-five years' study. It was pointed out to me by two of Dr. Adams's most intimate friends as one of the sermons which ought by no means to be omitted. It is believed, too, that our Baptist brethren will not feel themselves aggrieved by a discussion manifesting so much candour, and so much charitable regard for them as a part of the great Christian family.

The discourse delivered June 18, 1835, at the inaugura-

tion of the Rev. Samuel H. Cox, D.D., as Professor of Sacred Rhetoric and Pastoral Theology in the Auburn Theological Seminary, and the sermon which is entitled "The Crisis," preached July 22, 1832, during a time of extraordinary political commotion in the old world, and the prevalence of Asiatic Cholera, have been previously published. It was deemed wise to give them a place in the volume, both because they are the only two that have received the last finish from the author's own pen, and because those who possess them would be pleased to have them in a form more likely to be preserved.

Disappointment may be experienced by some that none of the sermons addressed to the young are found in this selection. They are indeed invaluable, but they are so connected that it was difficult to begin without publishing the whole; and, since this volume was designed as a general memorial and keepsake for the congregation and friends of Dr. Adams, it seemed important to make it up of such varieties as would be most generally acceptable.

Since completing the selection, and reading over the sheets with a mind free from the embarrassment produced by constantly looking for inaccuracies to be corrected, it has occurred to the editor that this volume may be more highly appreciated by the public at large than he had anticipated. If so, and if the judgment of the reading community should seem to justify it, a smaller volume of LECTURES TO THE YOUNG may be selected and issued at a future day. Partiality aside, he cannot help thinking that the first discourse in the book, on "Christ's Renown," the

two previously published, the "Hope of Glory," which he heard at the time as the first sermon delivered by Mr. Adams in Syracuse, and the last two sermons, one on "The Christian's Victory," and the other on "The Christian's Crown," are worth, to every lover of holy sentiments, expressed in a pure and beautiful style, more than the cost of the whole.

Great pains have been taken to render the mechanical execution of the book tasteful. The engraving, by an artist who was familiar with the countenance of the author, and who copied from an admirable portrait of Dr. Adams, now in possession of his family, is judged to be a very perfect likeness of the original.

In conclusion, the editor would express his grateful acknowledgments to the people of Syracuse, and those generous friends that have enabled him to execute his task without the embarrassing apprehension of pecuniary loss, and in a style of publication of which none will have reason to be ashamed. May that gracious Spirit, whose gospel is set forth in these discourses, augment and prolong the influence which they exercised when they fell from those lips which have ceased to move.

Philadelphia, March 7, 1851.



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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

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THE biography of a good man, like his actual life, is both agreeable and useful; but when the life has been marked by a modest and retiring disposition, and few have known the charm which it has spread through a limited sphere, it is scarcely to be expected that very ample materials should be found for a written memoir.

The subject of the following sketch, JOHN WATSON ADAMS, was born December 6th, 1796, in the town of Simsbury, Hartford County, Connecticut. He had a twin brother named Erastus Homer. They were very unlike each other in their appearance, temperament, and mental peculiarities; yet there were strong points of resemblance in their character. Both were affectionate in their dispositions, and possessed of lively sensibilities and genial tastes.

John Watson had a greater amount of self-control, and his calm judgment, and the disposition of his brother to look to him for counsel, made him seem to be several years the senior of his coeval yoke-fellow.

Their father, the Rev. Roger Adams, had dedicated them to God in their childhood, and before he ceased to perform the active duties of the ministry, they both entered upon the responsibilities of the sacred office.

Among the papers of my esteemed brother-in-law, I can only find the most meagre reminiscences of his childhood.

From the introduction to a brief diary kept by him, and which was commenced November 5th, 1823, at New York, it appears that when he was five or six years of age, his father removed with his family from Simsbury to Granville, Massachusetts. After a residence in Granville of about three years, he removed to Sherburne, Chenango County, New York, in 1805. Here they remained five years, and then removed to Lenox, Madison County, in 1810. Thence the family removed, the year following, to Sullivan, near the Oneida Lake. Here they remained till after Mr. Adams became the pastor of the church in Syracuse. Being thus near to his paternal home, he was allowed to minister, with filial piety, to the comfort of his parents during the infirmities of declining years, and to close their dying eyes.

It does not appear, from the brief memoranda referred to, at what time he made an open profession of religion. He says, that he "obtained hope in the mercy of God, in April, 1816." It is probable, that he was united to the church, in due form, soon after, as we find that he commenced his classical studies, at Paris Hill, in May of the following year. It does not certainly appear, from any documentary testimony in my possession, that he commenced study with the purpose of serving God in the sacred office. But, it is to be presumed, from several circumstances, that this was his object. We find no evidence of his ever agitating the subject of selecting a profession subsequently. He did not commence his classical studies till he had nearly attained his majority, and as this was soon after his becoming decidedly religious, it is probable that he was induced to enter thus late upon his course, in the hope of qualifying himself to preach Christ to lost men.

It is one of the beautiful incidental influences of the

gospel, that it inspires the love of learning, and awakens a desire for a thorough education. Hundreds of men now filling the sacred office—men who are alike ornaments to the cause of learning and religion, would never have had a motive sufficient for acquiring a public education, if such education had not been necessary to their rendering the best service to that Saviour who had called them by his grace into his spiritual kingdom.

Mr. Adams was graduated at Hamilton College, in 1822. He was then nearly twenty-six years of age. His performance on commencement-day will never be forgotten by those who heard him. His appointment was an oration. The theme which he selected, "Dignity of Character," was extremely well-chosen. It was one to which his genius was peculiarly adapted, and one of which his auditors felt that his whole appearance was a beautiful exemplification. His manner was simple, yet animated. His tones of voice were deep and mellow. The more beautiful passages, of which there were many, seemed suffused with a golden light, while a slight shake in his voice, arising from a modest diffidence, imparted to some of his most pathetic sentences an effect not unlike a judicious use of the tremulant stop in an organ. Perhaps there was no one in all the college who secured a more profound respect, and no one in his class was the object of a warmer affection. He had, at that time, no enemies. His talents and acquirements awakened universal admiration, while his modesty secured him against the shafts of envy. In testimony of the truth of this statement, I have before me a letter, dictated by a classmate, who still survives, and whose character is a guarantee against everything like flattery. The letter is addressed :

"To my classmate, JOHN W. ADAMS. Not to be opened



by him until the expiration of fifteen years, dated from April 28th, 1822."

After various allusions to their friendly intercourse, and the utterance of some fancy predictions, the writer proceeds to make the following beautiful prophecy, founded upon the impression made by the character and talents of his classmate :

"If those superior talents, which Heaven has bestowed on Adams, are suffered to flow in their proper channel, and he will seek a theatre adequate for the display of them, he may fairly claim a competition with Whitefield, Wesley, or Chalmers. Indeed, I never knew and never saw the man, who, I think, possesses abler requisites for an eminent divine, than the subject of this epistle. As a writer, he is above all praise ; and the deep-toned energy and powerful pathos of his voice can rouse the sluggish spirit, or strike dismay to the guilty conscience. But, if actuated by that modesty which is almost invariably the concomitant of true greatness, he prefers the walks of private life, he will possess a congregation whose love will be concentrated in him ; and the delights of social intercourse and connubial felicity will yield him that inward satisfaction, which the applause of the world can never confer.

"I cannot, perhaps, conclude this sketch better than by applying to the subject of it the beautiful description in Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* :

“ At church, with meek and unaffected grace,  
His looks adorned the venerable place ;  
Truth, from his lips, prevailed with double sway,  
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.  
The service past, around the pious man,  
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran ;  
E'en children followed with endearing wile,  
And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile.

His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed,  
 Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed;  
 To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,  
 But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.  
 As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,  
 Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,  
 Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
 Eternal sunshine settles on its head.'

“Thus prophesies

“Your devoted friend, till death,

“W. J. B.”

This youthful prediction the author, whose genius has graced another profession, has lived to see fulfilled to the letter. It is a fine exemplification of the truth contained in the current expression, “the inspirations of genius.” There is a truth-loving quality in real genius, that enables it to seize with confidence upon a nascent development, and describe it as it will appear in its maturity.

On leaving college, Mr. Adams engaged in teaching a select school, in Manlius. At the close of his engagement in teaching, he went to the city of New York, and commenced his professional studies, under the instruction of the Rev. Gardner Spring, D.D., the Rev. Samuel H. Cox, the Rev. Melancton Whelpley, and the Rev. Elihu Baldwin.

The year which he spent in the city was of great service to Mr. Adams, both in regard to attainments made in professional study, and the acquaintance which he formed with society, as well as the advantageous friendships which he secured. He confessed himself under great obligation to his respected teachers in theology, and also to a private gentleman, Anson G. Phelps, Esq., who, being a distant relative of Mr. Adams's father and the uncle of Miss Mary Phelps, with whom he was already anticipating a future union by marriage, took his diffident young friend by the

hand, and bestowed on him all those marks of hospitable attention to which his benevolent nature and ample means so readily prompt him.

No literary remains are to be found, as marking the history of his quiet life during the year spent in New York, except a brief diary of his studies and attendance upon religious meetings, in which he sometimes addressed the people; and allusions to his social enjoyments and correspondence, and a few of his first efforts in the composition of sermons.

His diary, during this period, indicates that he improved the opportunity afforded by a residence in the city for hearing all the best models of pulpit eloquence. One only needs to glance at the use which Mr. Adams made of these advantages, to be satisfied that every young man preparing himself for the sacred profession would do well to secure, at least, one year's residence in a great city. His notices of eloquent speakers, and of occasions of various interest, indicate clearly that he was neither an uninterested nor an indiscriminating observer. In justification of this remark, two or three brief extracts may be given.

“May 13th, 1824.—In the evening, attended the Anniversary of the Presbyterian Education Society, held in the Brick Church. De Witt Clinton in the chair. He delivered an able address. His speech was followed with the Report, read by Mr. Morse. The meeting was then addressed by the Rev. Mr. Nott, formerly of the Bombay Mission, by Dr. Rice, and Professor Monteith, and last by the Rev. Dr. Griffin, in a most learned, eloquent, and pathetic speech of nearly an hour's length. The audience, which was learned and elegant, was charmed and enchained with it. It exceeded anything that has been recently exhibited in this city.

“June 2d. Attended the Anniversary of the Methodist

Missionary Society in the John Street Church. The meeting was addressed by the Rev. Mr. Reese from England, and the Rev. John Summerfield. This last gentleman speaks very pleasant and agreeable things in a very pleasant and agreeable manner. His memory seems retentive; his ideas are at hand, and his words flow without effort. He commands attention, rather by the agreeableness than by the weight of what he says.

“June 13th. Sabbath.—Attended the Methodist Church in John Street. The preacher was the Rev. Mr. Summerfield. His text, ‘Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their father.’ The speaker rose often upon some beautiful and glowing figure into the most animating and eloquent strains. A natural simplicity, assisted by a brilliant imagination, are the peculiar characteristics of his style. He appears like a man that has given up all for Christ. Yet his sermons are adapted to charm and engross the fancy rather than to affect and convince the mind.”

The next extract from his memorandum, of an attendance upon a Roman Catholic service, shows the liberality and good sense with which his mind surveyed a scene, in which persons of a weak judgment fancy everything to be right or everything wrong, according to the bias of their feelings.

“June 27th. In the morning attended service at the Roman Catholic Cathedral. A *mess* of foolish superstitions was apparently the sum total of their worship. The sermon, however, which was delivered for a collection to aid orphan children, was neither foolish nor inappropriate. The music, which was given on the organ and by the voice of Mrs. Fagan, was quite charming. The holy water with which every one sprinkled himself on his entrance at the door, the crossing and bowing towards the altar, the sprinkling of the worshippers by the priest, and the burning of the



tapers, seemed to me a nonsensical, superstitious, and vain parade of lifeless forms.”

After a residence of a little more than eight months in the city, Mr. Adams left on the first of July to join his friends in Lenox. Remaining with them a few days, he passed on to Auburn, and was admitted as a member of the middle class in the Theological Seminary on the sixteenth of the same month. During his course in the Seminary there was but one opinion among the professors and his fellow-students in respect to his comparative standing. He was everywhere “*primus inter pares.*” Nor did we ever know of a single instance in which such distinction was reluctantly assigned him. He was not remarkably devoted to active efforts to render himself useful in Auburn and its vicinity, and hence was not as well known by the people, at *that* time, as some of his classmates. He was contemplative and retiring in his habits, and easily persuaded himself that duty called him to be wholly absorbed in his studies, that he might make a careful and thorough preparation for future labours in his sacred calling.

In the middle of senior year, the Second Church of Rochester, on the recommendation of the Rev. Dr. Lansing, at that time his pastor and the professor of sacred rhetoric in the Seminary, invited Mr. Adams to preach for them as a candidate.

Having previously been licensed by the presbytery, he complied with this request, and arrived in Rochester on the 1st day of January, 1826. He remained and preached two Sabbaths, and returned to the Seminary. Soon after this he spent four Sabbaths in Syracuse. In compliance with a previous engagement, he returned and preached five Sabbaths at Rochester, and received a call from both places. To most young clergymen, Rochester would have been regarded as a far more inviting field. The population from

which a congregation might be gathered was much larger than in Syracuse. The congregation was more numerous and wealthy, and the salary offered was \$800, while the church of Syracuse could only promise \$600. Yet Mr. Adams preferred Syracuse. The chief reason for this decision, as I know from conversations had with him at the time, was an apprehension that he had not sufficient talent to sustain himself in such a place as Rochester, where he thought the gleams of his farthing light would be lost in the blaze at that time issuing from the candlestick of the first church. It was an amiable modesty conducting him to an erroneous conclusion.

The literary remains of Dr. Adams, aside from those of a professional character, are few. I am not aware that he ever contributed anything to our periodical literature for the purpose of advancing or gratifying the taste of the community, or that he pursued any plan for improving himself in those graces of style for which he possessed such a sharp relish. Yet among his early papers there are found a few snatches of poetry in which there are exquisite touches. They are all tinged by his peculiar love for rural beauties, and seem to have been inspired by scenes and seasons such as are referred to in the following stanza from one of his little poems :

“When the earth walked forth in her green attire,  
 And the dew-drops were pendant from every flower,  
 And the Angel of Song had waked up his lyre,  
 And the music of heaven inspired the glad hour.”

But two specimens shall be submitted. They are imperfect, but the soul of poetry breathes through them, and to friends who knew and appreciated the author, they will possess a peculiar charm. The first was written in the city of New York. It is without date, but I remember to have

seen it when it was fresh from his pen, and, according to my best recollection, it must have been written in 1827. Two stanzas are omitted on account of imperfections in their structure.

#### THE DESIDERATA OF THE CITY.

In this city gay and splendid,  
All that art can give you've got,  
But with softer hand are blended  
Nature's beauties, which you've not.

Here no forests tall are waving,  
Where, at noontide, you may rove ;  
No sweet matin songs are waking  
That allure you to the grove.

Here no zephyr gales are breathing  
Fragrance through the balmy air ;  
Here no tender vines are weaving  
Cooling bowers that shade you there.

Here no crystal fount is flowing,  
Glancing brightly through the dell ;  
Here no willow trees are growing,  
Planted by the moss-grown well.

No soft moonlight, while your straying,  
Trembles through the dusky grove ;  
No sweet warbles, while delaying,  
Cheer you with their notes of love.

No fresh pastures, green and growing,  
Where the lambkins skip and play ;  
Nothing like the scythe-men mowing,  
Nothing like a harvest day.

Here no yellow-fingered autumn  
Folds the vestments summer wore ;  
Here no little fading blossom  
Speaks life's transient summer o'er.

All is hum, and din, and bustle,  
 Rattling coach, and cracking thong;  
 Carts that jumble, thunder, rustle; —  
 Ah! one can't endure it long.

In that little white-walled cottage,  
 Planted in the hazel glen,  
 Let me live till wintry dotage  
 Give life's troubled dream an end.

The other specimen to which reference has been made is still more peculiar, but though wanting in rhythmical accuracy, it possesses the sweetness and beauty of genuine descriptive poetry. It was written some years later than the foregoing piece, and bears the marks of haste. He gave me a copy of it in manuscript, and I should have handed it over to some of our periodicals years ago, had it not been very certain that the author's diffidence would have made the exposure extremely painful to his feelings. It is entitled

#### THE MUSIC OF SPRING.

The music of spring, the robin, the robin  
 Is carolling loud in the old cherry-tree,  
 Where from year to year he heralds the spring,  
 And that is sweet music, sweet music to me.

The gales of spring, the gales, the gales  
 Are fitting around upon dewy wing;  
 Breathing sweet odours through copse and dales,  
 All joyous with life, they sing, they sing.

The lambs of the spring, the lambs, the lambs  
 Are skipping and bounding in frolicsome glee.  
 O'er the bright sunny glade by the gurgling spring;  
 Sweet music is this, sweet music to me.

The buds of the spring, the buds, the buds  
 Are dropping sweet gums from their leafy folds;  
 And the virgin germ as it springs from its bed  
 Sweet music to me unfolds, unfolds.



The flowers of the spring, the flowers, the flowers,  
As they open their hearts to the honey-bee,  
All sweet with their fragrance, and bright with their hues,  
Discourse in sweet music to me, to me.

The streams of the spring, the streams, the streams,  
As they gurgle and leap, now the winter is gone,  
And murmur and dance o'er their pebbly beds,  
Delight me at heart with their song, their song.

The showers of spring, the showers, the showers,  
As they weep on the fields and gladden the earth,  
Or paint their bright bow on the folds of the clouds,  
Delight me indeed with their mirth, their mirth.

The fields of the spring, the fields, the fields,  
When the sunbeams repose in the pearls of the dew;  
When the green grass is springing, and the flocks are all feeding,  
Chant sweet music to me, and to you, to you.

The morning of spring, the morn, the morn,  
As it starts from the east on its bright purple wing,  
And spreads o'er the earth the soft trail of its light,  
With the breath of its fragrance it sings, it sings.

The Sabbath of spring, sweet day, sweet day,  
When the bells from the spires are pealing their call,  
When, to silence is hushed the loud hum of the world,  
Makes sweet music for me, and for all, for all.

The voice of the spring, the voice, the voice  
Of Nature, all roused from her wintry sleep,  
Sings aloud to the praise of the God of the year,  
In sweet music his praises she speaks, she speaks.

Besides these, and a few less finished pieces of poetry, I find nothing among the papers of Dr. Adams of a literary character, except those discourses and addresses which were of a strictly professional nature. He did, indeed, once commence a history of Onondaga County, and, if my recollection serves me, delivered one or two lectures before "The Village Lyceum," or some institution

of a similar character; in which the materials collected by him were spread before a portion of the community.

These manuscripts were subsequently either given away or sold for a trifle to some person writing a more extended history.

He had, also, commenced the preparation of a book, in conjunction with the editor of this volume, and which will ere long be given to the public.

Mr. Adams commenced his labours in March, 1826, with the congregation which he served till called away by death. The origin of the church, the mode of its constitution, and the principal facts connected with Mr. Adams's settlement, are succinctly set forth by a well-drawn article published in the "Religious Recorder," under date of April 11th, 1850. The whole article is worth preserving, and is, therefore, transferred entire to these pages.

"The Rev. Dr. John Watson Adams is dead! He expired at his residence, in this city, Thursday morning, 4th inst., at 8 o'clock, in the 54th year of his age.

"A great and good man has fallen!—a man great in intellect; great in practical sense; great in the domestic, social, and moral qualities; great in integrity, and in the exhibition of the Christian virtues. As a man and as a Christian pastor, he possessed a strength and completeness of character rarely equalled. The loss of such a man, at the period of highest intellectual and moral vigour, is a public calamity, and makes a chasm which is sensibly felt by men in every walk in life.

"This announcement will pierce thousands of hearts with the pang of deep and poignant sorrow. Rarely does any man enjoy so widely, and to such an unlimited degree, the love, respect, and confidence of community—while those who knew him best loved him most. The friends, who became such when he came to Syracuse, were recognised on

the morning of his death, as his ardent and bosom friends, after an association through all the changing scenes of a quarter of a century. And surely, no man, not manifesting in an extraordinary degree the attributes of the true Christian pastor, could at once have unanimously secured, and for a quarter of a century have uninterruptedly retained, the respect, regard, confidence, and warm affection of a large and steadily growing church and congregation. To them, this bereavement comes with overwhelming force, not less to the younger than to the older members, for to all, whether in the hour of prosperity, trial, or affliction, he was ever the wise and judicious counsellor, and the sympathizing friend. How many of them will remember to their latest moment, the consolation and strength which his wise, cautious, moderate, yet always decided and affectionate counsels have afforded, in affairs of a business, domestic, or social nature. The extent and accuracy of his practical knowledge of men and things, and his rare common sense, made him at all times, not only a safe, but a valuable counsellor in the business concerns and personal relations of the members of his church and congregation; and to many a young man has he thus rendered invaluable service. All who knew him, young or old, and desired his advice, approached him without hesitation, and with confidence the most unreserved.

“A most delightful as well as valuable trait in the character of Dr. Adams, was his warm interest in the happiness and prosperity of the young, and particularly in reference to the character and success of young men. He did not cast off a young man because not in all respects such as he desired him to be. This seemed to establish a stronger claim upon his good offices. Not by word or deed did he ever exhibit aught of that spirit—‘I am holier than thou.’ He seemed to regard himself as the friend of ‘publicans and sinners,’ and that they were the objects of

his great mission as a minister of the Gospel of the Prince of Peace. The man of depraved morals was kindly met, and, when consistent, kindly and affectionately counselled—not shunned or treated with contempt.

“In his friendships, he was cordial and ardent, and in his intercourse with those whose worth he had tested, most unreserved. The relations for twenty-five years subsisting between our respected fellow-citizen, Deacon Pliny Dickinson, and the deceased, to the knowledge of the writer of this, furnishes one of the most beautiful and touching instances of personal friendship, which the intercourse of man ever affords: and if the history of those relations could possibly be clearly revealed to the mind of man, the character of our lamented friend would be fully appreciated by all. Among the results of that revelation would be a most rare illustration of warm-hearted, unostentatious benevolence, while the strongest guarantees against publicity were always used. His liberal contributions at the monthly concert were unseen by the church, and known only by their officers who had the fund in charge—while often the last cent about his person would be bestowed upon a charitable object, of which not more than a single person would be cognizant. Ostentatious giving, instinctively inspired him with disgust, as denoting the ascendancy of the lower and meaner qualities of character.

“In modesty and humility—inseparable characteristics of the true Christian gentleman, as well as the *imprimatur* of nature’s nobility—he was a model which men of all ranks and professions might safely copy with the strictest fidelity. Possessing an intellect of extraordinary clearness and power; with the ability to comprehend and present every view of which a subject was susceptible, with astonishing readiness; with the most intimate knowledge of the practical affairs of life; his bearing in discussion with his juniors who differed from

him, and who were his inferiors in intellect and knowledge, was always kind, gentle, and respectful—in a word, the manner of the truly great. His diffidence, manifest from his earliest manhood, in reference to the most brilliant and powerful productions of his intellect, productions which so often elicited the admiration of his auditors, and inspired his friends with delight,—we say, his diffidence in regard to them was so marked, as to be liable to be mistaken for affectation by those who were not thoroughly conversant with the constitution of his mind.

“As a preacher, his discourses were distinguished for their clear and powerful expositions of the leading doctrines of the Bible, and in illustrating the main views upon which the evangelical churches of Christendom rest. His appeals in the enforcement of the practical obligations of Christian duty, were always forcible, direct, pungent. His language was usually that of invitation, argument, affectionate appeal; rarely that of denunciation.

“As a writer, his style was distinguished for its compactness, strength, vigour, order in the arrangement of propositions and thought, the perfection of every sentence, and above all, and to a degree which was never excelled by any clergyman to whom the writer of this ever had the pleasure of listening, for felicity in the choice of language. The most highly cultivated critic in philology, in listening to a discourse from the lips of Dr. Adams, would have found his powers set at defiance, in an attempt to substitute a single word for the one so aptly, so appropriately, or so beautifully chosen. At times, he was strikingly eloquent, for he possessed a strong and active imagination; but his eloquence was like his character, pure, chaste, and subdued, and never bedecked with the trappings of meretricious ornament. We have spoken of him as in public discourse usually mild and persuasive; but we ought to add, that when a sense of duty compelled him to denounce,



his invectives at times were terrible in their force, and seemed to scathe and blight whatever they touched.

“It is so remarkable a fact as to be worthy of special mention, that those who have listened to the pulpit discourses of Dr. Adams for ten, twenty, and twenty-five years, found the zest with which they heard him not at all diminished. To the entire correctness of this remark, all who have been for those periods permanent members of his congregation will attest. If it were to be added, that the interest with which his sermons were listened to increased, rather than diminished, up to the unexpected close of his public labours, many of his most attentive hearers would furnish a hearty endorsement of its truth.

“His constitution was not robust, which fact, coupled with high nervous temperament, made him liable to temporary depression, when afflictive events, of a sudden and overwhelming nature, pressed upon his mind; and which tended to give to the general current of his views and feelings something of a conservative cast. But usually, he was remarkable for the buoyancy of his spirits; his cheerful and pleasing address; while his eye would instantly reveal the kindling humour of his soul, when any topic, introduced in ordinary conversation, excited his interest or awakened his sympathies. The childlike simplicity and youthful (though always dignified) merriment displayed by him on appropriate occasions, when surrounded wholly by those who unreservedly enjoyed his love and confidence, were traits which only a few, from the nature of the case, could ever appreciate, but which were to the noble consistency of his elevated character what the perfume is to the rose.

“He was remarkable for the strength of his convictions. So clear were his intellectual powers, that every conclusion arrived at by the processes of his own mind was to him as clear as light; and hence, that which he embraced as truth

he clung to with wonderful tenacity, being withal firm in his purposes. Yet the tenacity of his nature was fully equalled by the sincerity and earnestness with which his convictions were announced and maintained.

“His habitual interest in the condition of others, especially of those near to him by the ties of friendship, were exhibited to the last, and was most strikingly manifested within an hour of his decease.

“His thoughts, in his last severe illness of six weeks, were on the church he so loved. At Glen Haven, three weeks since, when he did not expect to live from day to day, Dr. Samson asked him, what message he should deliver to the church? His sole answer was, ‘Tell them to continue to pray.’

“Dr. J. W. Adams was born in Simsbury, Connecticut, on the 6th December, 1796. His father was Rev. Roger Adams, a Presbyterian clergyman, a native of Connecticut. When the subject of this notice was a boy, his father removed to Sherburne, Chenango county, where he preached about five years, and thence removed to Lenox, Madison county, about 1810. John commenced a course of study preparatory to entering Hamilton College, at which institution he was graduated, August 28th, 1822, and of which, for quite a number of years before his decease, he was a trustee. His oration, delivered at that commencement, is on the table before us, and is entitled ‘Dignity of Character,’ and its motto:

“‘True dignity is his, whose tranquil mind  
Virtue has raised above the scenes below.’—BEATTIE.

“He was twenty-six years of age at that time, and the oration exhibits the complete development of those qualities which have since given him a character so highly distinguished for consistency and elevation of tone. He

finished his studies for the ministry at Auburn Theological Seminary, where he won the warm friendship of all the students and of the faculty of that institution, including the late venerable Dr. Richards, then president of the Seminary.

“He was married on the 3d day of May, 1826, to Miss Mary Phelps, of Lenox, N. Y., daughter of Col. Thos. W. Phelps.

“As his general relations with the First Presbyterian Church and Society, which has had no other pastor than Dr. Adams, are a matter of interest to at least a great share of this community, it is briefly stated, that the society organized on the 14th December, 1824, when the following persons were elected trustees: Moses D. Burnet, Miles Seymour, Rufus Moss, Jonathan Day, Heman Walbridge, Joshua Forman, and Joseph Slocum, of whom only two are now alive, the first and last named, both of whom are well-known residents of this city. During the next year, 1825, the church-edifice, in which the society have since worshipped, was erected; in which Dr. Adams was the only pastor, and which was leveled to the ground simultaneous with the departure of his spirit. The last Sabbath-service was performed in the venerable and consecrated old pile on the 24th ult., and since then it has been demolished; its place is to be supplied by a new structure, now in process of erection. The old church-edifice was dedicated in January, 1826; the dedication-sermon by Rev. Dr. Lansing.

“The First Presbyterian Church of Syracuse was organised on the 6th April, 1826, by Hezekiah N. Woodruff, Hutchins Taylor, Ralph Cushman, and Washington Thatcher, clergymen, and Joseph W. Brewster, William Eager, and Harry Mosely, elders; being a committee from the Onondaga Presbytery. The church consisted of twenty-

six members; and Frederick Phelps and Edward Chapman were elected elders, and Pliny Dickinson, deacon, at that time.

“When the old church edifice was dedicated, in January, 1826, Dr. Lansing brought the then young Rev. J. W. Adams, at that time engaged in theological studies at the Seminary, with him; and, of course, many acquaintances were formed by him. Dr. A. was then in the 30th year of his age. The impressions were mutually agreeable, but not immediately acted upon by the society. Meantime the Second Presbyterian Society, at Rochester, made an agreement with the Doctor to preach a certain number of sermons for them in May or June, as a candidate for settlement, at a salary of \$800 per year. The society here, invited him to preach a few sermons prior to the commencement of his brief engagement at Rochester, with a view to settlement at a salary of \$600 per year. He accepted the invitation, and the result was, after fulfilling his engagement at Rochester, he declined their offer, concluded an arrangement with the society here, and was ordained and installed Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church and Society of Syracuse, on the 28th June, 1826; which relation he uninterruptedly sustained to the day of his decease. The church now numbers 365 members.

“The amiable wife of Dr. A., and two daughters of his own family circle, survive him. As their bereavement is utterly beyond the power of any language at our command to express, so is their grief beyond its power to assuage.

“As among the distinguishing characteristics of Dr. Adams, may be mentioned his intuitive knowledge of men; the remarkable vigour, strength, and activity of his reasoning powers, which never in their conclusions proved

false to the premises adopted; extensive knowledge of men and things, including the every-day affairs about him; his never-failing common sense; the perfect equipoise of his character at all times, so far as his relations with others were involved; his ardent and unyielding attachment to friends, his cordial interest in the welfare of the young; unostentatious liberality; an inflexible integrity; an address which instantly challenged the regard, love and confidence of those who made his acquaintance. In reference to his intellect, it may be added, that he never held vague, confused, or shadowy views upon any subject. The great scriptural doctrines held and maintained by him, were to his logical mind as clear as sunlight; and with equal clearness he presented them to others.

“But those only who knew him intimately, who had established themselves in his confidence, and secured a hold upon the full force of his sympathy, had revealed to them the full force and beauty of the character of Dr. A., either in the quickness, brilliancy, and power of his intellect, or the depth, earnestness, and absorbing sincerity of his moral and social nature. Here, indeed, in this circle, did his noble and elevated feelings, and his ready and powerful intellect shine forth resplendent—warming and vivifying every soul within his generous and genial influence. Commanding as was his influence, and great as was his weight of character in public and church affairs, and universal and profound as was the respect accorded to him in that sphere, it was in this charmed circle that he reigned supreme in the hearts of all. It was his empire.

“But we must stop with this glance at the character and life of a man whose death is a great loss to the church and denomination with which he was connected, to the city, and to our state. It is rare that the death of a man creates so great a void, either in the ordinary interests of



society, or in the hearts of a people. But as a testimony of admiration and affection, the writer could not withhold even his hurried and feeble tribute to the memory of this great and good man. As he lived—so he died. Of him it may with truth be said, in the language of the last hymn ever sung at a Sabbath service in the old church edifice—

“‘Bound to each soul by tenderest ties,  
In every breast his image lies.’

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“At a meeting of the clergy of Syracuse and vicinity, at Park Church, immediately after the funeral of Dr. J. W. Adams, R. W. Condit, D. D., of Oswego, was called to the chair, and W. W. Newell, of Syracuse, was appointed clerk.

“Messrs. Newell and Maltbie were appointed a committee on the resolutions, which were presented, discussed, and adopted, as follows:—

“Resolved, That we deeply sympathize in the general sorrow occasioned by the death of Dr. J. W. Adams, late pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, in this city.

“Resolved, That thanks are due the great Head of the Church that our departed brother was enabled to give triumphant testimony of the sustaining power of that Gospel which, for a quarter of a century, he has been proclaiming; that in his death we have the touching spectacle of a pastor sinking down to the grave amid the tears of his first, his only, and his dearly beloved people, and the sincere regrets of our entire community.

“Resolved, That by the clearness of his perceptions, the strength of his reasoning, the kindness of his heart, and the piety of his life, our brother has justly secured a

commanding position in the Church of Christ, which renders his death a public calamity.

“Resolved, That in the fall of this able standard-bearer in the ministry, we have lost a kind friend, a sympathizing companion, and an able counsellor.

“Resolved, That while we recognise in his death a solemn appeal to ourselves, and while we cherish a tender sense of our own bereavement, we would also tender to the stricken widow and orphan children our hearty condolence with them in this hour of their grief.

“Resolved, That the preceding resolutions be published in the papers, and presented to the bereaved family.

“R. W. CONDIT, Chairman.

“W. W. NEWELL, Clerk.

“SYRACUSE, April 6th, 1850.”

In addition to these statements we may subjoin with great propriety the beautiful and judicious sketch of Dr. Adams's personal qualities, talents, and usefulness, as well as the sweetly humble conversation of his last hours, as given by his excellent friend, the Rev. E. D. Maltbie, in his funeral sermon. Near the close of this discourse he thus expresses himself:

“On the 28th of June, 1826, he was ordained and installed your pastor; and here, as you know, he has since been, for a quarter of a century, amidst the fluctuations and changes, ecclesiastical and otherwise, in Western New York, pursuing the ‘even tenor’ of his labours as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ; in scenes of health and prosperity, of sickness and affliction, here ‘holding forth the word of life.’ We say—in *sickness* and *affliction*—for we speak in the hearing of those to whom, in seasons of disease, bereavement and sorrow, he has come as a messenger of heavenly mercy—come in the unaffected tender-

ness and with the winning, soothing accents of Christian sympathy and friendship, assuaging the sorrows of bereavement, and greatly lightening the pangs of grief. His words at such times were indeed as 'apples of gold in pictures of silver.' They were few and simple, but they came warm from the heart, and they went to the heart. In this way, among others, he coiled himself around your inmost affections, and linked himself to you by ties of enduring remembrance. 'A pastor should not leave his flock in the midst of their afflictions'—was a sentiment in the mind of him before us, cold in death. Hence it was that, in the visitations of the pestilence, Dr. Adams remained firm and unmoved at the post of duty. Destruction might waste at noonday, or at midnight; but as a messenger of divine consolation and peace, it was for him to calm and soothe the panic-struck and affrighted; to go from house to house full ready to weep with them that might weep; to proffer judicious and friendly counsels; and above all, to point the departing to Jesus Christ, 'the resurrection and the life.' We well know that during the past summer, when the cholera was again expected to come among us; though impaired health might have led him, as it did others, to seek recreation and renovated strength abroad; his deep sympathetic regard for his spiritual flock, and solicitude for their welfare, would not allow him to think of absence from the scenes of his pastoral duty. That, in his labours among you, he was successful and highly useful, fully meeting, in this regard, the anticipations and predictions of his earliest friends, abundant facts might be cited to prove.

While, to his people, he was the sympathizing pastor and the faithful friend; while his were characteristics of person and manner, of mind and heart which, without compromising the dignity of his office, gave him access to persons in this community of varied age and attainment, condition

and pursuits; while to multitudes, not only those of his own but other congregations, and especially to YOUNG MEN, just starting in life, he was ever ready to utter the word of kindness, and to afford the benefit of his remarkably sound judgment and practical good sense; while, in the relations of social and domestic life, as a son and brother, as a husband, father, and friend, his were qualities which those who knew him best most highly prized, and he has thus, for a quarter of a century here, exerted a moulding, conservative, and salutary influence—to that endeared and hallowed spot,—the pulpit of the *old church edifice*, and to the *Session house* also, the place of associations sacred and tender as connected with his labours,—turn we now as furnishing most conclusive evidence, at once, of his worth and excellence, and of the greatness of the loss sustained in his death. We wish not to deal in language of unmeasured commendation. That were forbidden by the sacredness of this hour, and by his own request, touching the matter of eulogy, made in the near view of death. With the humility of spirit characteristic of our departed brother, he wished to be spoken of as ‘one of God’s meanest servants.’ But none can question that in the pulpit he greatly shone. His views of divine truth were lucid, comprehensive, and sound. His mind grasped the Evangelical doctrines with a clearness and strength of conception equalled only by the taste and simplicity, and the singular force and beauty of the language in which he presented his thoughts to the minds of his hearers. The CROSS was his great inspiring theme. Though varied were his inculcations of heavenly truth, we think he rarely, if ever, failed to link them by some divine chain to Gethsemane and Calvary. Christ was the ROCK upon which, living and dying, he rested his hopes. Yes, I was commissioned by his own lips, already gather-

ing the ashy paleness of death, to proclaim this, over these his mortal remains. *Christ*, in the bestowments of his purifying and manifold grace, was the pillar of his hope and consolation in the departing hour. The character of Dr. ADAMS, combined with acumen and strength of intellect, and the higher qualities of moral virtue, a peculiar native diffidence and self-distrust. He had an inbred aversion to everything in the shape of obtrusiveness and display; and hence by some may not have been rightly appreciated in respect to his many deeds of philanthropy and Christian benevolence. Here, too, we doubtless have the origin of the fact that he was never much inclined to commit his thoughts to the press. Perhaps, in view of his capabilities as a writer, we might be tempted to wish that this had been otherwise. What discourses he did publish, in point of sentiment, arrangement and style, would scarcely suffer by a comparison with those of the most distinguished in the ministry of the gospel. As a specimen of finished pulpit performance, both in style and matter, we confidently refer to his discourse at the time of the inauguration of Dr. Samuel H. Cox, as Professor in the Theological Seminary at Auburn, published in a small volume, entitled 'The Ministry we need.' Another discourse, delivered by him in the hearing of his congregation, about the time of cholera visitation, in the summer of 1832, was published by request of the younger portion of his charge, and specially 'dedicated to the YOUNG MEN' of Syracuse, with the expressed desire that it might 'lead them to the Rock of Salvation.' That his pulpit and other labours were owned of God, the steady growth, from the beginning, of the First Presbyterian Church and Society, the increase of the church, from rising a score to between three and four hundred members, may be regarded as ample proof, especially as taken in connexion with the fact that the First Church also fur-



nished off-shoots for the church worshipping here,\* as well as for other and kindred Evangelical Churches. To those who have known him so long and well, I need not discourse upon his intellectual, moral, and spiritual traits. I need not dwell upon the strength of his principles, nor upon his decision and resoluteness in their defence; nor upon that unflinching integrity and uprightness for which he was ever distinguished. Neither the entreaties of friends nor the opposition of foes could move him to yield his convictions of duty. Enemies he doubtless had; but few, it is believed, whose resentments will survive his entombment. Errors he doubtless committed; but let them be buried in his grave. The defects which, in the view of some, attached to his character, grew, in our judgment, at least in part, from peculiarities of physical constitution, and were developed by difficulties in the position he was called to occupy. None could be so keenly alive as himself to whatever of imperfection attached to his character. You know the circumstances of his last sickness, and the means and methods to which he resorted for its removal; and you know that they *failed*. Most mysterious seemed the providence which placed him upon a sick and apparently dying bed, away from his home and the presence and sympathy of his spiritual flock; and yet we seem to have evidence that this providence was not less kind than mysterious. It may have prepared him for the inflow of heavenly grace which enabled him to look with composure at the inroads of disease upon his earthly frame, and to gird up his spirit for a dying and triumphant testimony to the reality and preciousness of that Gospel which to you, the church of his *first*, his *only* and *unchanging* love, he so long and faithfully preached.

“ Full was the stream of pious expression which, in his last

\* The Park Church.

hours, was poured out from the depths of his mind. He had expected to die at Glen Haven. While in his own and the view of others, his end was near, after giving directions respecting some matters of business, he said to one of the attending physicians—‘I am perfectly willing to die. I feel how great and abounding is, and has been, the grace of God. I know I am unworthy; but Christ is my all in all. In Him I trust. I hope *your* trust is also in Him.’ When asked if he had any message for the members of his church and congregation, his reply was—‘Say to them that I die bearing them on my heart fresh and green. Often have I wondered at their patience and forbearance with me.’ He said he ‘should have rejoiced had they thought less of him and more of the Saviour.’ ‘Say to them,’ said he, ‘though I have preached Christ poorly and feebly, yet I have clung to Him as my sheet anchor. While a resident of Syracuse, I have had no other work on my hands but the work he called me to do.’ Having partially revived, his strongest earthly aspirations seemed to centre in the wish that he might be taken to his home, there to die, in the midst of his church and people. His family and some tried friends were now around him; but he longed *for home*, and to see others of his beloved friends and spiritual charge. GOD, in kindness to him and to us, granted this desire of his heart. We have, many of us, looked in upon the emaciated form of the pastor, brother, friend. We have witnessed, for ourselves, the placid serenity of his hope, and have listened to his last utterances of joy and triumph. His trust in Christ reached almost the height of apostolic assurance, as was indicated by his uniform responses to inquiring friends.

“In the course of the night preceding his death, he asked for water. One present took occasion to direct his thoughts to the ‘water of life.’ ‘How sweet,’ said he, ‘*that* life.’—

‘Is the hope of it yet comforting and sustaining?’—With emphasis greater than he had for some time commanded, he replied, ‘Yes, MORE AND MORE.’ As the morning approached, he sank rapidly, and his family were gathered around him to give and receive the last *farewell*. To his sorrow-stricken companion, in years of health endeared to his heart, and as it seemed, increasingly dear in his last trials and sickness, his voice was, ‘Peace be with you.’ He adverted to the thought of a reunion above. ‘Oh! that they might be a united, happy family in heaven.’ His last words were said. His hour was come. As the morning incense of prayer was about to be offered upon the family altar, he slept in Jesus. ‘And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.’ ”

The following tribute to the memory of Dr. Adams formed an appropriate and beautiful exordium to the address of Hon. William J. Bacon, before the Society of the Alumni of Hamilton College. He was a classmate and intimate friend of Mr. Adams in college, and was able to speak from his own knowledge:

“I stand before you to-day an unexpected—I fear I may add, an unwelcome guest. There was another who should have filled the place I now occupy—a place most worthily bestowed upon him, at our last anniversary, by your suffrages. And yet he comes not! We may call, but

‘He answers not again!’

Need I tell you why? The grave sends back its melancholy response to our inquiry, and our hearts, though pained, are hushed at its solemn voice. As I stand now

upon this spot, and look out upon the scenes around us, I am filled with some pleasing, but many painful remembrances. All nature here is beautiful and bright in the radiance of her summer vesture; the streams murmur, and leap, and glance, as they were wont, in the sunlight; from yonder hill-top, the eye of the living still looks out on a scene of surpassing loveliness and varied beauty, and the summit is crowned with the temple of science and of knowledge, where our early vows were paid and our parting farewells taken. But where are many of those who then trod those halls, and with us entered on the incipient battle of life? Alas! how have they fallen, 'like leaves in Vallambrosa,' some almost before the sound of the clarion had summoned them to the contest; others in mid career, with lance in rest, preparing for the shock; and others still,

'Calmly as to a night's repose,'

have sunk to rest, the battle of life well-fought, the crown of faith and hope victoriously won. They fill, it may be early, but they are not unhonoured graves.

"Twenty-eight years ago, there passed from beyond the walls of our Alma Mater, a band of fifteen pilgrims of hope and soldiers of fortune. At the head of the list, in the class of 1822, as it stands on your triennial catalogue, is the honoured name of John Watson Adams. And well might it stand there; for, of all our number, he was, in all that should call forth attachment and respect, by common consent and undivided suffrage, 'primus inter pares.' Already, on that brief list, the stars are clustering which denote the loss of our companions on earth, and their transfer, as we may hope, and as I can truly and emphatically say of all my departed classmates, to a better and a brighter world. At our last meeting, four of the class of 1822 were thus designated; on the next catalogue, another star must be

added to indicate the mortal extinction of him who was the selected orator for this occasion—John Watson Adams.

“At some of the older institutions of learning in our country, a custom has obtained, at the annual gathering of the alumni, to present a record of ‘death’s doings’ among their number during the year gone by, with occasionally a brief memorial of those whose virtues or eminence entitle them to the notice. It is a good custom, whose observance might be well and profitably honoured among us; and although I do not intend to devote this occasion to a discharge of the duty I have ventured to suggest, yet the position in which I stand, and the relation our friend was designed to have borne to this day, will be an ample apology for a very brief commemoration of his life and character.

“I have already indicated the elevated position he occupied in the respect and affection of his classmates. He won this place by intellectual gifts of a high order; by very respectable, if not the highest grade of scholarship; by moral worth of the most unquestionable purity and sincerity, and social sympathies and attachments, in spite of the occasional coldness of his exterior, of a warm and abiding character. In this respect, he was perhaps often mistaken and misapprehended. To the eyes of some he may have presented the appearance of an impassive and unimaginative man. This I am persuaded was ever a misconception. I know of a verity, that he was a man of deep feeling, and had by nature even impulsive sensibilities. I saw them too often in exercise—I was too frequently the unworthy object of affectionate interest to him, to be left in doubt on this point. But he had learned philosophy, and gained the mastery of himself; or, what was better and nearer the truth, he had acquired discipline in the school of the great Teacher, and learned to ‘con-



trol in his shut breast' the outbreaks of passion, and even the more usual manifestations of excited feeling and enkindled affection. However the world may have judged him, he was a man of a gentle and loving spirit; and I invoke all kind and gentle feelings to hallow his memory, and keep the record of his virtues green in our souls.

“You all know the sacred calling to which he dedicated his life. Of the manner in which he discharged its high and momentous duties, I cannot speak from personal knowledge; I only know, that in respect to fidelity, conscientiousness, sound judgment, and devotion to his Master's service, I have heard but one united and concurring testimony. One fact in his history is certainly most remarkable, and in these latter days of changeful, and, if I may so speak, *fugitive* pastoral relations, is worthy of special notice and commemoration. It is, that he closed his pastoral service upon the spot, and over the same congregation with which he commenced it; and that service extended over the unusual period of a quarter of a century. In the last interview which it was my privilege to enjoy with him, I well remember his striking remark, that he was the longest settled minister in any single parish between the Hudson River and the Rocky Mountains. A striking fact, to illustrate the too great facility with which the interesting and momentous relation of pastor and people is formed and sundered, and a not less speaking testimony to the fidelity and acceptableness of his ministrations, and the well-rewarded constancy of his people. He commenced his labours, the comparatively obscure pastor of a country village. He lived to see that village expand and grow, and develope its great resources of nature and of art, and become a populous, and busy, and enterprising city; and the house of worship where his ministry commenced, becoming too strait for the thronging worship-

pers, to witness and assist in laying the foundations of another temple, now rising in majestic and beautiful proportions, soon to be completed and dedicated to the God of our fathers. But where is he who should have witnessed and rejoiced in its consecration, and been the first to minister at its altar? His Master had other service for him, and he has gone to worship and to minister in that other sanctuary, the 'temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

'Servant of God, well done,'

shall be his epitaph and his apotheosis. He has bequeathed to us a name full of pleasant memories; a life of devotedness to the highest service in which man can be engaged; a death of calmness and Christian hope; an example in all points, worthy of all imitation and all praise."

Another testimony from a gifted young clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Lee, is so full of truth and sweet poetic beauty, that I feel constrained to extract largely from it; especially, because equally strong representations from the writer of this brief memoir might be imputed to a friendship, too partial to be trusted for a cool and unbiassed statement.

"Dr. Adams is dead! Twenty-five years he has preached to one people, ministered to one church. It was his first, his last, his only charge. Twenty-five years ago, he came from school, the young man full of Christ, full of hope, of zeal, to train a people for the Lord. He came to a young town; he took charge of its first church; training its first thoughts and impulses, nursing its early hopes, stimulating its first aspirations, and laying foundations for permanent influence, growth, and usefulness; he, at the time, became a citizen whose name and influence were thenceforth to be one with the interests of a growing city, whose last rest

should become sacred and monumental to its history. He saw Syracuse a town, a village, a city. He loved its institutions, he toiled for its prosperity. In the marriages of its people and the baptism of its children, the instruction of its youth, by companionship with the men, and a place in the home circle, one of the people, a father among its families, a friend to all, how has he lived there, and loved there, been everywhere known, everywhere honoured, blessing and blessed from the beginning to the end. His family calls it home, and many a sad heart will find its trysting-place of holy but melancholy musing by his grave among the people.

“That young pastor passed, with his precious charge, through the years with its vicissitudes, its trials, its revivals, its communions, its seasons, its growth; and whoso follows him, though he pray for the mantle of Elijah, will reap from *his* sowing. He followed to their rest, so many of those who were young with him. He blessed their children, and they now are passing the meridian. The Sabbaths of twenty-five years are redolent of his memory. He has presented from his rich mind, the substance of all the truths they learned. Day after day, year after year, he has testified of Jesus. In the minds he has educated for God, in the souls which have hoped for salvation through his instrumentality, he has enlarged the kingdom of Christ on earth, and breathed an influence upon the glorious well-being of all eternity.

“Think of him labouring there, struggling there, praying, preaching, fearing, hoping, day and night, sick and well, prosperous and adverse, young and old, for a quarter of a century. Think of all he felt, of all he effected, of his sowing with tears, of his sowing in darkness, of the friendly words he has spoken, of the warnings and woings he has presented, of his prayers for all and with all, of the chil-

dren the father's hand has touched in sacred baptism, of the sick he has encouraged for their dying, and the dead for whom his sympathizing heart had spoken so often, and the mourners he has held to the faith and the comfort of the resurrection; now, now *he sleeps!* The old church, among whose aisles the echoes of his voice dwelt so sacredly, like the prophet's birds who made the Temple of God their home. That old church, the homestead of sacred souls, timeworn and sad in the wreck of its days, bent and bowed before him. O, it had been so sweet to have laid his form on its altar, and thence, from the last service of both, to have borne him away, heavily, sadly, for ever, and to have closed the history of both together. But at its altar none other can break the bread of life. For long, too, though men tread the loftier aisles in the church which was being built for him, will they strain heavy eyes toward the old place, and the voice which is heard in the stead of his, will for long utter strange sounds. I cannot think it true. He must live and love again. He must consecrate the new temple. He must, in holy gratulation, realize the hope of years, and yet for years, venerable and grave, minister to his old people.

“Not so; never so! The ties are severed that bound all together, friend from friend, the father from his family, the pastor from his people. What ties, what reverence, the work of these years is done, and ‘well done.’ The ‘sowing’ is ended with the ‘weeping.’ It is no more now till the ‘sheaves’ with the ‘rejoicing;’ and glorious is it for him. No more has he to do with tears, life-battles, and funeral-rites. He weeps not, though all are grief-stricken. He is in raptures at the last funeral scene, where a whole people bewail as at his misfortune. He ministers at a purer altar, worships in a sublimer temple.—Our first Sabbath after his death-blow, was the first Sabbath in

Heaven to his translated spirit. He preached not for us, but praised Jesus with the 'ten thousand times ten thousand,' for the blessedness of all preaching. He is gone, but he praises. He is dead, but he lives. He is buried, but it is no more earth. 'Servant of God, well done.'

"I have told of his worth already. I could eulogize his excellencies more. I have a right. Friend never had better friend. Son never had better father. Heart never desired better speech. His mind was strong and forceful. His judgment discriminate and just. His piety was a spiritual principle, intelligent and fundamental. His character, upon a like natural basis, was strengthened and matured into a consistent, uniform, practical life of godliness. His intercourse with men was kindly and commanding. His pastoral supervision was fatherly and maturing. His heart was the home of true and fervent emotions—too true for vapid profession, too fervent for artificial effervescence. Like true dignity and worth, unconscious of position and claims, he was so unconsciously humble, too, so diffident of self, so appreciative of worth and others' deserts, so full of peace and love, yet so self-poised, that if sometimes he depreciated himself, at others, and all times, he commanded the admiration of men. He shrunk from display, but, when called, he acquitted himself of a great man's duty. Unambitious, he reprov'd by silent dignity the clamorous artificialness and false-hearted policy of aspirants. He won the young by the kindness and protecting fatherliness of age. He reprov'd the vicious and wicked by the winning counsels of true reform. He overwhelmed the vice and the wickedness by a terrible force of righteous indignation. In public councils, of city or of the church, he was the last to presume, the first in wisdom. His brethren in the ministry will do him reverence, and their churches will honour the



father of them all. His hospitality impoverished himself, but the homes of all were glad at his presence. But at home, in the bosom of his own family, a history of love and faithfulness is written, upon which even an impartial eulogy may not too closely intrude. Dear, venerable man, if a dying pang might rush in at the heart, it would be that he must leave his family, the wife of his life, and the nurslings of his prayers and love, to the chances and buffets of human circumstances. God help that sorrowing, deserted household. It is lonely, chilling, sad there now: God help them.

“He sleeps! He is buried, and all is history where that life went out. I could ask forgiveness for this worthless tribute, but not for the deep love I bore him. If I could pray, it would be for his mantle to fall upon me. If I could aspire, it would be to his character, usefulness, and praise. If I could hope, it would be for his righteous end, or it would be in his eternal glory. ‘Servant of God, well done.’

“ROCHESTER, April 10.”

There were two characteristics, in the constitution and temperament of Dr. Adams, which few persons understood; perhaps no one ever saw them developed so fully as the writer of this memoir. His modesty was extreme—more morbidly so than any case that ever came under my eye. For this reason, when new and inviting fields of labour were opened before him, as in New Haven and Brooklyn, he shrunk from the responsibility, from a deep impression of his incompetency to fill the stations offered to him. When remonstrated with, and told that his own people were quite as intellectual as the congregations which called him, his reply was, that the people of Syracuse would bear with the feebleness of his performances. A remarkable

instance of this morbid estimate of himself occurred while preaching for his brother-in-law, in Broadway Tabernacle, New York. He was preaching in a delightful strain. The sentences were dropping from his lips, like beautiful pearls, when, reaching a convenient place for arresting the discourse, when it had been about two-thirds passed through with, he closed the book and sat down. No other course remained but to conclude the services in the usual manner. On being inquired of afterwards, why he did not complete the delivery of his sermon, he replied: "It is a *little* thing, it is not worth preaching." On another occasion, when proposing to visit us in Philadelphia, he exacted a promise in our correspondence, that he should not be urged to preach if he came. The promise was made, and he came and spent one or two Sundays, without preaching; and this I know was not to avoid labour, but simply from the apprehension that his sermons would not be worthy to be listened to by the audience. The other point, to which reference was made, was an indisposition to mental labour. This was connected with the morbid state just adverted to. It was not from indolence and the love of repose; but from sheer apprehension that his composition must be tame and worthless. This is the true reason why he furnished nothing for the press, save three or four sermons, during a ministry of a quarter of a century. Those compositions which received the last finish from his hand before going to the press, were elegant; and we cannot but proceed with some trembling, in sending forth others which he intended for no such destination. If they shall not be thought to indicate a genius and scholarship corresponding with his former reputation, they will doubtless afford a real satisfaction to those whose impressions of his qualities as a preacher and a man of mind are fixed.

Dr. Adams had peculiar idiosyncrasies of character.

He was naturally irascible in his temper, and yet was so much of a philosopher, and carried with him such a sense of the worth of personal dignity, that he seldom betrayed this weakness except to his most intimate friends. Yet those were the very persons who loved him best.

The closing scenes of his life were affecting in the extreme. His faith rose to a sublime triumph. All the tenderness of his soul was drawn out towards his family and his friends. While he felt himself to be "one of the meanest of God's servants," he confidently hoped in his Saviour's mercy. He had no misgivings at the last, in regard to the doctrines which he had preached. "I believe," said he, "I have always preached the truth, but I have not always done it with that unction and faithfulness that I should have done." At another time he said, "O, at such a time as this, we have a mountain of sins that we wish to cast somewhere, and where should it be if not on the Saviour? God has said 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as wool.'"

His death was not characterized by the triumphs that marked the last hours of Payson. His joys were solemn, and, at times, overcast with a tinge of melancholy, growing out of a deep sense of personal unworthiness. "My love," said he, "has been exceedingly cold. How can such a sinner, covered all over with pollution, be cleansed and fitted for that bright and glorious place, where they tune their shining harps, and the streets are paved with gold?" He faithfully admonished his children to give up the vain and foolish things of the world, and to seek their Saviour. The closing scene has been alluded to with sufficient particularity, in an extract from the productions of another pen. After Dr. Adams's decease, the session of his own church not only, but also that of the Park Church, the consistory of the Dutch Church, and the Baptist Church,

severally passed resolutions expressing a deep sense of their own and the public loss, and sympathizing with the bereaved family.

This sketch cannot be more appropriately closed than in the language of a little poem written by himself, and which was indited, probably, more than twenty years since. It is entitled in the manuscript

THE HAPPY TRANSIT.

Did e'er thine eye watch the dewy morn,  
 As it merged itself in the glowing day,  
 And threw its light o'er the silvery lawn,  
 And chased the mists of the night away?

Did e'er you mark, when the smiling sun  
 Looked forth from his dark retreat of the cloud,  
 And the storm was hushed and the dark mists gone,  
 And the day had laid off her gloomy shroud?

When the earth walked forth in her green attire,  
 And the dew-drops were pendent from every flower,  
 And the angel of song had waked up his lyre,  
 And the music of heaven inspired the glad hour?

So the saint, when he passes from earth to the skies,  
 Leaves a region of storms and a solitude drear;  
 The soft light of eternity breaks on his eyes,  
 And ravishing songs pour their tide on his ear.

## SERMON I.

### CHRIST'S RENOWN.

“His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him. All nations shall call him blessed.”—Ps. lxxii. 17.

THIS Psalm is a composition of transcendent beauty. It was written by David, near the close of his brilliant career as king of Israel. It refers, subordinately, to Solomon, his son, and is descriptive of the extent and glory of his kingdom. But its chief reference is to Christ, of whom Solomon was but an imperfect emblem; and it furnishes us with a most glowing description of the prosperity and magnificence of his empire. Some parts of it are entirely inapplicable to Solomon, and can have a perfect fulfilment only in the person and kingdom of Jesus Christ. The Jews themselves always considered it as having a reference to their Messiah.

That part of it which I have announced as containing a suitable subject for our present meditations, is a prediction of the extent and perpetuity of Christ's fame, with the blessings that should stand connected with it. “His name shall endure



for ever ; his name shall be continued as long as the sun : and men shall be blessed in him. All nations shall call him blessed."

Upon these topics it may be interesting and profitable for us for a few moments to dwell.

"His name shall endure for ever." By name, here, is not meant that personal appellation which was used to distinguish Christ from other individuals ; but it is employed to signify his fame or renown. The word is often so used in the Scriptures.

It is, then, predicted in this passage, that Christ's renown should be great ; that it should be as extensive as the habitable globe ; that it should fill every land, and inspire every tongue : "All nations shall call him blessed." "Blessed," says David, in a subsequent verse, "be his glorious name for ever ; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory."

Now, it is to be remembered, that this prediction was uttered more than a thousand years anterior to the birth of Christ, and when, notwithstanding the perpetual and costly sacrifices in which he was prefigured, there was a deep obscurity resting upon everything pertaining to the person and character of the Messiah. The Jew was taught to believe, that it was through the shedding of blood that remission of sins must be obtained, and he obscurely anticipated a Saviour who should make provision for the salvation of his people ; but of the distinctive traits of character which Christ should possess, or of the peculiar nature of the work which he

should perform, he entertained no definite and enlarged conceptions. There was, therefore, in the existing state of things, when David wrote, apparently nothing to justify the bold and glowing anticipations in which he indulged. A thousand years were to elapse before Christ should make his appearance upon the earth, and no very definite ideas were entertained by the Jews of the character which he should even then assume.

Now, if we pass on to the period when Christ actually descended from heaven and assumed a human form, we shall find, in the circumstances attending his condition, scarcely anything to justify the anticipations entertained by the royal prophet of his great renown. There were, indeed, some remarkable demonstrations of power and glory given immediately from heaven on his behalf; and these were sufficient, to the eye of faith, to counteract the impressions that were made by the untoward and disparaging circumstances attendant upon his outward condition. But, where faith was wanting, the glory of Christ's nature was veiled from the sight, by the obscurity of his origin and the poverty of his state. All the sources of influence and fame, that are opened to men who are born to affluence and the advantages of a high parentage, were closed to him. He was the reputed son of parents occupying the most humble rank in society, eminent for nothing but their piety and their poverty; and, through his whole life of thirty-

three years, he neither had, nor was ambitious to have, any worldly possessions ; he was also visibly associated almost entirely with those who were of the same humble rank with himself. He came at length to the hour when he must leave the world, and here all the circumstances were expressly arranged, so far as the agency of man was concerned, as if to give his name to everlasting infamy. He was arraigned, and condemned, and crucified as a malefactor. "He was numbered with the transgressors." The few friends, who had continued with him up to the time of his apprehension, forsook him then, and in so doing, gave their voice against him. Under such circumstances, where were to be found the hearts in which his name was to be embalmed ; or, where were the tongues that were to sound abroad his fame ?

After his death, the friendship of those who had loved him revived ; and they undertook to vindicate his character and to secure an admission of his claims. But what an undertaking was this ? Contemptible in point of numbers, they had neither learning, nor wealth, nor influence, nor friends, nor fame—and the whole world was against them. What probability was there that, under such auspices, the name of their Master should endure for ever, and that all nations should call him blessed ?

Yet, what are the facts, and what is the history of this matter ?

This name had exerted a talismanic power upon

the hearts of those few disciples, whom Jesus had gathered around him. It was, to them, the name that is above every name, endowed with irresistible charms, the representative of inimitable goodness. Over their hearts it had thrown a captivating power, and they were ready to brave all dangers, and endure all sufferings, that they might publish it to mankind. It was the name of him in whom all goodness was embodied, and who had brought to the world a remedy for all its sufferings and sorrows. The preaching of this name, by the obscure and illiterate disciples of Jesus, was followed at once with a degree of success that surpassed all previous example. The temples of the pagan gods and the schools of the heathen philosophers were soon deserted, and thousands on thousands were found listening, with the deepest interest, to these disciples as they proclaimed the name of Christ and told the story of his cross. But yet, on the other hand, opposition was aroused, and combinations were formed to stay the progress of the work. The arm of civil power was invoked, and the sword of the magistrate was unsheathed, and resistance from every quarter, unto blood and death, was made to the cause of Jesus. But still it advanced; it spread; it triumphed on every hand. Whole cities and provinces were filled with the fragrance of this name, and in a short time, throughout the whole known world, the banner of the cross was unfurled, and thousands and tens of thousands were

ready to lay down their lives for the honour of Christ. Time rolled on, and the fame of Christ widened and spread, and all the sympathies connected with his history struck deeper into the human heart. It encountered, in every place, a dead resistance; but it carried with it a power so mild, and winning, and captivating, that even its enemies could proceed against it only on grounds of misrepresentation or perjury. It has held on its course, unchecked and unawed, in the face of royal edicts, and courts of judgment, and prison-dungeons, and instruments of torture, and secret treachery, and popular scorn. At times, it has seemed to be overwhelmed, and buried beneath the ignorance, and superstition, and superincumbent forms imposed upon it by a benighted and sensual priesthood. But, even in the Middle Ages, when an impenetrable night of ignorance seemed to enshroud all minds, and the spirit of the true religion was nearly lost from the earth, the name of Jesus resounded through every valley and on every hill-top throughout the Christian world.

It was the watchword that electrified all Europe, and led on the mighty army of the Crusaders to the place of the holy sepulchre. Never was there a word known to any human language, that contained within itself such an electric power, or wielded so wide an influence as this name of Christ. It was the sole agent employed to produce that mighty convulsion, which shook to its centre every



city, and town, and hamlet throughout Europe, when Peter the Hermit went forth at the head of those armies that were to restore to Palestine its ancient glory. And nearly one-half of the immense population of Asia shared in the sympathy which that extraordinary name had awakened in the bosoms of the pilgrim crusaders.

And it is a circumstance of singular interest that this name has often been found inscribed on the banners of opposing armies, and has received the homage both of pagan and infidel. The name has been worshipped, when the religion, of which it was the index and glory, has been repudiated and scorned. Ancient princes and warriors would have it inscribed upon their crowns, and helmets, and banners, and, while attributing to it a magic power to render them invincible, were utter strangers to the spirit, of which it was the source and patron. The name of Jesus thus diffused abroad, and embalmed in so many millions of hearts, both of the dead and the living, has come down to our day, blooming in all the freshness and fragrance that invested it at its earliest birth. The monarchs of the earth are not receiving from all their subjects the undissembled homage of so many hearts, nor do all their sceptres combined wield an influence so wide and powerful as that which belongs to this single name. Millions would die for it to-day: and millions on millions more extol it

as the name that represents all excellence, human and divine.

But, let me now mention a few circumstances tending to show that the glorious renown which belongs to this name is entirely different in its elements and history from that which appertains to other eminent names, and that it is a well-merited renown.

There have been other names whose fame has filled the world. Warriors, and statesmen, and philanthropists, have arisen at different periods, the lustre of whose deeds has been diffusive and bright as the sun's beams. The rays of that glory which encircled their names are reflected, from the most distant points in antiquity, upon us.

But in all the particulars which I am about to name, you will find a difference between their renown and that which appertains to Christ; a difference which gives him an infinite superiority over them.

I. It is doubtful if all knowledge of Christ was ever entirely rooted out of any place, where his religion had once been known.

Even in the place where the Seven Churches of Asia, under the curse of heaven, withered and perished, centuries ago, and were succeeded by an infidel and semi-barbarous people, a knowledge of the name of Christ is not lost. To the infidel Jew and Mohammedan Turk, it is a word that is perfectly familiar.

The same is true of the Arab and Ethiopian tribes that wander over the desert sands of Arabia and of Egypt; though they have no knowledge whatever of the true religion, they are not strangers to the name of Christ. Seventeen centuries ago, it was published among them by Tertullian, and Cyprian, and Origen, and other illustrious disciples of Jesus, and though the bright lights which they kindled up have long since been extinguished, and even their own names utterly forgotten in the land of their birth, still does the name of Christ survive in the knowledge of multitudes among them.

Travellers inform us that the names of Alexander and Cyrus sound strangely in the ears of the common people who now inhabit the very places where these distinguished warriors achieved their high renown; but there the name of Christ is a familiar sound.

II. The knowledge which men have of Christ is everywhere more intimate and particular than that which they have of the most renowned sages, or philosophers, or warriors of antiquity. How many of you, to whom the names of Cæsar, or Alexander, or Demosthenes, or even of Napoleon, are perfectly familiar, can enter into the details of their history, and give a clear and connected view of the prominent events of their lives, or of the particular manner of their death? Yet, in all the Sabbath Schools of America and Europe, there can scarcely

be found a child of ten years old, who cannot recite to you the prominent events in the life of Christ, and describe to you the particular manner of his death. And everywhere, among all those tribes and nations of the earth, where the means of knowledge respecting Christ are, to any considerable extent enjoyed, the same is true, in general, of all ranks and classes. They have a better acquaintance with the history of Christ, a more intimate knowledge of his character, his acts, his spirit, his life, even at the distance of eighteen centuries from his death, than they have of the most eminent men of ancient or modern times.

III. But again; you will observe that this knowledge is not limited to the more intelligent and learned classes of society. It is possessed by all, old and young, learned and illiterate, rich and poor. It is like the common light of heaven, diffused everywhere. But, how different is the fact with reference to every other name, no matter how bright may be the circle of glory that surrounds it. The little that is known of the most renowned on the list of the mighty men of the earth, is restricted to a comparatively small number; the mass of the people neither knowing nor caring to know, who they were, or where they lived, or what they did.

IV. I remark, again, that the name of Christ is associated in the minds of them that know him, with a feeling altogether different, and vastly

more profound than that which is inspired by any other name known among men. It is embalmed in the deepest and sweetest affections of millions of hearts. It inspires with veneration, gratitude, love, joy, and hope, to a degree far transcending that awakened by any or all other objects. We are filled with admiration as we contemplate the giant undertakings and the brilliant achievements of the great men of other times. And to those who have been good as well as great, we yield the tribute of our admiration not only, but also that of our heartfelt respect. But we have something more than admiration or respect to pay to Christ; we give him our hearts. Every mention of his name touches a chord that vibrates to the deepest seat of the affections. Its charms lead us captive; they take us from ourselves and lead us to make a willing offering of everything to Christ. There is no power on earth like this, winning its way upon the heart with the softest and sweetest influences, and yet holding it with an energy which death itself cannot impair. Where is the name among men, that subjects to its control all the powers and passions of the heart, like this? There are few, on the pages of history, of high renown, that do not, at the same time that they awaken our admiration, excite also our disgust. The laurels that deck the brow of the warrior are dyed in blood; and even the best of those names whose fame has filled the world, are tarnished with im-



perfections; and more than all, they hold to us no such relations as to render it possible to give them a place in our personal sympathies and affections. But it is said of Christ that "all nations shall call him blessed." They shall delight to acknowledge him as their benefactor, and they shall praise him with a full heart for his transcendent excellence, and his glorious achievements.

But we have said of Christ's fame, that it was well merited, not adventitious, not won by brilliant vices, nor transcending the proper measure of his desert. On what foundation does it rest? What are his claims to honour; what his demands upon the world for this universal homage? Such as entitle him to a still greater measure than he has ever yet received. The essential perfections of his nature and character were such as to exalt him infinitely above every human being. He was the embodiment of goodness in its divine plenitude, without a fault or blemish to impair its claims upon our admiration and love. The sacred writings speak of him thus:—"His name shall be called Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us." "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God, blessed for ever." "This is the true God and eternal life."

Can you wonder that a being, of whom the

Spirit of inspiration could speak in language like this, should receive the homage of a world? Here, then, in the adorable perfections of his nature, in the indescribable attributes of his character and person, is laid the foundation of Christ's glorious renown. He received the homage of angels, before he came into the world, and on his return thither, they cast their crowns at his feet.

But what relation do all this intrinsic goodness and perfection hold to us? Relations of vital interest and of eternal moment. These perfections have had a full and mysterious development *for us*, in personal condescension and sufferings, such as have rendered Christ a peerless friend. The primitive glories of his exalted state, he voluntarily laid aside, and taking upon him the humble form of a servant, he hastened to our relief. After having endured, for an appointed period, the contradiction of sinners against himself, he gave his body to the bloody cross, and there expired, a victim for us. Yes, it was for us that he endured that death, which for the innocence of the victim, the value of the oblation, the weight and pressure of his sufferings, stands unparalleled, a very marvel and astonishment to the universe. It is this alone, that constitutes the meritorious cause of acceptance with God, to the lost millions of our world. Every person, in his individual capacity, owes to this sacrifice, the ransom of his soul from everlasting sorrows. "He died, the just for the

unjust; and bore our sins in his own body on the tree." Thus did he redeem us from the curse of the law. Of sufferings such as his, my brethren, what can we say? Did not the enduring of them constitute a work of immeasurable grandeur? And must they not remain a theme of wonder and praise, alike to the inhabitants of earth and heaven?

But look now, for a moment, to the demonstration which the Father has given of *his* estimate of the merit and glory of the Son. See to what an elevation he has been raised, and with what prerogatives he is now invested. He is seated on the mediatorial throne, clothed with all the splendours of divine royalty; and there he is known and honoured as King of kings, and Lord of lords. But all the high and glorious prerogatives of his state, he still exercises for the benefit of his redeemed people; to carry out the magnificent purposes of his own infinite love; and when they are consummated, then shall all nations call him blessed, and the whole earth shall be full of his glory.

Behold now the facts which I have spread out before you, and tell me, my brethren, if the renown of Christ, great as it is on earth, is at all comparable to what it should be? Ought not the incense of love to be sent up to him from every heart; and acclamations of praise be shouted from every human tongue? What are warriors or statesmen, or

lawgivers, or philanthropists, or philosophers, or nobles, or princes, or kings, when compared with him? All nothing, and less than nothing. "He is without a compeer, and without a rival. He stands unapproachable and alone; the one grand absorber of all majesty, all power, all beauty, all glory, all goodness:—the mid-day sun of the spiritual firmament, before whose intense and glowing brightness, all other luminaries fade away and disappear."

Now I ask, as an improvement of our subject, if there be any one here, to whom this glorious person, this prince of high renown, appears as one "without form or comeliness?" You may clearly see if it be so, that your estimate of him is a robbery, that steals his crown and glory from him, and puts you in the condition of one upon whom the curse must fall,—“If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha.” Open your eyes, perishing sinner, upon his glory. Inimitable grace and goodness and compassion have flowed from his heart to you: and now he is exalted far above all principality and power, and every name that is named in heaven or on earth, but still the same condescension and pity dwell in his bosom, that reigned there when he hung upon the cross. Has such a friend, such a Saviour, no beauty in your eyes? It is a sad thing, depend upon it, to deny to this blessed one, his dear-bought fame, and to strike hands with those who

would consign his name to forgetfulness or infamy. Let me entreat you not to do this. You will be covered with shame and confusion if you do, when the time shall come that all his glory shall stand revealed to your wondering view.

Finally: Is it not obviously due to Christ, that his people everywhere do what they can to spread abroad his fame? by giving circulation to his word, where his achievements are made known, and all the glory of his love and grace is revealed; by uttering, perpetually, the sentiments of admiration and gratitude that kindle and glow in their own bosoms; and by offering prayer that his kingdom may come, and the time be hastened, when "the whole earth shall be filled with his glory." In connexion with our text it is said—"Prayer also shall be made for him continually, and daily shall he be praised;" i. e. prayer shall be continually offered by the people of Christ, on the behalf of Christ, that his kingdom may come, that he may take to himself his great power, and reign on earth as he reigns in heaven. This is their appropriate work: they are to pray *continually* that the divine influence may be poured out upon their families, upon the neighbourhoods in which they live; upon their country, and upon the world. "And they are not to cease, until either their lips shall be silenced by the hand of death, or the consummation shall come, in prophetic reference to which it was that David laid aside his harp and hushed its strains for ever"



in the sweet aspiration,—“Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen and Amen.” The prayers of David—he had nothing more to ask—the prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.

## SERMON II.

### INAUGURAL SERMON.

DELIVERED AT THE AUBURN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

“By the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears.”—Acts 20 : 31.

I PLACE much dependence for my discourse to you on this occasion, upon the last two words in this passage. They inform us in one particular how Paul, as a minister of Christ, did his work. It was *with tears*.

No man ever entertained more correct views of the Christian ministry than he, nor did any one ever discharge its responsible duties with greater fidelity or success. The world would have been evangelized centuries ago, had all who have professed to be Paul's successors in the ministry been anointed for their work as Paul was.

He was a learned Jew ; but it was neither his extraction nor his learning that gave him his eminence in the ministry, for many a Gentile has been called of God to the same work, possessing stores of learning altogether more extensive and varied than his.

He was an apostle, acting on the authority of an

extraordinary commission, and endowed with supernatural gifts and powers. His extraordinary commission, however, did not authorize him to preach an extraordinary gospel, or to enforce its claims by extraordinary means. It distinguished him from us chiefly by the plenary authority with which it clothed him, to adjust the ordinances of the infant Church. We preach the same gospel which he did, and we have the same facilities of giving it a lodgment in the heart, which he had, if we except the demonstrations of miraculous power that were placed at his disposal. But what use did he make of these, and what ends were they intended to subserve? They were simply visible confirmations of the divine authority under which he acted, the bright signets which Heaven put into his hands to accredit his commission. But men were converted under his ministry just as they are converted now; not by miracles, but by the Spirit and truth of God. He was, to be sure, endowed with an opulence of ministerial gifts, so that, from that age to this, the Church has not seen his like. But what gave him this distinctive and radiant eminence? Not his commission as an apostle, not his vision, and revelations, and miracles; but the burning ardour, the invincible energy, and the unparalleled self-devotion which he brought to his work. In these respects he stood alone among apostles, and here he holds a solitary prominence among the stars that have since been

set in the firmament of the Church. No man has ever bestowed upon the propagation of Christianity the same amount of well-directed zeal, exact fidelity, untiring industry, and unfaltering courage that Paul did. The beamings of his spirit are seen in that small fragment of his history which I have already recited to you. "By the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears." This was his contribution to a single church. But he spent thirty-three years in the ministry, and the whole period was employed just as he had spent the three years at Ephesus. What a multitude of tears must he have shed in that time! What a victim to emotion must have been the manly spirit of this flaming herald of the cross—for it is *manly* to weep where there is occasion for weeping! The sensibilities of the heart, duly excited, are a fragrant atmosphere investing the soul, and shedding its soft and balmy dews on its powers. They are the silver tissues that are woven into the delicate but immortal texture of the mind. They are the electric fluid that pervades the regions of the heart, throwing its subtle influence upon the springs of thought, and shooting its lightnings through every channel where the mind is wont to give expression to its hidden movements.

Our apostle could not, under any circumstances, be subject to a suspicion of mental imbecility or of fanatical weakness, as he was under the control of

a governing influence from God. His tears came from fountains which that influence had opened and sanctified. There must, however, exist in his ministry, independently of this influence, adequate and perceptible causes for them. These causes, it is my intention, in the sequel of this discourse, to bring out distinctly to your view; for I have proposed to myself to illustrate and establish the following proposition; namely,

That emotion in the preacher is necessary to an effective and successful proclamation of the word of God;—

And also to answer the following inquiry:

By what means may this important attribute be secured to our ministry?

I have, however, a few preliminary remarks to offer; and,

1. By emotion I do not mean a pathetic tenderness, or a weeping sensibility, only and always pervading the bosom; but those different states of the affections which correspond with the import of the different themes on which we dwell, and the nature of the varying circumstances by which we are surrounded.

Nor when I speak of emotion do I mean those indefinable impulses, or sudden bursts of animal feeling which sometimes flood the soul, carrying away the landmarks of reason and thought, and leaving the mind to the mercy of an irresistible tempest of passion. But I mean that deep and



holy movement of the affections which has been produced by the energy of truth *understood* and *believed*; such a state of the feelings as corresponds with the *import* of truth. When such emotions exist in the preacher's mind, they will depict themselves in his countenance, and find expression in every look and tone and gesture. They will infuse into his manner an earnestness and warmth which will leave to the hearer no alternative but a clear conviction of the perfect honesty of the speaker's heart. There will be to his audience visible demonstrations of the preacher's faith.

2. In the economy of salvation, the natural relations of things are not overlooked. All the instruments and agencies which God ordinarily employs to give efficiency to the Gospel, have an *adaptedness* in themselves to accomplish the ends for which they are employed. Hence the different degrees of success which attends the ministry of good men. One has more and better qualifications for his work than the other. His ministry has an adaptedness in it to produce effect which the ministry of the other has not.

The Spirit of God does not employ our agency to accomplish his purposes in the renovation of human hearts, simply because we are good men. If he did, then piety would constitute the only qualification for our work, and the Church might dispense with the services of an ordained and instructed priesthood altogether. But this would

accord neither with the requisitions of the Gospel, the demands of the Church, or the nature of things. Such, however, is not the course which God pursues in the election of agencies to carry forward his designs. He employs appropriate, and ordinarily no other than those which are seen by us to be appropriate, instruments to accomplish his purposes of grace. Now we have to remark that *emotion* is necessary to render preaching such an instrument, and without it this agency cannot possess the adaptedness necessary to give it the greatest effect upon mind. This is the aspect under which I wish to present the subject in this discourse.

3. A susceptibility to emotion is not the only qualification which a preacher of the Gospel will need. A slight practical acquaintance with the difficult and responsible duties of the ministry will teach a man, if he has not learned it before, that something besides feeling will be requisite to qualify him skilfully to handle the word of God. He will soon understand that his office has introduced him into a sphere which, adequately to fill, would require an angel's powers, and whatever the resources of his mind may be, he will ever see occasion to mourn that he has drunk no deeper at the fountains of wisdom and knowledge. When, therefore, I speak of the importance of emotion, let it at no time be understood that I speak to the disparagement of those other endowments for our

work which are to be derived only from a thorough acquaintance both with secular and sacred science. The great interests of the Church are never so jeopardated as when committed to the care of men who feel strongly but know nothing. But we affirm on the other hand, that not all the endowments which the most profound and varied learning can give, will render a frigid preacher of the truth a successful one. We are prepared now to proceed directly to a consideration of the proposition which we have announced—That emotion is necessary to an effective and successful dispensation of the word of God.

I. *It cannot be denied that the themes on which the preacher dwells demand emotion, and are adapted to inspire it.* The minister of Jesus is a legate of the skies. When he speaks in his official character, he speaks for God, and when he pleads with men, he pleads with them on the behalf of God. The mission on which he is sent is one of mercy, involving, however, the most extended and multifarious interests. On the part of God he is charged with the vindication of the honours of his throne, and the rights of his government; and in the prosecution of this high commission is brought up to a near mental view of the ineffable glories of the eternal Godhead, and is conversant with scenes and objects that awe and thrill and charm the heavenly world. When he pleads for God, he is called to a contemplation of the most surprising be-

nignity, the most inimitable love, and the most affecting condescension, all, however, misrepresented, and abused, and scorned, in this fallen world; and when he pleads with man, he pleads with an immortal being, convicted of treason against the government of God, and condemned for his crimes to a state of punishment for which, irrespective of the Gospel, there is no relief, and to which there can be no termination. He meets him at a moment when, for anything that is known, the alternative is before the sinner to escape then or never from impending ruin. His work with him is the work of an ambassador of God, bearing accredited conditions of pardon, and charged to make the overture with every testimony of love, and every demonstration of concern, which a creature is capable of giving, on the behalf of God. To find now that his message meets with no accordant response from the sinner's heart; that the apathy of death has spread itself over all his faculties, or the keen resentments of injured pride have prepared him for a flat denial of the claims of God, what can be more solemn or impressive than the crisis? What a time to the faithful ambassador, for the heavings of emotion and the pleadings of love? Can he view such a scene and maintain a philosophical composure? This is a fellow-man, endowed with the same susceptibility to pain and pleasure with himself. Must he be shut out of heaven? Must he bear no part in the sweet and immortal songs

that will be chanted in that happy world? Must his eye ever weep, and his bosom heave with grief, and the waves of eternal sorrow dash and roll over his frightened and fainting spirit? Here is a pardon written out, and sealed with blood, bearing the impress of the cross, and proffered on terms the most gracious and condescending. But he rejects it. It opens to his soul the only refuge from impending wrath. But he refuses to embrace it. He is standing on the jutting and slippery edge of that deep abyss where billows of fire are rolling, and the slightest breath of God's anger may at any moment sweep him from his position, and bury him in the flood below. Has the messenger who is sent to warn him of his danger and plead with him to escape, no reason for emotion? Is no occasion given to his heart to dissolve and his eye to weep? The benevolence of the gospel can execute no commission like this, and leave the heart unsoftened by its influence.

The *sufferings of Christ* are the central point from which the bright beams of the gospel all radiate and diverge. The preacher of the gospel must therefore be often at the cross. He must often look upon the bleeding sacrifice, and take account of the doings of that dreadful hour when the powers of darkness were unchained, and Christ was devoted a victim to their rage. In the circumstances attending the tragedy of his death—the treachery in which it was commenced, the duplicity and sub-



ornation by which it was carried forward, and in the barbarous cruelties with which the horrid scene was closed, there is enough to subdue and melt the hardest heart. But join to these considerations, the perfect and acknowledged innocence of Jesus, together with the fact that he was a voluntary victim to these tortures, and more than all, endured them for his mortal enemies, not excluding even the incarnate demons that spiked his limbs and danced around his cross, and who can refrain from emotion? Was ever love like this—so pure, so comprehensive, so vast, and yet burdened with such sorrows and humbled to such a death? Its achievements on the cross effected the world's redemption. Here hangs all human hope. How can we handle themes like these, how can we deal with interests so interminable and vast, and not be the subjects of emotion sometimes unutterable, always fervent and deep?

“The stupendous magnitude of the objects which the Bible proposes to man, the incomparable sublimity of eternal pursuits, the astonishing scheme of redemption by a Mediator, the native grandeur of a rational and immortal being stamped with the impress of God,” the ruins which sin has produced, and the renovations which almighty grace achieves, open to the preacher fields of vision and thought, able to awe, and fire, and fill, and sublimate, the most capacious mind.

II. *It is a demonstrative denial of the truth and*

*importance of our message not to have emotion in the proclamation of it.* It results from the structure of the human mind, that truths believed will affect it in proportion to their importance. Who does not look to have a convict, sentenced to death upon the scaffold, and before whose eyes the preparations for his execution are going forward, agitated and convulsed by the prospect before him? Insensibility under these circumstances would constitute undeniable proof, either of a moral paralysis, or of an invincible unbelief. Whether it were the one or the other, all who beheld him would regard him as a monster whom humanity should disown, or a victim to delusion over whom humanity should weep.

The preacher of the gospel is conversant with truths of the most solemn import, both to himself and his hearers; and when as an ambassador of God he stands in the presence of dying men to give utterance and demonstration to them, where this side of eternity could he find a position so fraught with responsibility, or surrounded with circumstances so solemn and affecting? If, standing as he does between the living and the dead, with the world above lending him its sympathies, and the world beneath plotting defeat to his aims—himself a messenger of God to those who are objects of strife to both,—no kindlings of interest, no throbbings of emotion are felt in his bosom, what must angels, what must devils think? The scene is one which

must strike with amazement the spectators from both worlds. But a more solemn consideration is the effect which his apathy must have upon those to whom he addresses his message. For these, what remains but to deduce the conclusion, either that the gospel is a fabrication, or the man who proclaims it, a traitor to his trust? Whichever alternative is taken, the avenues of conviction will be closed, and the dominion of impenitence be rendered more settled and severe.

Let a philosophical indifference surround the man who undertakes to speak in the name of God to his dying fellow-creatures on the concerns of eternity; let a dozing apathy infuse itself into his manner, or let him talk and act like one who has only a professional task to perform, and what can save his message from the influence of a counter testimony, drawn directly from the living example of its inefficacy, standing before their eyes? Under these circumstances it will be obvious to his hearers, that he neither believes what he says, nor is concerned to have them believe it. Not only will he not commend himself to the conscience, but he will bring the influence of his experience to bear against the truth of his message. Who can tell upon how many minds the chains of impenitence have been riveted fast and for ever, by such preaching, even where truth, and truth only, has been proclaimed?

A man is said to have been despatched by the citizens of a certain town, to a neighbouring city,

to obtain help to extinguish a fire. He went in haste; but when he arrived there, he adjusted his spirit to a temperature of very great deliberation, that he might courteously address his friends. He then inquired as usual after their welfare, and interchanged with them the civilities that are common on occasion of meeting friends. His attention was next diverted to a piece of mechanism that stood by, which he very deliberately examined. After this he turned himself to those around him, and without betraying the least emotion, announced to them the object of his visit, and desired that they would, as soon as their convenience would allow, despatch the assistance necessary to extinguish the fire. It is needless to add that the story was regarded as a fabrication, and his request treated as an idle whim. The town, in consequence, was left to be consumed to ashes. Now let me ask, what was wanting to obtain credit for the story which he told? Only the evidence of strong emotion. Had he acted like a man who was under the influence of a perfect faith in the truth of his own testimony, others would have believed him, and he would have obtained the thing that he desired. But his indifference converted truth into falsehood, and what was at first only ignorance in his hearers, became at last an obstinate incredulity. So the truths of the gospel, solemn and momentous as they are, degenerate into idle tales in the hands of a speculative and heartless ministry. "Why,"

said an eminent divine to Garrick the tragedian, "why do we who preach the solemn truths of Christianity have so few to hear or believe us, while you who deal only in fiction have weeping throngs continually hanging on your lips?" "The reason is," replied the actor, "you represent truth as fiction, we represent fiction as truth."

III. *The advantages which truth has in the hands of a living preacher over the same truth on the pages of inspiration, consist mainly in the power which the preacher possesses of giving expression to the various emotions which truth is adapted to inspire.* On the pages of the Bible truth has only an historical or abstract existence. In the person of its heralds, it has form and motion and life and speech. In them its spirit has expression, and all its divine lineaments are drawn out in living beauty, and the impress of its lovely image is seen beaming from the preacher's eye. Through this medium a sympathy is begotten in the mind of the hearer with the things of another world. Prejudices are dissolved, and indifference broken up, and truth is brought in contact with the heart, and the interests of the mind are insensibly aroused, and unseen agencies open a pathway into the recesses of the soul for the entrance of light and truth. These are among the primary reasons why preaching, and not the inanimate page of revelation, has been constituted the grand instrument of conversion to God. It possesses an adaptedness to accomplish this end which



the Bible does not, and the Bible alone, though circulated through the wide world, would never bring its population to God. The power residing in the human voice and countenance to give expression to the varying emotions of the mind, is that chiefly which imparts to it this superiority.

IV. *It is true in point of fact, that those preachers who have been distinguished for this characteristic, have been far more successful than others.* There is an extraordinary unction and power attending the preaching of our own day. There is scarcely any portion of mind within the limits of Christendom that has not been waked and moved by it. Unnumbered revivals of religion, attended with great power, and bringing multitudes of converts to Christ, have followed it; and the church has been consolidated, and roused, and strengthened, and marshalled to efficient and systematic action, by its influence. But what is the prominent feature by which the ministry of the present day is distinguished from that of other and less favoured periods of the church? Not intellectual vigour, or mental furniture, but in the fire and unction of its eloquence. It is a practical and impassioned ministry, trained to action and baptized into the spirit of its mission. We cannot here call your attention to the comparative merits of individuals among our cotemporaries. But we may take a comparative view of the separate organizations of the church. Where has preaching exerted its widest and most capti-

vating influence? Among the Methodists in America, and the Welch Presbyterians in England. The eloquence of the Welch pulpit is stately, but impassioned, and for a long period has been celebrated for its persuasive and enchanting powers. Its influence is felt upon every grade of mind, and it has given to the gospel the most complete and signal triumphs which it has anywhere achieved in modern times. But the distinguishing feature of the Welch pulpit is emotion.

It was once remarked of the preachers of the Methodist church, by a learned infidel, that were they only panoplied in the literary armour which is worn by the preachers of certain other sects, they would in five years make a conquest of the world;—an indifferent compliment indeed to the intelligence of its ministry, but honourable in the highest degree to the unction and energy with which it is endowed.

If we pass now to other periods of the church, you shall find them fraught with illustrations of the same truth. Who among the cotemporaries of Whitfield will wear in heaven a crown studded with more or brighter gems than he? But what were the peculiar attributes of his preaching? Lucid illustration and fervid thought. The magic power of his eloquence resided in the inimitable pathos that was breathed into it.

Baxter was called the apostle of his age, and Barrow the Shakspeare of the church. The former

was a weeping prophet, the latter a learned and stately divine. Both of them were good men; but I had rather wear the crown that will press the brow of Baxter in heaven, than that which will adorn the head of his eloquent and gifted cotemporary.

Go on to the age of the Apostles. When was the church ever served by such a ministry, or the world so agitated and moved by the operations of twelve honest men? They were without patronage, or wealth, or learning,\* or friends, but their voice reached the ear of kings, and carried troubled thought into their bosoms, and shook their thrones, and electrified the nations, and changed the spirit and customs of the age. "The weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." The power of God's truth seemed to be concentrated in their hands, and wherever they wielded this sword of heavenly temper it "pierced to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." "They so spake the word that multitudes, both of the Jews and also of the Greeks" and other gentiles, believed. What was the secret of their success? After the demonstrations of the Spirit which attended their preaching, and upon which all success depends, it was the art-

\* When I say they were without learning, I do not mean that they were novices, having no suitable qualifications for their work, but that they were not profoundly schooled in the science of the age.

less manner in which they told the story of the cross, and the honest fervour with which they bore their testimony to its collateral and dependent truths. They were men whose spirit was fired and filled with the import of their solemn message. They went forth burdened with the magnitude of their work, keeping their eye on the consequences of their ministry, and remembering always, that "they were unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one the savour of death unto death, to the other, the savour of life unto life." No wonder that the chiefest of them all should have exclaimed, under the pressure of these overwhelming responsibilities, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

The ministry of the prophets was characterized by the same spirit. "O," said one of them, when contemplating the sins and the afflictions of the church, "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people;" and when he saw how the people turned away their ear from hearing the law, he exclaimed in the language of unaffected grief—"But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." And as though it were the appropriate business of the Lord's prophets to weep, he directed one of them to bear this message to his companions—"Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare

thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them."

But we have higher authority with which to urge the claims of our subject than the example of apostles or prophets. Our Lord, who was consecrated to an unchangeable priesthood, and held the stars of the churches in his right hand, was for a season the herald of his own gospel. "He was anointed," he tells us, "to preach good tidings to the meek—to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound—to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." He executed his commission like one who perfectly comprehended its import, with all the amazing consequences that were to result from it. Well might his disciples, when they saw with what inextinguishable ardour he prosecuted his work, call to mind what had been written of him in the prophets—"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." As a preacher he was simple, grave, and pungent, developing fully the emotions of his mind, and always leaving with his hearers undoubted evidence of the perfect benevolence of his heart. Who could have stood unawed, and faced the lightnings that flashed from his eye, when, roused in spirit, he encountered the captious and hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees, and woe after woe was thundered from his lips?—Or who could have remained unmoved, under the soft beamings of that radiant



countenance, when dissolved into pity, he threw his weeping eye over the blood-stained city of Jerusalem, and exclaimed in view of its approaching doom—"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes?" As a preacher, never man spake or felt like Christ.

V. *The condition of our hearers is such as calls for emotion.* This topic I have already, to some extent, illustrated. I shall therefore here barely remark, that, in the present state of the world, the preacher of the gospel may go where he will, and preach to whom he will, his eye must rest on the countenances of some, of whom it will be impossible not to augur sorrowful things for them in another world. He must see and speak to those who, though accountable to God, and destined to an immortal existence, are yet neglecting the concerns of their souls, and to whom he must entertain the most painful apprehensions that his ministry will prove only a savour of death unto death. To know certainly, while he is mingling with them, and making the overtures of mercy to them, that in a little season he *must* meet them at the bar of God, and may there take up a wailing over them as he sees them going out from the presence of the Lord to dwell with devils and to be consumed with fires, must touch the heart that is not made of flint. On the other hand, if he do but succeed in rousing them up from their delirious

dreams, and in bringing them on to the foundations of hope, with what exulting joy must he anticipate the coronation day, when he shall meet the ransomed spirits, and the harps of gold shall be strung to their sweetest notes, and the crown all studded and lustrous with these immortal gems, shall be set upon his temples by the hand of Christ.

VI. *The Spirit of God, as a sanctifying agent, exerts his power chiefly upon the affections, which are the great sources of emotion.* “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness,” and like excellencies.

It is not the grand fault of human nature, that it has no mental perception of truth, but that the affections do not correctly and adequately respond to its import. It is a main design of the inhabitation of the Spirit to correct this evil, and under its influence the affections are not only diverted from forbidden to lawful objects, but they are rendered altogether more sensitive and vigorous than they were before. It cannot therefore happen, that the man whose heart is duly subjected to this influence, shall have the sublime and thrilling truths of revelation brought in continual contact with his mind, and yet be the subject of no corresponding emotions. The thing is impossible both in philosophy and religion. But has the experience of Christ’s ministers corresponded with the truth of our doctrine? - Doubtless it has, so far as their experience has corresponded with the requisitions of the

gospel. Look at a single instance. Stephen is described as having been a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. As a consequence, his adversaries were unable to resist the wisdom and the *spirit* by which he spake. And if the countenance be regarded as a true index of the heart, what celestial impulses must have throbbled in his bosom, at the moment when "all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel?" The mind of this illustrious saint, speaking through "the glory of his countenance," carried burning thoughts into the bosoms of his accusers and judges, and they were awed by the unearthly radiance that beamed in his face, more than by the divine eloquence that flowed from his lips.

We pass now to a brief consideration of the inquiry connected with this discussion—How may the important attribute of which we have been speaking be secured to the ministry?

We have one remark to offer before furnishing a direct reply:—If there be any whose natural temperaments are so dull and phlegmatic that their affections can by no labour be disciplined into easy and powerful action, we advise them never to enter the ministry. They may be more useful in any other sphere. Now to the inquiry we reply—

1. Faith is the mainspring of all true emotion. There may be sensibility and the excitements of

feeling without it, but no deep and intelligent movement of the affections. All excitement produced in any other way, will be evanescent as the morning dews.

Faith brings down to the direct view and intimate fellowship of the mind, the things that are unseen and eternal. It gives to the declarations of God, on subjects that are beyond the cognizance of sense and reason, the influence, and the power of conviction, belonging to experimental truths. Let the preacher then have *faith*; let him credit the truth of the message which he bears; let him believe in the actual presence, the spotless purity, and the infinite knowledge of God; in short, let his faith bring down to his view the judgment day with its awful grandeur, its terrific scenes, and its changeless issues, and he will have emotion. He will feel and speak like one whose hands are ready to be grasped with those of his impenitent hearers in the weeping adieus of the judgment.

2. The preacher of the gospel must entertain profound and practical views of truth, if he would feel an adequate and uniform interest in his work. The great sources of truth are the word and works of God. Here the perfections of the Deity are disclosed. In these, the demonstrations of his Godhead are made, and the glories of his infinite mind unfolded. But the Bible demands the preacher's first and chief attention. This is the telescope through which the eye of his faith pene-

trates into distant worlds, and examines with minute attention the character and employments of their inhabitants, and brings back a true report of the laws and statutes and statistics of the kingdom. It is a glorious luminary, hung out from the moral heavens by God's own hand, designed to illumine the benighted footsteps of men on their journey to eternity. The book embodies the wisdom of the eternal mind, and every truth which it contains is a gem sent to us from the celestial world, and our riches are all treasured up in it. The Bible is therefore filled with truths of such vast interest to us, drawn from fountains so deep, and affecting relations so wide and sacred, that it is the proper business of life to study it, and if we study and believe it, we shall feel its pervading influence on every power and passion of the soul. No superficial acquaintance however with this volume, will answer the end which we have here in view. It must be studied, prayerfully, critically, and habitually studied, or many of its divine beauties will for ever be concealed from our view, and the freshness which rests on its pages gradually give place to the dull monotony of a cheap and tiresome familiarity.

But our work with the Scriptures is not done when we have ascertained their original import. There is another and higher object still to be attained, and that is, to imbibe the spirit, and put ourselves in possession of the practical bearings, of



the text. Until this is done the Scriptures will be a dead letter to us, and we may study them for ever, and bring to their interpretation the richest stores of learning and the finest powers of criticism, we shall know nothing of them as we ought to know. But whoever studies them to learn his duty, to discipline the affections of his heart, and expand his views of the character and works of God, shall find himself the subject of an influence that will fire his soul and endow it with an energy irresistible and divine.

3. Great advantage may be derived from a familiar acquaintance with the writings of such men as Leighton, Baxter, Howe, Edwards, and Payson. Purer and brighter spirits have never been lodged in tenements of clay. Some of them possessed gigantic powers of mind, and were brilliant luminaries in the world of science and letters. All of them "walked with God," and held familiar and continual intercourse with Heaven. In their writings we have the productions of mature and sanctified minds, enriched by the results derived from a personal acquaintance with the power of Christianity, and disclosing to our view the workings of the heart, when subjected to the ascendant influence of grace. It is impossible to be familiar with their writings without having a glow of holy emulation kindled in our bosoms, and experiencing, to some extent at least, an assimilation in temper and habit to them.

4. Parochial labours faithfully performed, will strongly tend to sustain and deepen the interest which we feel in our work. These employments, by bringing us into direct contact with the diversified conditions of society, and giving us familiar access to the hearts of our people, will enable us to ascertain, minutely and accurately, the true condition of the souls committed to our charge, and the actual success of our ministry among them. This intercourse will daily bring to our knowledge facts of the most interesting character, calculated to impress us with a just sense of the importance of our work, and to give us more enlarged and affecting views of the solemn responsibility which it involves. Nothing can more strongly tend to keep a fresh and increasing interest glowing over the field of our labours.

5. To qualify us to speak to others in a spirit that shall commend our message to them, and reflect honour upon the Master whom we serve, it will be necessary that we make a previous self-application of the truths which we bear to them. This exercise will prepare us to sympathize with our hearers, and I may add, to sympathize with God, as it will imbue our hearts with the spirit of our message and prepare us not only to speak the truth in love, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

6. I am constrained to remark, that in my judgment, habits of extemporaneous delivery will con-

tribute an important advantage for securing to our preaching the attribute of emotion. Not only are both mind and body sometimes jaded into a state of lassitude by the severe mechanical toil that attends the habitual preparation for manuscriptal preaching, but when we come to the labours of the pulpit, there is neither room nor demand for those energetic workings of the mind which are required in extemporaneous delivery. The advantages also which are to be derived from the immediate circumstances of the occasion, such as the varying emotions which will find expression in the countenance of the hearer, are nearly lost upon one who is pledged beforehand to a certain train of thought, and can employ only the language in which it is already clothed. But there are imminent dangers to be avoided by those who would adopt this mode of preaching. It were better to write and re-write every word we have to say, than to fall into those loose and lazy mental habits, which characterize very many of the extemporaneous preachers of the present day. This is an evil which all the advantages to be derived from extemporaneous preaching cannot counterbalance. But it is an evil which may be avoided, and one for which there can neither be excuse nor apology. Whatever our mode of preaching may be, to secure efficiency and power to our ministry, it will be absolutely necessary that we study much and write much. It will be impossible that we should be either long or extensively useful in any other way.

To render habits of extemporaneous preaching easy and natural, it will only be necessary that the student address himself to the attainment of the art simultaneously with the commencement of his other studies; and pursue it as he pursues them, with a systematic and untiring diligence, and he will have maturity in it when he has maturity in them. Thus the error will be avoided of making room for this habit by breaking down the established dominion of older ones, and of sacrificing to its feeble existence the concord and fellowship which should always exist among them. Let students then not shun, as they sometimes do, but let them court the drilling of professional skill, to secure to them this most important and useful acquisition. After they have once entered the field of their labours, they will never regret any sacrifices of time or patience which they have made to acquire it.

Finally: To give an efficient and sacred unction to our ministry, it will be necessary to accompany it continually with prayer. God is the source, and the only source, whence an influence adequate to this purpose can be derived. A holy fervour in his work is the result of an internal anointing of his Spirit. The flame must be kindled at the altar of prayer, and there alone can it be kept burning. He who begins, continues, and ends his labours in prayer, shall assuredly have occasion to rejoice in the last day, that he has neither run in vain nor

laboured in vain. God will own his ministry, and clothe it with power and salvation.

The Theological Institution established in this place, was founded for the purpose of giving to the church such a ministry as we have now imperfectly described, and under the supervision of its experienced Faculty, has done all hitherto, which learning, piety, and the most indefatigable industry could accomplish. Some of its graduates are now occupying posts of the highest responsibility in the church at home; some are traversing the wide wilderness in our country, preaching the gospel of the kingdom to its scattered and fainting population; and others still are toiling on heathen shores, breaking the bread of life to them that sit in darkness and in the region and shadow of death. Were the institution from this moment to cease its operations and pass out of existence, both the church on earth and the church in heaven would have occasion for ever to render grateful praise to that beneficent Providence which brought it into being.

But the task of sustaining its interests and of discharging the difficult and complicated duties connected with its internal management, has been hitherto toilsome and onerous to a degree that has loudly called for relief. The venerable men who have shouldered this burden, have borne it without repining, but not without great sacrifices of health and comfort.



The present occasion should therefore be one of lively interest and of joyful congratulation to all the friends of Zion, not only as it gives to one of her most eminent and venerable institutions, an accession of talent, learning, and experience, which cannot fail to deepen the channels through which its refreshing streams are flowing out to the church, but as it brings relief to the men who have, so to speak, *for her sake*, jeopardded their lives in the high places of the field.

We meet on this occasion, solemnly and officially to induct into office, one who has been chosen by the competent authority to fill the chair of *Sacred Rhetoric and Pastoral Theology* in this seminary of sacred science. He brings with him the experience of a long and successful ministry, exercised on one of the lofty and beauteous eminences of Zion; and, associated with the talent and experience and piety of his distinguished colleagues, will contribute, we trust, to swell that mighty river of salvation, the streams whereof are making glad the city of our God.

The post to which he is called is a responsible one, as it gives in special charge to him to mould and train the practical and preaching talent of our youth. God grant him a fresh and copious anointing of the Spirit, that distant places and distant times may have occasion to bless that Providence which led him to unite his destinies with those of this sacred institution.

Brethren in the ministry and members of the churches :

This institution will need and must have our patronage and our prayers. The smiles of Divine Providence are indeed beaming sweetly upon it now, but they will not long continue to do so, unless its interests be embalmed in the affections and nurtured by the prayers of the church. Whatever talent, or learning, or piety, or zeal, may fill its chairs of instruction and of internal police, it will certainly never prosper independently of God's blessing and the patronage of the church. The relations therefore which we hold to it are solemn and responsible. Shall it languish on our hands? When a cry for the labours of the heralds of the cross is borne to our ears on every breeze, and whole nations are dying in utter ignorance of the way of salvation, shall this institution be suffered to wane and falter for want of our patronage and our prayers? God forbid. Let us not cease then to bear its interests to the throne of grace; and let us by every means labour to enlarge the sphere of its usefulness, and may God grant that its influence may be felt through all time, to the joy of millions of immortal minds, redeemed and saved through its instrumentality.

## ✓ SERMON III.

### THE SANCTUARY BUILT.

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.”—HAGGAI 1: 7, 8.

It is vain to pretend that there exists an exact correspondence between the Jewish and the Christian church. Although the latter is only a continuation of the former, yet it exists under circumstances so different in respect of its external organization, its government, privileges, and obligations, that the two appear, to the superficial observer, to have but very little affinity. Yet, as they were constituted and ruled by the same authority, and for the same great ends, the history of the former cannot be otherwise than pregnant with instructions suited to the condition and wants of the latter. The principles of truth and righteousness are immutable—the same in one age that they are in another—and what of homage and reverence and love were due from the Jew to God, are equally due from the Christian.

These remarks are applicable to that passage of Jewish history which we have just read. It refers to a period of time subsequent to that of the cap-

tivity. The people had returned from Babylon; but they were few, indigent, and dispirited. The Chaldean army had ravaged the country. They had overthrown the city, and destroyed the temple. The work of rebuilding had commenced. The foundations even of the temple had been relaid. But, under a decree of one of the Persian kings, the work was suspended. It was not resumed till many years afterwards, not because there was any invincible obstacle in the way, but because the people were intent upon building their own houses, and in repairing their own fortunes, which had been destroyed or reduced by the war. This selfish regard for their own interests, while the temple of the Lord lay waste, led them to say,—“The time is not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built.” The reason why that time had not come was, that they had not yet accomplished their desire in building for themselves their ceiled houses, and in repairing their decayed and wasted fortunes. They chose to let the house of God lie waste, until they had made ample provision for themselves and families.

With this course God was displeased, and he punished them in a manner exactly corresponding with the offence. They were so intent upon providing for themselves all the comforts and luxuries of life, that they had nothing to spare for the rebuilding of the house of their God.

Now see how God punished this grasping ava-

rice,—the prophet was commanded to go and say to them,—“Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little: ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.—Why, saith the Lord? Because of my house that is waste; and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.”

Thus did God defeat them in the very ends which they had neglected the rebuilding of God's house to attain. They wanted to accumulate more of the world for themselves and families. But, God rendered abortive every labour of their hands. By drought and famine he dried up the sources of their gains, and withered their hopes.

Now, I cannot see in this transaction, anything, either on the part of God, or of the Jewish nation, that had its origin in the *peculiarities* of that dispensation, and that renders the case inapplicable to the Christian church. There was indeed a direct infliction of temporal judgments, and the land was scourged with drought and famine, because the people suffered the house of God to lie waste, while every man was busy in rebuilding and adorning his own dwelling. God does not, at the present day, always adopt this mode of expressing his dis-



pleasure. Though, even now, you cannot point to the place on his footstool, where the house of God is suffered to go to decay through the neglect and penuriousness of his people, and yet the community around it bears the marks of a virtuous, happy, and prosperous people. The great law of God's providence, in this respect, is maintained even down to the present day.

Let me, now, ask your attention to a series of remarks which I shall offer with a view to furnish a comprehensive survey of the whole subject presented in the text.

I. The first observation which I have to make is this:—that God has, from the beginning, been worshipped in temples made with hands—i. e. from the time that he gave to his church a visible organization. Even while the Jews were passing through the wilderness, and before they had either a country or a home, they built a portable tabernacle for his worship. This was the place where the rites of religion were publicly celebrated, and where were concentrated all the sacred sympathies of the Jewish heart.

When the migrations of the people were ended, and they had come permanently to occupy the promised land, they built a costly and magnificent temple to the honour of Jehovah. And here God was worshipped, from generation to generation.

Thus it has been in all time where Jehovah has been known. Temples have been consecrated to

his service, and no people ever thought of maintaining the true religion, without a house where they could regularly assemble to offer public homage to God.

The necessity of this has been so obvious, and so widely felt, that even heathen nations have everywhere had public edifices devoted to the rites of their idolatrous worship. The conviction of this necessity is as deep and general as is the religious sentiment in man. There never was a community, pagan or Christian, where any visible form of religion was maintained, that did not consecrate to the object of its worship some structure, adapted to the public celebration of its religious rites.

II. I remark, secondly, that as respects the true religion, these edifices have been built *by command of God*.

It is worthy of observation, that of all the laws which God gave to his ancient people, none were more minute or explicit, than those which related to the building of the tabernacle and the temple. Moses was thus admonished of God, when about to construct the tabernacle,—“See (said he) that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.”

And David said to Solomon, upon whom it devolved to erect the temple,—“Take heed, now, for the Lord hath chosen thee to build a house for the sanctuary: be strong and do it. Then David gave to Solomon his son, the pattern of the porch, and

of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy-seat, and the pattern of all that he had *by the Spirit*, of the courts of the house of the Lord, and of all the chambers round about."

And when at a subsequent period this temple was overthrown, it was rebuilt by express injunction of Jehovah; and because the people delayed the work, the wrath of God was poured upon them, and they were visited with a series of terrific judgments, as is recorded in the chapter from which our text is taken.

This view of the subject is both approbated and confirmed by the practice of our Saviour and his Apostles. They repaired, every Sabbath day, to those houses, called synagogues, which had been erected by the Jews, for the public worship of Jehovah. And Christ said, concerning the temple,—"It is written, my house shall be called, of all nations, the house of prayer."

But, in addition to all this, can any reason be assigned why God should demand of the Jew any more than of us, that he should erect to him a house of prayer; or why the Jew any more than we, should need the benefits of such a house? Surely, our obligations to him are as great as were theirs, and the difficulty of establishing and maintaining the true religion is the same that it was then. And history records not one instance of the pervad-

ing and sanctifying power of religion in any community where the regular and stated convocations of the people for the worship of God had been abolished.

III. But this reminds me to remark, in the third place, that a house of worship, where the people may convene to make a public recognition of God, and offer to him the homage of their gratitude and praise, is indispensably necessary to a diffusion of the blessings of religion and a perpetuation of its institutions.

Among the very first objects demanding the attention of those who go to preach the gospel in pagan countries, or to the new and destitute regions of our own land, is a house of worship. Being obliged to commence their work without this, they very soon learn from experience that little can be done to propagate religion or establish its influence over the minds of the people, till some place can be secured where they may assemble on the Sabbath for purposes of religious instruction and devotion. Hence, to provide such a place is invariably amongst the very first objects of their regard.

The advantages resulting from a convocation of the people at stated periods for religious instruction, are perfectly obvious. How long a time would it require to preach the gospel to a thousand souls individually, supposing that only an hour were appropriated to each, and twelve hours to the day were consumed in the employment? It would take

nearly three months, and the uninterrupted labours of one man for the whole year would give to each only four hours of instruction—equal only to the ordinary privileges of two Sabbaths, which might as well be enjoyed by the whole thousand, at the same time as by one.

But, how long would it require to give a competent knowledge of religion to the people, and to secure to it a controlling and sanctifying ascendancy through the community, if they were to enjoy only four hours of instruction during the whole year? Would not those strong worldly influences which are continually sweeping away like a torrent every thing around us, instantly obliterate, in most cases, every impression that might be made, and carry the whole population into a state of irrecoverable defection from God? It would be impossible under such an administration of the ordinances of religion, to prevent a steady retrogression towards a state of barbarism.

There could be no Sabbath. There would be no sacred convocations to distinguish and hallow the day. It would be blotted out.

All those incidental advantages, also, which result from the *habit* of assembling together once a week, where the rich and the poor occupy a common level, and are taught to cherish the feelings of a common brotherhood, and are bound together in the sacred sympathies of a common Christianity, would be lost. In short, let the house of God go



to decay, let the sanctuary be demolished, so that there shall be no place where the people may resort on the Sabbath day for the public worship of God, and the strongest bonds of the social state will be dissolved, and all combinations of effort or sympathy to sustain the ordinances, or propagate the doctrines of religion, will come to an end. Religion could, under these circumstances, have no organized existence.

You are perfectly aware, my hearers, that every association of individuals for moral, intellectual, or other purposes, must have its place of meeting, and its periodical convocations, or it will in a little time expire. How long would the society of the Odd Fellows or of the Sons of Temperance maintain their organized form, and have a vital existence, if they had no place of meeting, and their periodical gatherings were to be given up? They could not exist a year. There could be no union of counsels, and no concert of action. All those sympathies which are kept alive, and glowing, by the social intercourse of these meetings, and which constitute the vital power of the organization, would stagnate at the heart.

It is just so with religious organizations,—and even with the church of Christ. Its solemn convocations constitute the heart, whose pulsations send the vital fluid through all the ramifications of the system. Let its Sabbath assemblies be given up, and its existence would speedily come to an end.

IV. But I remark again, that the ministrations of the house of God have a powerful influence upon the intelligence and good order of the community. Even where the great end of this ordinance, which is the conversion of men to God, is not immediately attained, the influence which it exerts upon all the intellectual and moral habits of the people is most salutary and powerful.

There are susceptibilities to religious influence, which belong to man's nature. These are as essential to the human constitution as is the reasoning faculty, or the social affections. They must either be developed and trained under scriptural instruction, producing an illumination of the understanding, and breathing into the heart a gentle spirit of meekness and patience and good-will; or they must take on a character from some superstitious and inadequate culture, which shall leave the popular mind now in a dead sea of ignorance, and then breaking forth in a dark, incorrigible, and fierce fanaticism, blighting all that is fair, and defacing all that is lovely in human society.

The objects presented before the mind in the sanctuary, by an able and scriptural ministry, are of the most exalted and commanding character. It is not possible to contemplate them without an expansion of the intellect, from introducing into it such lofty conceptions. It raises human nature from that low and unhonoured state, and from those poor conceptions of its true dignity which so

extensively prevail. It shows that man is, in an important sense, the offspring of God and an heir of immortality.

It exhibits the character of God in a grandeur and majesty and purity and beauty, adapted to fill our minds with astonishment and delight. It exhibits the principles and transactions of a government which embraces the wide universe for its domain,—is administered with infinite wisdom, and extends its influence through eternal ages. It publishes a system of redemption, in which infinite love and tenderness and condescension and justice are blended. In short, it unfolds to our view all the adorable perfections of the great God, and reveals a system of truth embracing the government, law, and grace of Jehovah, the bare contemplation of which is often found sufficient to move the deepest sympathies of the heart, and to awaken aspirations that are as vigorous and lofty as those which inspire angelic bosoms.

How is it possible that the constant exhibition of themes like these should fail of producing an elevation and expansion of intellect through all the grades of society, that no other agency is capable of producing?

And then, from the nature of these themes, how great must be the moral power of the pulpit. The principles of the gospel are all holy. It inculcates every virtue, while it frowns on every vice, and all

its requisitions are enforced by sanctions that are infinite.

But if you would know the great power of the sanctuary in restraining the evil passions of men, and in fortifying and strengthening the principles of virtue, you must take a survey of the condition of society, and tell us from whence come the perpetrators of crimes; to which class belong those men who are so often arraigned in our police courts, and sent to prison;—do they belong to the class that is found in regular attendance at the sanctuary, or to that which is seldom or never seen there? In all my observation of twenty-two years, I have no recollection of even one individual who was an habitual worshipper in the sanctuary, being convicted of a state's-prison offence. And as it has been here, so it has been elsewhere. Very seldom will you find a seat made vacant in the house of God by its occupant being removed to prison. Our criminals are nearly all neglecters of both the Sabbath and the house of God. And does not this fact illustrate, in a most striking manner, the value of the sanctuary in its relations to the moral principles and habits of society?

But there are still higher interests to be secured by this agency; and interests which no other means will avail to secure, if this be wanting,—I mean, the interests of the soul.

It is in the sanctuary that the principles of religion are discussed, the doctrines of the gospel

unfolded, and the terms and conditions of salvation spread out before the mind, and urged upon its faithful and earnest regard. Here the attendant is surrounded with sacred associations—associations which draw the mind away from its deep-worn ordinary channels, and subject it to influences which with the blessing of God, may give it a new direction. Here, too, there is given a visible and sensible display of the adaptedness of the gospel to human nature, and of its divine power in transforming the entire character of individuals. In the house of prayer there are peculiar manifestations of the divine presence and glory. How were the people of Israel affected when they saw the Shechinah in the temple!

And when the Christian Church beholds the Spirit of God moving upon the hearts of the people, witnessed in the silent tear, and the suppressed groan, and the solemn stillness that fill the house of prayer, often does she exclaim, in admiration of the glory that pervades the place,—“Surely, this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” Here souls are trained for heaven.

V. I remark, in the fifth place, that the building which is destined to this high purpose, and which subserves these glorious ends, should, in some sense, correspond to the great design of its erection.

But here I must call your attention to several



particulars, that I may clearly present to you my view of what the house of God, as a material structure, should be.

1. In the first place, it should be a *true exponent* of the estimation in which the people hold the institutions of religion. It is so considered everywhere. If you enter a place where the houses for religious worship are small, and built in the cheapest manner, and weather-beaten, and all out of repair, bearing no proportion in size and costliness to those structures which are inhabited by the citizens round about, do you not instantly conclude that there is more infidelity than religion in that place, and that there the worshippers of mammon are more numerous than the worshippers of the true God? Would you not at once form an unfavourable impression of that community—and regard them as a selfish, uncultivated, and irreligious people?

While, on the other hand, if you enter a town where the churches are conspicuous objects, attracting attention by the neatness, size, and beauty of their structure, would not your estimation of the people be exactly reversed? And in both of these cases, the character of the people would, on inquiry, be found in general to be just what we have here supposed it. In the first instance you would find them to be coarse, grovelling, and selfish; in the other, refined, elevated, and liberal.

It is not possible that a community that duly

estimates the influence of religious institutions upon all the interests of society, secular and spiritual, should make only an inadequate and parsimonious provision for the exercise and diffusion of that influence. It is to all such, an object of commanding and paramount interest, towering high above every personal and selfish consideration. It is perceived that property is worth nothing where the restraints of religion are unknown, and the moral and spiritual interests of the people are uncared for. What do you suppose real estate was worth in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? And what would yours be worth, your stores and dwellings, and village lots, if the Sabbath and sanctuary of God were unknown here? I say it is impossible for you to have any just conception of the vast and vital influence of these institutions upon every relation and interest of life, and yet make only a poor, restricted, and illiberal provision for them. And I say, *that* is an illiberal provision which makes the house of God appear mean and contemptible, when compared with the structures that surround it, the stores and the dwellings and the public houses, that tower in their grandeur and strength far above it. There may be circumstances to justify for a time, this disparity; but if it exist and is perpetuated because the people care less about the house of God, than they do about their own houses, as was the case with the Jews, then is it

an evidence of an ignorant and low appreciation of the true interest of religion in that community.

You will see from these remarks, that I do not hold that expensive and magnificent houses of worship should be erected everywhere, but only that they should correspond with the outward condition of the people for whose particular benefit they are built.

The second temple bore no comparison with the first, in point of richness and beauty, because the people had been impoverished by a desolating war, and the rigours of a long captivity. The rude log cabin, erected for the worship of God, is as appropriate to some conditions of society in the West, and as expressive of the high and just value which they place upon the gospel of Christ, as is the gorgeous temple that points its spire to heaven amidst the splendid palaces of a city. It may be far more so. And, it may levy a larger tax upon the ability of the poor, to furnish even such a building, than would be imposed upon the rich in erecting the most expensive temple for the worship of God.

This then, I regard as the general rule by which expenditures in erecting a house for the worship of God, should be regulated. The structure should be sufficiently large and commodious to accommodate all who from necessity or preference may resort to it regularly on the Lord's day, for his worship; and it should be finished in a style not only to render it comfortable, but to make it an object of con-

spicuous interest to the whole community, and a true index of the comparative estimate which the people place upon their own dwellings and the house of God. It should not be gorgeous: it should not be so elegant and costly that the people shall admire it more than they do the sacred rites and privileges which it was designed to furnish. But it should be such a one as the combined resources of a whole society are well able to erect, and as will indicate a generous and large concern for the great interests of religion.

2. And this leads me to remark secondly, that it ought to be rendered as attractive by its architectural beauty without, and by its well-appointed arrangements within, as is consistent with the sacred and holy purposes which it is designed to subserve.

Although the sanctuary of God is always beautiful and lovely in the estimation of the pious heart, because of the sacred privileges which it affords, yet to other minds whom we are concerned to bring to this sacred place, the house may wear an aspect so desolate and gloomy and repulsive, as to drive them in disgust from its doors. There is a principle in our nature which leads us to accord our admiration to that which is fitting and appropriate and beautiful,—while, on the other hand, their opposites necessarily create a measure of disgust. This principle is not to be contemned or overlooked, especially in a case where we are con-

cerned to do everything not inconsistent with truth and justice, to win the attention of all classes, and draw them, if possible, to the house of prayer.

You are not ignorant, my hearers, of the mighty influence exerted through this medium, upon the members of the Catholic Church. Taking advantage of this principle, they have erected in all the larger towns, both of the East and the West, the most imposing and costly edifices. Although in the decorations of their churches every law of Christian simplicity is frequently violated, and the great ends of Christian worship wholly perverted, yet in the grandeur, and amplitude, and massive strength, and rich adornings of their houses of worship, they secure the great end which they have in view, which is, to throw out an influence which shall attract the multitude to their idolatrous altars, and bind their hearts to the house and the place, if not to the religion.

The temple of Solomon, though not one of the largest, was yet one of the most beautiful and costly structures ever erected. It was loved by the Jew for its own sake, as well as for the sake of its divine appointments and privileges. In the midst of the overwhelming calamities of a long and dreary captivity, he never forgot that house. It was an object of his constant and most tender remembrance. Hence, when pleading with God for a mitigation of the sufferings of their captive state, and reminding him of the dreadful calamities that



had come upon them, they use this touching language, in reference to their beloved temple,—“Our holy and our *beautiful* house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste.” How sweet to them in their captivity were the recollections of their *beautiful* house, and their *pleasant* things!

So, when the foundations of the second temple came to be laid, the ancient men who had seen the first house in its glory, and remembered its magnificence and beauty, are said to have “wept with a loud voice,” because of the inferiority of the structure that was about to take its place.

No associations are more powerful or more indestructible than those which bind our remembrances to the house of God. They cleave to us amidst all the changes of life, and never forsake us to our latest day. The image of that house whose porch and aisles the feet of our childhood and youth were wont to tread;—its form and size and position; its desk, and gallery, and seats; the image of the whole is painted vividly upon our memories, and always rises to our view, on the slightest recurrence of our minds to the scenes of our early days. And these associations often bring to our remembrance the instructions which distilled from the lips of the venerable man of God, who occupied that sacred desk: and amidst the follies and the waywardness of after life, they are sometimes brought to our recollection with a vividness and power that arrest

our downward course, and take us to the foot of the cross.

Will you say then, that it is a matter of no consequence whether these remembrances be of *that beautiful house*, in which our fathers praised God, and of those *pleasant things*, which they were wont to enjoy in the appointments and privileges of the house of prayer; or of some uncouth, uncomfortable, gloomy, dilapidated building, upon which our childish eyes were never fixed but with dread and disgust? Surely no man can say this, that knows anything of the laws by which the human mind is controlled, or that cares anything for the religious impressions and prejudices of early life.

3. But I remark again, that when it becomes necessary to erect a house for the worship of God, the people should well consider the character of the Being to whom it is to be consecrated; and take care that the structure be such a one as they will not be ashamed to present to Him as an expression of their gratitude and love.

If we consider the character of God, his divine majesty and glory, his infinite condescension and grace, and how he has noticed us, and lavished upon us blessings of untold value, of uncomputed worth, can we think that any offering we can make him will be worthy of his acceptance, or adequately express our sense of the vast debt of gratitude which we owe to him? What a sense of the awful majesty and the infinite glory of God

had Solomon, when he exclaimed,—“ But will God in very deed dwell with man on the earth? Behold heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!”

But God does dwell in very deed with men upon the earth. The temple is hallowed with his presence: the divine Shechinah rests in the sanctuary. Is it so? Is this the condescension of God, and shall we consecrate, as his habitation, some poor and worthless structure, inferior to that in which we ourselves dwell?

Who can wonder at the liberality of the people of Israel, when David called upon them for contributions to build a temple to the God of heaven. They gave a hundred thousand talents of gold; a thousand thousand talents of silver: and of brass and iron without weight; for its abundance. This, according to every computation of the value of the talent, was an incredible amount, exceeding the sum of millions. But in their estimation it could not build a house too good for God. And when this temple came to be rebuilt, a third time, under the auspices of Herod, it is described as having been a structure of surpassing splendour and richness. “ It was built of white marble, exquisitely wrought, and with stones of large dimensions, some of them twenty-five cubits long, eight cubits high, and twelve cubits thick:”—(a cubit was about twenty-two inches.) “ Its appearance,” says Jose-

phus, "had everything that could strike the mind and astonish the sight; for it was on every side covered with solid plates of gold, so that when the sun rose upon it, it reflected such a strong and dazzling effulgence, that the eye of the beholder was obliged to turn away from it, being no more able to sustain its radiance than the splendour of the sun."

I know, my brethren, that this is not an example for us, and that such a vast expenditure in building a house for the worship of God at this day, would but illy comport with the simple character and spiritual nature of the ordinances of the Christian Church. Yet, keeping within the scope of this simplicity, and adhering to the grand designs to be attained in erecting a house for the worship of God, would you even then, make the habitation of his presence and glory any other than beautiful and rich and large, according to the ability of those who were to enjoy its benefits? Who is more worthy than God to receive the first and richest tribute of our means and of our hearts? To whom do we owe more? and who for majesty and excellence can be compared with him?

I know that some are in the habit of considering a house of worship as having no relations to any but the worshippers,—as having nothing to do with the honour of God,—and that therefore no reference is to be had in its construction to anything beyond the accommodation of the people.

But is this the view entertained by any true friend of God! Is the house which we build as a sanctuary for Jehovah, and dedicate to his glorious name, to have no influence upon the sentiments which others may entertain of the God that we worship?—none on the estimate which they may form of the religion which dictated such an offering to him? Surely if the offerings which we make to God are any index to the sentiments which we cherish towards him, then it cannot be otherwise than injurious to his honour, to present to him such gifts as are indicative only of a low appreciation of his glory, and of the obligation which his benefits have imposed.

This is the reason why the people of Israel were forbidden to offer to God that which cost them nothing: the lame, and the halt, and the blind; and it was the ground of David's joy, when he saw the people contributing so willingly and largely for the building of the house of God. "Then the people rejoiced for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord; and David, the king, also rejoiced with great joy." "But who am I, said that great monarch, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." Ah! yes, the offerings which we make to God may well be free and large, since the ability to make them comes from him, and all be-



longs to him. Let me now invite your attention to a few closing remarks.

1. From what has been said in this discourse it is entirely obvious that we owe primarily to the sanctuary, the intelligence, the refinement, and the good order which prevail in Christian communities, and the security of life and property which we enjoy. These all are wanting where the Sabbath and the house of God are not found. And the Sabbath would soon be blotted out, but for the sanctuary and its sacred convocations. Who then ever overestimated the value of the house of God? Who ever thought too highly of its influence upon any interest of our existence, secular or spiritual?

2. Again: Let it not be thought from what has been said, that I would recommend extravagant expenditures in building a house for the worship of our God. This, I verily believe, would be both injurious to us and offensive to God. I would have everything pertaining to such a structure simple and chaste, but, if the ability of the people permitted, rich and commodious.

The amount, then, of all that I have to say upon this point is this: that the building should be suitable to the circumstances of the people, and honourable to God.

3. I remark, thirdly: That to accomplish successfully a work of such magnitude, the utmost harmony is demanded: a perfect union of views and efforts.

Divided counsels always tend to weakness and ruin. They have been the bane and overthrow of many a powerful church, and of many a strong kingdom.

Scarcely any occasions of discussion and disunion, in ecclesiastical bodies, have ever been so frequent or so calamitous as those which have originated in fixing the precise locality of the house of God. Where selfish views and feelings have been permitted to bear sway, they have ruled with a rod of iron, and, regardless of consequences, have pursued their object, to the destruction of interests which a century could not repair. But so far as I have ever learned, these divisions when they have finished their work of ruin, have been followed, invariably, by deep, bitter, and unavailing regrets; and in repeated instances, the calamities resulting from them have passed on, in their weight, through several successive generations. Let me entreat you, as you value the peace of yourselves and your children, as you regard the honour of Christ, or the well-being of his church, set up no tenacious or selfish views on this subject. In a congregation of two or three hundred families, it is impossible that each man should have the church at his own door. In this great matter, you are to be governed, not by considerations of personal convenience, nor by laws of taste, nor by any local or sectional interest, but solely by a paramount regard to the greatest good of all concerned, and the glory of

God. Let this principle govern you, and divided counsels will be unknown, and God will prosper you.

4. Again: From what has been said it is obvious, that nothing but the spirit of an enlightened and enlarged liberality, will be equal to the demands of such an emergency:—the erection of a house to be consecrated to the worship of Jehovah.

It is not by estimating the ability to contribute which *others* may possess,—of which, by the way, we in general know far less than we assume to know,—nor by fixing the precise amount which we suppose *they* ought to give, that a house worthy to be a sanctuary for God is to be built; but it is by coming up to *our own* duty with a generous heart, and a high sense of the value of our privileges, and of our solemn responsibility to our Maker, and manfully doing our work, without taking the gauge of others, that this undertaking is to be accomplished.

Nor shall we prepare a house, suitable to be presented to God as a token of our gratitude, and an offering of our hearts, if we imagine that our contributions are not to be so large as to put us to some inconvenience to pay them, and to involve some self-denial. He that intends to do no more than is entirely consistent with the unimpaired and growing strength of his own fortunes, and to give only what he can spare without inconvenience, or trouble, or self-denial, is not at all worthy to

have a hand in a work like this, and ought to take up his abode in some place where churches are never to be built. But these, I know, are not the views and feelings entertained by the members of this congregation. You have generous and liberal hearts, every way equal to the emergency, should God prosper you; you need only to be warned against the spirit of division and disunion, which can defeat the best intentions of the most cheerful and large-hearted liberality.

5. But I remark, finally, that the condescension of God, in recording his name in temples made with hands, and in permitting himself there to be sought and worshipped, by his sinful creatures, ought to excite our highest wonder, and gratitude, and love, for ever. Well may we adopt the language of the divine poet, and exclaim—

“Thy favours, Lord, surprise our souls;  
Will the Eternal dwell with us?  
What canst thou find beneath the poles,  
To tempt thy chariot downward thus?”

“Still might he fill his starry throne  
And please his ears with Gabriel’s songs;  
But the heavenly Majesty comes down,  
And bows to hearken to our tongues.”

Can we witness this condescension, and not hasten with eager and delighted hearts to give to God the strongest testimonies of our gratitude and love? Shall we witness this condescension, and not furnish to our glorious King the best abode which our poor hands can build for him? Shall we know this

truth, and not feel it to be a privilege above all price,—never to be slighted or misimproved,—that we may go to God's house, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple? Well might the king of Israel exclaim—"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord God of hosts, my soul thirsteth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord." It was here that he received the council of God, and saw the visible glory of the Shechinah.

Ah, this it is that constitutes the highest beauty, and the best adorning of the house of God. It is his glorious presence; the pervading energy of his quickening spirit. O then, let us seek this as our highest joy. Then shall we be prepared to say of any and every place where we may worship God: "Surely this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."



## SERMON IV.

### THE GOSPEL TESTED BY EXPERIENCE.

“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”—JOHN 7 : 17.

THE great question whether the gospel of Christ be a divine revelation or only an imposture, is one of infinite importance. It equally concerns the high and the low, the learned and the ignorant, to have satisfactory proof of its character. Although the teachings of Christ embrace ideas of incomprehensible magnitude and depth, yet, they are invariably characterized by a clearness and simplicity that adapt them to the minds of all. The most ignorant find in them no obscurity, but what is inseparable from the nature of the subject. Yet the preliminary question, of the divine authority of the record, would render useless and void this beautiful adaptation of style, were not the evidence by which it is to be decided, equally accessible to all. Now, in this respect, the gospel is distinguished from every other work of antiquity. Their authenticity can be ascertained only by the most learned and elaborate investigations. To these the great mass of mankind are wholly incompetent.

But the Author of the gospel rests the truth and the divine authority of his doctrine with the experience of men. There is no test so satisfactory or of such universal application as this. It is the evidence of consciousness, of personal knowledge, of profound personal experience; and any man that possesses an honest heart, and a mind capable of comprehending the simplest truth, may at once put himself in possession of this evidence.

It is, then, to every man's experience that Christ commits the question of the truth and the divine origin of his doctrine. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." How admirable is this feature of our divine religion, rendering its adaptation to all classes and conditions of men perfect and complete. It is in itself an evidence of the divine origin of the Scriptures.

My object in this discourse will be, to show you THE DECISIVE AND SATISFACTORY NATURE OF THE TEST TO WHICH OUR SAVIOUR HERE APPEALS FOR THE TRUTH OF HIS DOCTRINE.

Now, what is it "to do the will of God" but to yield an honest and profound obedience to all his sacred demands? What is it but to act and live under a supreme regard for the authority, and love for the character of God? It is a merging of our will in his, and a subjection of all our powers and faculties to his supreme control. There can be no obscurity upon this point. Men know what it is to

do the will of God. They know they cannot yield to every impulse of habit, or self-love, or popular sentiment, and yet be obedient to God. In short, they cannot be ignorant, that to render their experience a faithful and accurate test of the divine authority and power of Christ's doctrine, they must concede to it the authority of an imperative law, and render to it a sincere homage and obedience. If they will do this, they will certainly ascertain,—

I. First: Whether the gospel be adapted to their constitutional susceptibilities and wants. If it be, it is, in this respect, distinguished from all human systems, and shows its author to have had such a knowledge of man as man never had of himself. It is of the rational and moral nature of man that I now speak. As a being endowed with intelligence and reason, we find him for ever aspiring to overleap those barriers of knowledge to which the circumstances of his present condition confine him. He is restless to survey the future; eager for a minute acquaintance with the persons and scenes that may have an existence in another state; and anxious especially to know what is to be the condition of his own being after death. These are the spontaneous and irrepressible aspirations of his nature. They are common to man, and are therefore part and parcel of his original constitution.

Now, where is the human production that meets these peculiar tendencies and workings of our nature? that discloses to our view future scenes and

future worlds in a way to satisfy these desires, and to lead the spirit to rest with sweet and delighted confidence upon the communication? It exists nowhere. No human mind has ever given birth to such a production: and no combination of skill or wisdom or power has ever been able to strike out a path through which these unexplored scenes and worlds might be visited. "The world by wisdom knew not God." But look, now, into the doctrine of Christ,—into the blessed gospel which he has given us, and see how it sweeps away the darkness that had been impenetrable to our vision, and discloses to our sight the solemn and grand realities of the future state. Here is presented the very knowledge after which the human spirit had so panted and struggled. Here are authentic responses to its inquiries about the future. Here are the boundless views which it had so impatiently sought to enjoy. All is grand and glorious and illimitable, consonant in every point and feature to the demands of reason; and yielding a perfect satisfaction to every legitimate desire. The soul here finds rest: it can ask for no wider field in which to disport itself, nor brighter paths in which to roam among the unseen worlds, nor nobler objects with which to satisfy its large desires. Where, in all time, have these high breathings of our nature, these inextinguishable passions and pantings of the spirit, found repose but in the glorious revelation of Jesus Christ?

But there are other demands of our nature which require to be satisfied, and which the world, upon thorough trial, has been found incompetent to meet.

Look at the passion of hope. Does it not spring eternal in the human breast? Where is the bosom that never felt its animating and elastic power? Where the heart that never throbbed under its genial and impulsive influence? It is one of the distinctive and elementary principles of our nature, and can no more be separated from the soul than can the attribute of reason or volition. But where on earth does it ever find an object that has the power to fulfil its promises to the heart, or upon which it can rest with any certainty of a full fruition? Is it not always roaming from scene to scene, and passing on from object to object,—its way all along strewn with broken promises, and disappointed expectations?

Take any object which the world contains,—dominion, riches, honours, learning,—and endeavour to make it the resting-place of hope, the terminus beyond which it shall not roam, and can you accomplish the object? Will it divest the heart of its misgivings and fears, and inspire it with contentment? No, no. There is no stability in these objects, and if there were, the soul knows very well that they are wanting in magnitude and intrinsic worth. It can never realize, in these things, the bright visions which hope has created. But are



they not all changeful and fluctuating, doomed to decay and extinction? Even our kindred and friends, the dearest treasures of the heart, what certain promises can hope make us of joys from intercourse with them? They sicken and die.

And when she plumes her wings for a flight to other worlds, to search out objects of higher interest and more enduring worth, who shall light her way, and who shall conduct her to those living fountains where sparkle the waters of life? If she turns away from the gospel of Christ, an impenetrable veil of darkness will shroud those worlds from her view, and hide all things future from her sight.

But now open the pages of that blessed volume, and what objects of grandeur and glory stand revealed to our knowledge. Who that learns from this volume who God is, and what are the resources of his empire, can give too wide a grasp to hope? Who that reposes his confidence here, can ever be disappointed? We feel secure, and we know that the final fruition shall infinitely surpass all that the most comprehensive hope in God has ever promised. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that only, which gives adequate scope and security to the operations of this principle of our nature.

There is still another faculty with which we are endowed that is subjected to a state of thralldom and suffering from which no human power or skill has ever been able to deliver it,—I mean con-

science. This is the faculty by which we acquire a knowledge of our moral condition, and are made alive to the stings and reproaches of guilt. It is essential to the existence of moral responsibility, and is therefore an attribute of every rational being. Now, where is the human heart that has not groaned under a sense of delinquency? that has not surveyed its relations to a superior Being, with awful premonitions of judgment? There are injured rights, there are perverted privileges, and violated obligations, and ruptured ties that demand retributive awards from a just God. The sinner must meet the account. He cannot fly from the jurisdiction of the Almighty. He cannot evade the rigid scrutiny, nor avert the final sentence of that trial. Conscience warns him of this, and forestalls his doom.

What shall he do? How can he remove this guilt; how allay these fears? Has the wisdom of man ever invented any method by which the conscience of the transgressor might be righteously pacified, so that the stings of guilt should be taken away, and the heart be assured of an indemnity against the demands of infinite justice?

This is a grand problem, upon which the wisdom of the wise has been employed in every age. It has laboured with a consuming zeal, to invent some method by which a sinner might be pardoned, and an offended God be placated. It is this which has given rise to every system of heathen philosophy,

and to every idolatrous rite of pagan worship. This it is, that has prescribed the bloody sacrifices of the heathen altars, and all the self-inflicted tortures to which these victims of a blind superstition were subject. In short, there does not exist a single form of corrupted Christianity, from the monstrous perversions of Romanism down to the most nice and accurate counterfeit of the true religion, that has not sprung from this intention and aim. The object of the whole has been to appease God, and secure peace to the conscience.

But, has one of these plans succeeded? Have they enlightened and purified the guilty conscience, while they have professed to allay its fears and raise its hopes? There never was an instance in which a votary of any one of these systems was able to meet the king of terrors with a calm and intelligent composure, or to throw a glance up to the throne of God, without striking fear to the heart. I am aware that the conscience may be educated to a peaceful and quiet repose in a system of error; and that it may even be thrown into a condition of dead insensibility, by a long neglect of its warnings and reproofs; but even in these cases, there is a rayless gloom hanging over the grave, and dark, boding clouds that gather around the judgment-seat, that make the spirit tremble, as it launches away from the shores of time. It starts up from its deep slumbers at the sound of that voice that summons it away.

Now, for a moment, turn your attention to the great remedy for a diseased and troubled conscience, which the gospel of Christ brings to our knowledge.

It is a remedy not found in the repeal of the law that has been transgressed, or in the demise or change of the power that made it. Both the law and the Lawgiver retain their glorious prerogatives unimpaired, and not a principle of justice or a particle of right is ever to be sacrificed. But yet, a remedy has been provided for the transgressor, and one which, while it forgives him the debt, loads him with favours infinite.

God has furnished a substitute, an adequate substitute, to bear the curse in the sinner's stead, and on his behalf, to make due reparation to the violated law. Christ has died, not for himself, but for us; not for his own sins, but for ours; "the just for the unjust."

The efficacy of the propitiatory offering consisted in this,—that the Victim was the Lawgiver, the original source of authority and power, and holding by underived and undisputed right, the dominion of the universe.

This is the Being who came and assumed our responsibilities and discharged our debt; and it is to his sacrifice that the gospel points the dying sinner for relief. It bids him look to his cross; to come and lave himself in the crimson stream that issued from his wounds; and never, no never, did

a weary burdened spirit come to this blessed fountain, but it obtained relief.

The open testimony of a mighty crowd of witnesses has been given to this point. They have tested the efficacy of this remedy. Even those who have come all crimsoned with guilt, and sinking under apprehensions of wrath, have returned exulting in the joy of pardon. They have declared this experience to the world, and over and over again has its truth been sealed with blood.

Those who have thus been attracted to the cross, and by its power been absolved from the guilt of their sins, have found its efficacy adequate to the most trying emergencies. It has inspired the heart with courage for the final conflict, and often rendered the dying hour like the golden sunset of a sweet summer's day,—full of tranquil beauty and of soft repose. And when the skies have parted, and opened full on the view of the ascending spirit, the throne of judgment, and all the dread realities of the eternal state, it has been undismayed, and hastened to mingle in the solemn and joyous scenes.

O who shall deny that a system which meets the moral necessities of man like this, with an adaptedness so complete, and an efficacy so sovereign, is from God? Of the unnumbered millions who have made trial of its power to give peace to the troubled and foreboding conscience, not one has failed to acknowledge it to be divine.



II. But, let us pass, now, to consider another distinct proof of the divine origin and power of Christ's doctrine, which those will possess who do the will of God. They will know from their own experience, whether its tendencies be elevating or not.

Man is a grovelling creature. He lives for the world. His desires and hopes and aims are all restricted to the present life, and are never thrown up heavenward, till he yields to the power of Christ's doctrine. He is averse to all communion with objects and scenes that exist beyond the grave. And conversant as he is only with those which are trifling and evanescent, all his habits and passions and views and aims are moulded to the small patterns of earthly things.

But is it thus with the soul that has given entertainment to the doctrine of Christ, and yielded to its power? Where are its affections? Are they not placed upon God? Where are its treasures? Are they not in heaven? And the objects that fill its vision, are they not such as expand and subliminate and transport its powers? These objects are all intrinsically glorious; of infinite purity, grandeur, and duration.

Can the mind of man grasp these things, and throw around them the warm and gushing sympathies of the heart, and not have the whole moral being refined, and exalted, and aggrandized by the alliance?

Surely it is an easy thing to decide whether under the government of Christ's law and the influence of his doctrine, we have sublimer views, and purer affections, and richer joys, and more glorious hopes, than we were wont to possess anterior to our experience of the truth.

III. But I hasten to remark, again, that if we will "do the will of God," we may readily ascertain whether our actual experience harmonizes with the representations of God's word. The Scriptures affirm that certain results will follow a reception of Christ's doctrine, and they minutely describe the effect which it is to have upon the heart and life. If the results are found to be not only in themselves glorious, but to correspond perfectly with the prediction, the presumption is that the doctrine is divine.

What does the gospel affirm shall be the heart's experience, when subjected to the governing influence of Christ's doctrine? What, but that it shall be the home of all the sweet charities of life?—the abode of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith?

Has he not promised to give us strength in our weakness, light in our darkness, joy in our sorrows, hope in our distresses, and victory in our conflicts? What has he said of the upward path of the Christian, but that it shall shine brighter and brighter, unto the perfect day? What of his end, but that it shall be peace and triumph?

He has nowhere said that the Christian shall be exempt from trials and adversities; but on the other hand has assured him that he has been chosen in the furnace of afflictions, and that in the world he shall have tribulation.

But while the promise leaves him to the buffetings and shocks of outward calamities, it secures fortitude, and strength, and gladness to the heart within. And this renders his experience a paradox: "We are troubled on every side," says the Apostle, "yet not distressed: we are perplexed, but not in despair: persecuted, but not forsaken: cast down, but not destroyed." And again he says:—"As dying, and behold we live: as chastened, and not killed: as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."

Such is the Christian's experience. While the rude storms of adversity are rising and raging without, the calm sunshine of peace, and hope, and joy is shedding its sweet influence upon the spirit within. And when the dying conflict comes on, and the fierce terrors and sharp agonies of the mortal strife are felt in all the powers, the soul, linked in its hopes and sympathies to the unseen world, rises serene and joyful above the troubled scenes, and exults to descry from afar the beaming glories of its blessed abode.

Take now, my hearers, any point in the Christian's experience, look at him at any period of his course, or under any of the vicissitudes of his state;

and you shall find a substantial correspondence between his history as written out in the word of God, and as traced in the records of his life on earth. Imperfections are indeed seen everywhere, blotting the page of his history : but these are discrepancies, not with the portraiture which God has given us of his character, but only with the demands which he has made upon his obedience in his law. The one tells us what he really is, the other, what of right he ought to be. His life meets the description, but falls far short of the demand.

Now, my hearers, will you allow competent witnesses in this case to testify? Will you believe those who speak out the simple language of a plain experience, with no motive to deceive, and no power to secure that uniformity which characterizes the evidence? Listen then to the ten thousand voices of the martyrs as they come down to us from their distant path, proclaiming that for them to live was Christ, and to die was gain ; that living and dying they had an experience of the truth and power of Christ's doctrine that proved it to be divine, and to which they set the seal of their blood.

Listen also to the testimony of the ten thousand times ten thousand, who in every age and nation have declared that their personal experience was an exact fulfilment of the promises of God, and

who in the matter of their individual consciousness could not have been deceived. Are all the witnesses in this great company to be charged with fraud and imposture, or to be suspected of delusion? Many of the brightest names that adorn the pages of history, are found in this catalogue. And besides, why is it, that neither reproaches, nor imprisonments, nor stripes, nor confiscations, nor the fears of death, nor the sufferings of martyrdom, have ever been able to dispel their delusion, or to dissolve their frauds?

And now, at this present day, what a cloud of witnesses for the testimony of Jesus is seen filling the earth with its brightening train? And among the myriads of the throng, there is not even one who has enjoyed the happy experience of those who faithfully do the will of God, that would not sooner die than forswear that experience. Its happy and exact coincidence with the recorded promises and truthful delineations of the word of God, has left to each no room to doubt the divine origin of the doctrine of Christ.

But who are they that call in question the truth of this testimony? Those, and only those, who from the nature of the case are incompetent to judge. This is a matter, not of speculation, nor of opinion, nor of doubtful historical evidence. It rests entirely with the conscious experience of those who do the will of God. This experience is predicable of no other class,—it is claimed for no other;



and it is from the nature of the case impossible that it should belong to any other. Shall those, then, who have never had this experience, be permitted to call in question the truth of those who have? Shall they who have never done the will of God, be allowed to decide what has been the experience of those who have done that will? Yet such is the position taken by every one who doubts the divine origin and power of the gospel of Christ. His conduct is like that of the man who, because he has always lived in the torrid, denies that water ever congeals in the frigid zone. Or like him who, though dying of disease, denies before trial the efficacy of a remedy, which thousands of others have proved and found to be of sovereign virtue in cases just like his own.

You are to observe, my friends, that this is a denial not of what is simply unknown to both the parties interested—this would be sufficiently arrogant to characterize any measure of ignorance; for what reason has a man either to affirm or deny, in a case where he has no knowledge?—but it is a denial by the party that is confessedly ignorant, of what is matter of actual knowledge and experience with the other party. Can impudence be carried farther than this? Yet this is the real foundation of all that has ever been either said or written against Christianity. It is a conflict of ignorance with knowledge; the groundless assumptions of impudence on one side, against the brightest de-

monstrations of experience on the other. And will any one of you, my hearers, suffer yourselves to be made the dupe of an influence like this—to be kept aloof from the true test of the Christian doctrine, and wheedled along in your ignorant and perilous security, to the end of your probation? I beg of you to consider what response you will give at the bar of God, when it is demanded why you was a rejecter of Christ's doctrine, and why you lived and died in ignorance of its renewing and sanctifying power? Will you then enter the plea, that though the evidence essential to a conviction of the truth was within the reach of those who had leisure and learning, yet it was inaccessible to you? But you will certainly remember then, if you refuse to consider it now, both that the great mass of Christ's disciples have in every age been taken, not from the ranks of the learned, or the mighty, or the noble, but from those of the poor and the ignorant, and also that Christ subjected the truth of his doctrine to the test, not of learning but of honesty; not of speculation and research, but of candour and experience. You will certainly then remember the words of Christ: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine," &c.

Be sure, then, you will be covered with speechless confusion at the bar of God, if when you appear you are obliged to confess, that you lived and died in ignorance of the divine power of Christ's

doctrine; and that you had never troubled yourself to prove it either true or false by the proper test.

What can you say for your candour, even now, when you are every day, by your conduct, confronting the testimony of millions on topics where they speak from experience, and you only from conjecture? What for your honesty, when you declare that to be false which others know to be true, and which you have refused to decide, by the only proper test, to be either true or false?

Are you to live down the religion of Jesus in this manner, and then to go to the bar of God with a lie in your right hand, and still escape conviction and condemnation? Vain hope. Vain hope.

How can you pursue a course so unjust to religion, and, at the same time, so ruinous to yourself? Will you thus overthrow every law of truth, and trample under foot every demand of honesty? Your sins, in this matter, go beforehand unto judgment. Your destiny is written in lines of fire on the incrustations of a guilty conscience.

Take what course you may, invent what tests you will, to secure the blessings of the gospel, and to determine whether it be from heaven or not, you can obtain neither of these ends, till you begin heartily to obey and do the will of God. And all this lingering, and indecision, and hesitating, and doubt, and fear, which you manifest to begin the work, only postpones the result, and increases the difficulties of the experiment. And I am con-

strained to say, I fear that few of you, who are now unconverted, ever will begin. But in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I here once more solemnly charge you, by all the obligations of your duty to God and to yourselves, and by all the considerations of life and of death, to treat the gospel of Christ no longer as if it were a fable, or yourselves as though you had no account to give to God,—but resolve, with an honest heart and a determined purpose, to subject at once the claims of religion to the clear and decisive test which its divine Author has proposed. “Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” This is the law by which you will be judged in the last day. And that day may open all its solemn scenes upon your view, before another Sabbath shall invite you to the house of prayer.

## SERMON V.

### ✓ LIVING EPISTLES.

“Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men.”  
2 Cor. 3: 2.

THERE were religious teachers among the Corinthians, who aspired to an envious pre-eminence over Paul. In his absence, they entered into his labours, and strove hard to supplant him in the affections of the people. To effect this end, they propagated slanderous reports respecting him, and did what they could to divest him of his apostolic character and sink him in the estimation of the church. In his second letter to them, he boldly asserts his authority as an apostle of Christ, and vindicates himself from the foul aspersions that had been cast upon him.

Among other evidences of his divine commission, he refers them to the change which had been wrought in themselves under his ministry. Previously to his labours among them, they had been involved in the deepest darkness and degradation of paganism; had no hope and were without God in the world; hateful and hating one another. Now their character and condition were both altered. They had



been turned from the service of dumb idols to the service of the living God; had forsaken the degrading vices of heathenism, and had come to enjoy the privileges and practise the duties of the blessed religion of Christ. There was a very great change in their character and circumstances, and they could attribute it to nothing but to the power of that gospel which he had preached among them, and to the divine efficacy which had accompanied its ministrations. He therefore did not need, as some others who had been among them did, letters of recommendation, either to them, or from them. "They were themselves his epistle, written in his heart, known and read of all men, forasmuch as they were manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by him, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." Here was sufficient evidence of the truth and purity and power of the doctrine which he had preached. It was all the letter of commendation which he needed. Whoever knew them in their former state, and could compare it with their present; all men, who had opportunity to know anything about the change which had been wrought in their character, would readily acknowledge that that gospel was from heaven, and that minister divinely commissioned, whose instrumentality had been employed in producing so great a change.

The doctrine of the text, then, is manifestly

this:—*The lives of sincere and faithful Christians furnish the best recommendation of the gospel, and the gospel ministry. They are the epistle commendatory, written by the Spirit of God and given to the ministers of Christ, to bear testimony to the truth and power of the gospel which they preach.*

This is the proposition which I shall endeavour now to illustrate and confirm. To do so, I must beg your attention to the following considerations.

I. The letters of commendation thus furnished, are of all testimonials the most plain and intelligible. They are credentials which everybody can read and understand. A simple child, having opportunity to observe the conduct of a Christian, can form from it a correct opinion of the nature, and tendency, and degree of his religion. He may know all about its practical influence; judge correctly whether it exerts any refining power upon his heart; whether it subdues and controls the passions, whether it inspires with love to God and man,—in short, whether it makes one better or worse, or leaves him just where it found him, in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

He knows perfectly well that we never “gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles.” It would be in vain that you assured him the religion revealed in the Bible was divine, if he saw that all those who embraced it had been made worse by doing so. And, on the other hand, if he saw its professors strictly conforming their conduct to its great

principles, acting under the constant influence of its motives, and exhibiting the spirit which it inculcates, he would conclude, at once, that there was a sovereign efficacy and divine reality in it.

You might write volumes on the subject, and after all you could not convince him, that the man who acted like a thief was not a thief. Just so in reference to the Christian. If he saw him act like a Christian, if he perceived that he was greatly altered from what he once was, and that from being a profane, thoughtless, hardened sinner, he had become an humble, penitent, conscientious follower of Christ; if he saw that he had become indifferent to the things of the world, and bent all his energies to prepare himself for the scenes and rewards of the eternal state; if he saw that the fear of the all-seeing God was continually before his eyes, and that under the influence of the gospel he had become a benevolent, humble, praying man; in short, if he saw him, in endeavouring to purify himself even as God is pure, steadily resisting the temptations by which the multitude all around him were borne downward rapidly to the gulf;—could he doubt at all whether that man was a Christian, or whether there were an elevating, sanctifying, almighty power in his religion? Could all the books and sermons in the world make the thing so clear to him as the life of this Christian? These results are to be attributed to religion, as every one knows. They flow from a heart that has been

melted and subdued and purified by the gospel of Christ.

The lives of Christians do, therefore, furnish a comment upon the nature and tendency of religion, that is perfectly plain to be understood. They constitute an epistle of commendation for religion and its ministers, "known," as well as read "of all men."

II. In the second place, I remark concerning this living epistle, that it is not only perfectly plain and intelligible, but it attracts universal attention. It is "read of all men." The Christian when he goes out may leave his Bible on the shelf, and no eye may see it till he returns again. But he takes his character with him, and the scrutinizing glance of a thousand eyes may be upon it, before he revisits his home. He is "a spectacle to angels and to men." He is continually unfolding his personal character, and exhibiting the spirit of his religion to the world. And there is an inquisitive, penetrating eye fixed upon him, and he says nothing, and does nothing, but it constitutes a page in the epistle, known and read of all men with whom he has intercourse. If he possess an humble, self-denying spirit, friends and enemies will know it. If he have faith to raise him above the world, and to give him the victory over it, that will be known too. If Christ be the object of his supreme affection, and the welfare of immortal souls awake the solicitude of his mind, that also will be seen.

If he be a man of prayer, it cannot be concealed. The Christian is a walking, living, commentary on the Scriptures. He is constantly interpreting and inculcating their truths upon all around him, and the minds of men are awake to read the lessons which he imparts. Many are looking to have him confirm their scepticism, and embolden them in a rejection of the gospel. They watch for his halting. They are glad to have occasion to read, in this living epistle, a page that shall strengthen their doubts of the truth of religion, and dissipate the gloomy but well-grounded fears which they have of a suffering eternity. All fix their eye upon him, and he is every moment either impairing or deepening the impressions which divine truth has made upon the hearts of sinners.

In most communities there may be found some who cannot read a letter written on paper. There are none, however, who cannot read one written on the fleshly tables of the heart. Whoever has eyes and reason, whether he have any learning or not, can read the letters of commendation for the gospel which are written in the lives of Christians. The old and the young, the learned and the ignorant, all classes know enough to pick out a Christian from the mass of society, and to form a right opinion of his character. And although there is a strong and almost invincible propensity in many unregenerate men to conclude against religion, under all circumstances, yet the light of a pure and



holy example is such as to make friends of reason and conscience everywhere.

Some men are indifferent to books. They will not read them, let them be ever so interesting and instructive. And as to the Bible, the best of books, there is an absolute aversion in the minds of unregenerate men to what it contains. This leads many of them to decline all intercourse with the heavenly oracles, and the Bible is a book which they never open from month to month.

The daily walk and conversation of the Christian, however, is a book which he cannot use in this way. He must read it, or else have no intercourse with Christians. He cannot get rid of it. And one would think he had no aversion to study it, who observed how many hard and scandalous sentences he picked up out of it in the course of the year. There is no better evidence of the interest which he takes in perusing this book, than we have in the accuracy and minuteness with which he is observed to have noted every fault and blemish in the Christian character. He will refer to these as evidences against religion, with more familiarity, and often with far greater interest, than the Christian does to his Bible for proof of his faith. He knows, for it is written in imperishable characters on the tablet of his memory, when the Christian violated the Sabbath, when he spoke unadvisedly with his lips, when he overreached his neighbour, when he cast off the fear of

God and subordinated the interests of religion to his own gainful pursuits. He has marked all the grosser aberrations of his conduct, and abated just so much from the importance and vitality of his religion. This note-taking is going on every day, and among all classes, and the Christian's life becomes in this way "an epistle known and read of all men."

III. I remark, again, concerning this living letter, that the things which it relates are credible;—they are generally believed.

For many reasons, it is impossible to credit everything that is verbally reported. Men may not be correctly informed, or they may be swayed by interest to distort and garble the truth. But a man's conduct will report things that are credible. It generally speaks a language that is true to the sentiments of the heart. "As face answereth to face in water, so the heart of man to man,"—the man will possess a character corresponding with his heart. The conduct of the external will exactly agree with the character of the internal man. A man may deceive you, it is true. He may assume a false character, and disguise the heart from your sight. But the veil will in due time be penetrated. He will not always keep the bow bent. It will return at length to its natural position. The man who makes money his God, will betray the ruling passion of his heart. You will certainly see him, sooner or later, prostrate at the feet of his

idol. The predominant moral features of the mind must all be traced in lines of light on the external character, at one time or another.

If a man be totally destitute of the fear of God, he will let you know it. His atheism will discover itself in ten thousand different ways, however much he may try to conceal it. It will stamp its terrible features upon his whole character. So, also, if a man heartily love God, the fact cannot be concealed. It will give a sublime and heavenly aspect to his conduct. A man of prayer may be known on the slightest acquaintance. The temper of his mind, the tone of his spirit, will indicate it not less distinctly than the language of his lips. No maxim is more true than the scriptural one, "A tree is known by its fruit."

It is right, then, to remark, that a Christian's conduct, the tenor of his life, is commonly taken to be a practical comment upon his religion; an illustration of its efficacy upon the human character. It is so understood, so taken; and a great proportion of the impenitent world actually make up, what proves to be their final decision, on this ground alone. They will have it that there is nothing in religion worthy their attention, if they find its professors living as they used to live, "after the course of this world." It is an unrighteous thing, indeed, to impute to religion what originates solely in a want of it. But this men do when they charge the faults of Christians upon their

religion. They have, however, a right to expect that those who profess to be Christians, will live like Christians: and if they could find none who did so, would have great reason to fear that human nature was absolutely incurable by any system of religion that could be made known. They ought, however, to remember that all are not Christians who profess to be, and that those who are Christians, have to struggle with the imperfections of human nature still. But, I say again, that it is on the recommendations of Christians, the epistle of commendation which they furnish in their lives, that most men are brought under the influence of religion. The transformations of character which they see it produce, the sublime effects which they see it operating upon the hearts and lives of men, the purity, peace, joy, and hope which it imparts, all impress them with the conviction that there is an amazing power and an immense importance in religion. They are uneasy under the searching light of the Christian's example, simply because they give credit to the declarations which are made in the living epistle. They cannot resist the evidence which is presented them in the life of a holy and active disciple of Christ, of the renewing energy and divine power of the gospel. This is evidence which appeals to their senses, and is incapable either of being misapprehended or misapplied. It finds its way to the convictions of all, and leaves men either to maintain a deadly conflict



with reason and conscience, or to give up the heart to the conquering, reigning influence of grace.

IV. The language of the epistles written on the fleshly tables of the heart is impressive to an extraordinary degree. It speaks to the soul, and is uttered on topics of amazing moment. The Christian, awake or asleep, active or inactive, devoted to the world or to God, is still reading in the ear of the world around him lectures on eternity. He is constantly speaking to them in a way to reach their hearts, and they see, and hear, and believe him. The language of his conduct is distinct and penetrating. Every ear hears, and every heart feels it. There is no divesting himself of this awful responsibility. He has gone up on to an eminence where he must necessarily be seen, and he has undertaken to act out religion before the world. He has distinctly told them in his profession that it is just what they see it to be in him: that they may estimate its importance, its power, its excellence by his own example. He is professedly an instance where its regenerating efficacy, and its heavenly tendencies are displayed; a subject on which it has performed its miracles of love, and wrought its wonders of grace.

Now, if he be what he professes to be, and the holy and sanctifying influences of his religion be rendered apparent in his life, the world cannot resist the conviction, that the gospel is divine, and that men must make up their minds to embrace it



or perish. One single Christian in a community, exhibiting every day the influence of that faith which overcomes the world, and the melting power of that love which is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, will do more to convince men of the excellence and necessity of religion than all the preaching in the world could do.

If they saw that this Christian had evidently taken his heart off from the world, and was ready cheerfully to sacrifice anything to the cause of holiness: that religion was, in preference to anything else, the theme of his daily conversation: and that he could not, by any artifice, be diverted from his purpose to seek the glory of God: if they saw that he scrupulously shunned every contact with sin, and was resolutely bent upon a conformity of heart and life to the law of God: if they saw that the conviction was deeply and immovably fixed in his mind, that the world was alienated from God, and that his friends and neighbours were actually involved in guilt and ruin, and must all sink into perdition, unless they should repent: if they saw this man often expostulating with his friends, and with an earnestness, and feeling, and affection that appeared as though he could not give them up, entreating them to become reconciled to God: if they saw that opposition, and insult, and universal scorn had no effect to divest him of that calm and heavenly temper, that serious and solemn purpose, those high and holy aims, with which he

had set out in the service of Christ: if, in short, they saw him denying all ungodliness and every worldly lust, and living soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present evil world: would they, could they deny that that man was a Christian, and that the gospel had become to him the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation? Could they live under the light of such an example and not be convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come? What an efficacy such an example would impart to the preaching of the word! What power it would give to the ministrations of the sanctuary! With such an epistle of commendation, my brethren, we should find an introduction to every heart. The mouths of gainsayers would be stopped, and we should have nothing to do but to stand still and see the salvation of God.

I would call your attention now to a few reflections and remarks. And—

1. How great is the responsibility resting upon professors of religion! They are the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God: not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. Such they are declared to be, and such they are understood to be. The responsibility rests with them, to teach men what religion is by their lives. They stand forth to the world as examples of its renovating power: specimens of its new creating energy; and to them the world

looks for data on which to make up its decision relative to a reception or rejection of Christ. Right or wrong, so they do, and so they will continue to do. You see, then, my brethren, what a responsibility a public profession of religion has devolved upon you. Every day you are speaking to those who will listen, and will credit what you say, and telling them just what you think about Christ and his gospel. You are addressing them in language vastly more pointed and impressive than any which words could form, and you are addressing your discourse directly to the heart, and every sentence makes an impression which no human power can efface.

Suppose, now, that you are a parent, and that you live without prayer: that your children never see you take down the Bible from the shelf, and calling them around you, read to them the words of God; suppose you never discover to them any peculiar anxiety about their souls: never talk with them on the subject of religion, never pray with them, never weep over them; suppose they discover that your attention is all taken up in providing for their welfare here, and that your anxiety about them ends with their introduction into the circles of wealth and fashion: that they hear you talk, but never about Christ, and see you plan, but never for religion: and feel, but not for their souls, and act, but not for God. Suppose they grow up under your eye, thus trained and

drilled to a love of the world and an indifference to religion, could you reasonably expect that they would live or die with any other character than that which your own example had impressed upon them? Could you reasonably indulge any other expectation, than that they would live like atheists and die like fools?

But the influence of your example is not circumscribed by these narrow limits. The eye of multitudes is upon you, and every day you are dragging a host along after you to heaven or to hell.

Suppose, then, that you are known to them as a professor of religion. They are aware what it claims from you, and what it professes to have done for you. Their eye is fastened upon you, and you are weighed in a perfect balance. They would be distressed, perhaps, to see you live as they know you ought to live; but then, they expect and claim this of you, and will, it may be, revile you if you do not. They discover, however, that you love the world just as other men do; and that you are no more inclined to turn aside from its pursuits for the worship of God and the welfare of souls, than they are. They are acquainted with the fact that to be a Christian, a man must be more concerned about the glory of God and the great interests of eternity, than he is about the things of time. But they perceive that from week to week you have no other concern apparently than to make good bar-



gains and drive a gainful traffic. You have told them that no happiness is to be compared with that which you derive from intercourse with God and his people, and that it is truly better to spend one hour in the exercises of social or private devotion, than a thousand elsewhere. On the evenings appointed for social prayer and praise, however, they find you in your shop or your dwelling, retailing your goods or amusing your family, just as you do at other times. They know it to be a primary article in your religion, that the law of God is infinitely holy and good, and that every violation of it deserves death. They see, however, that you do not scruple to violate the Sabbath when your interests may be promoted by it, at least, that you will employ others to do so.

They find that truth in your intercourse with men is no obstacle in your way to a good bargain, and that honesty is good policy only when it answers a better purpose than dishonesty.

They are aware, that where a man's treasure is there his heart will be; and that you profess to have laid up your treasure in heaven. But they see that you are as eager after riches as the miser, and seemingly as thoughtless about heaven as themselves. They are told that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. But they are with you day after day and never hear you talk of anything but buying or selling, getting rich or growing poor.



Gratitude to Christ for his dying love and his regenerating grace, is a predominant affection in the heart of the Christian. But they see no evidence of the existence of this affection in you. You are all the time seeking the things which are your own, not those which are Jesus Christ's. The immortal soul is held by you to be worth more than ten thousand worlds, and you profess to have been brought to feel this truth. But they never find you making any strenuous efforts, or any special sacrifices for its salvation. It is like pulling out an eye tooth to induce you to give a cent to those institutions whose sole object is to carry salvation to these souls; and you are seldom or never found endeavouring to persuade one to repent or accept of Christ.

Suppose now, I say, that you are a Christian of this stamp (and I hope in God there is not one here whose character has in all particulars been correctly drawn in this sketch); that this is your history; that your life is just such a one as I have described: what may we reasonably suppose will be found to have been the effect of your example in the day of judgment? Great numbers of friends, and neighbours, and relatives, have kept their eye constantly upon you, and formed their ultimate decision of the importance, reality, and excellence of religion from what they saw it to be in you. Could you reasonably anticipate any better condition in the day of judgment, than to stand at the

tribunal of God with your hands all red and your raiment dyed in the blood of souls?

If there be any force in example, if moral considerations have anything to do with the reason of men, if human nature be not as unsusceptible to impressions as a rock, such an example, such a life in a professor of religion, must inevitably bind the chains of impenitence fast upon many a sin-ruined soul. Such, my brethren, is your responsibility. You are living not for yourselves only, but for a multitude of others: for souls around you, for Christ, for eternity.

2. There has been developed in this discourse, one of the principal causes of an unfruitful ministry.

We carry with us but few epistles of commendation for our gospel, written on the fleshly tables of the heart. Ministers are sometimes no better, often worse, than the members of their flock. But I wish to speak now of the bearing which the conduct of private Christians has upon the gospel when it is faithfully preached.

This, it is obvious from what has been said, must be very direct and powerful. When the members of the church are all living examples of the efficacy and excellence of the gospel which we preach; when in preaching this gospel, we are able to say, here are examples of its power, here are evidences of its truth, here, right before your eyes, are persons on whom it has displayed its almighty and renewing

energy, who could resist our ministry, who could evade the searching light of divine truth? Every sceptic would be confounded, and every cavilling tongue put to silence. When we urged the claims of the gospel we should not be met with the taunting inquiry, "What do ye more than others?" But, we should find our way directly to the heart, and with the sword of truth burnished and bright, in the name of our Master take possession of the citadel. Thus would the word of God have free course and run and be glorified; sinners would flock in multitudes to Christ, and our preaching would always be in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

But, on the other hand, when in looking over the church we can find no bright and shining illustrations of the power of our gospel, when the living epistles which we have are either so obscure that they cannot be read, or so scandalous as to be defamatory of the gospel, how then can we preach? how can we carry our message to the conscience of the sinner? You have blocked up every avenue to his heart, and we labour in vain to lodge the arrows of conviction there. Thus you stand between the sinner and Christ, and we are obliged to face your testimony, and preach only to be confounded, and toil up a steep ascent, and wear ourselves out, and have no seals of our ministry at last! O that Christians might once see the solemn relation which their conduct holds to the gospel,

and the awful bearing which it is to have on the destiny of immortal souls. And may the Spirit of God bless the feeble effort which I have now made to exhibit these to you.

But, my brethren in the ministry, if such be the responsibility resting upon private Christians, how awfully solemn and weighty is ours! If a cold, lifeless, worldly spirit, be so pernicious in them, how fatal and deadly must it be in us! We are ambassadors for Christ; we are set to watch for souls as they that must give account: we are ourselves ensamples to the flock. The church and the world both have their eye upon us; how solemn, then, how momentous are the consequences that are constantly resulting from our example! We are imparting our own spirit to the church; impressing our own character upon it. Were we uniformly to exhibit the Spirit of our Master,—the same zeal, self-denial, delight in our work, love to souls, should we ever want for living epistles to commend our gospel?

God grant that you, as Christians, may so live and so let your light shine, that when you shall stand at the bar of Christ, you may humbly claim, through grace, to have followed the Lamb whithersoever he went, and may there hear from the lips of your Saviour, the joyful response, “Well done, good and faithful servant!”

## SERMON VI.

### THE CRISIS.

“For he will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.”—ROM. 9 : 28.

THE apostle alludes in this passage to a prophecy contained in Isaiah, tenth chapter and twenty-second verse. It reads thus:—“For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.” He applies it particularly to the destruction of the Jewish nation by the Romans. But he seems to me at the same time, to have had in his eye another and still more important event; one which is yet to transpire, and which I judge is now on the eve of its accomplishment. This is the finishing of God’s work of mercy on earth; the winding up of that great plan of grace which has been in progress now for nearly six thousand years, and its glorious termination in a millennial day, or state of universal holiness and happiness on earth. The opinion has long prevailed in the church, that events of extraordinary interest and of a portentous character would immediately precede this consummation. There is a



reference I think to these, in the passage before us. The thought is worthy of our attention, and capable of a full and impressive illustration. I have this object in view in the remarks which I am about to offer. "He shall finish the work." I observe,

I. That this purpose has been cherished with a uniform interest in the mind of God from the beginning.

A system of mercy was disclosed immediately after the fall of man. The single design of this system was, to counteract the influences of sin. It had brought irretrievable ruin upon man, and threatened destruction to the government of God. The plan adopted to circumscribe its power and defeat its design was stupendous. It involved a train of operations extending through many thousand years, and called for such developments of power and wisdom and benevolence in God, as no part of his creation had ever before witnessed. After the introduction of sin, the world had no value in the estimation of God, except as it stood connected with this plan; and it never has had since; and it would not now be permitted to exist for a day, were it not that all the great designs of his mercy are not yet accomplished. The world will be instantly given up to a conflagration, the moment it is understood that nothing more remains to be done to illustrate the perfections of God in the salvation of men.

The providence of God has been constantly employed from the beginning, so to control events, and order the arrangement of causes, as to give the greatest efficiency and the widest possible range of influence to this mighty enterprise of divine benevolence. His hand has been moving with a sleepless activity, and an unimpaired energy, to urge on the work to its consummation. But in the opinion of unbelieving men, it has often been far otherwise. At different periods of time, they have judged that the design of God was abandoned, and that he had withdrawn from the world those agencies and influences which he had before employed, and which they thought were essential to sustain and consummate the work. The church has, in fact, been nearly extinct at different periods, and the triumph of God's great foe has been almost universal. The lights of religion and even of science have been put out, and darkness, moral and intellectual, has brooded over the world. There have been times when there was almost no visible religion on earth. This was the fact in the sixteenth century of the world, when a single habitation gave shelter and protection to the whole family of God. It was so too at that period when "the light shone in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not." And from the ninth to the sixteenth century of the Christian era, there was scarcely sufficient light, either in the moral or intellectual world, to render the darkness visible. At

these periods, men have supposed that there was either a suspension, or abandonment, of the great plan of divine mercy, promulgated at the fall; and they have looked upon God as one who had grown weary of his work, or given it up as attended with insuperable difficulties and of hopeless execution. But in all this diversity of experience, and in all these apparent mutations of plan and of purpose, the mind of God has been one. It has experienced no abatement of interest, and there has been no wavering of purpose, and no relaxing of energies for a moment, since the announcement of mercy was first made to Adam in the garden. But on the other hand, the work, in every stage of it, has been carried forward with almighty energy, and the intention to finish it, and to cut it short in righteousness, was never more glowing on the heart of God than at the period when all flesh had corrupted their way before him. It was then—when but a single family remained to indicate the existence of any plan of mercy to the world—that God rose up from his throne and swept the earth of its population, and cleansed it with a flood of waters, and brought the church on to a new and regenerated foundation. The work was here hastened with awful despatch, and the consumption decreed, overflowed with righteousness.

In the darkest and most disastrous times to religion, when her lights have been quenched, and there has seemed to be no trace of her spirit among

men, the providence of God has been efficiently employed in every part of the world, to set things in order for an ultimate and entire regeneration. Those events which have appeared to hold no connexion with this plan, but have been at a great remove from all visible bearings upon it, have constituted links in the mighty chain of causes that was to give birth to a millennial day. The connexion was discernible by the eye of God, though hidden from man. Sometimes, however, this connexion has been disclosed in the progress of events, and the world has been led to admire the wisdom and power of God displayed in it. Such was the fact in reference to the captivity of Joseph, the defection of Judas, and the iniquitous management of the Romish Church in the time of Luther.

The plan of God is immensely broad. It extends to all causes natural and moral, and that they may operate in harmonious concert, and all tend with a concentrated efficacy to the destined consummation, it is impossible to urge on the work to an instant issue. Events can transpire in their natural order, only in the even progress of time. This is the reason why the world cannot be converted in a day. There is in the arm of God power sufficient to coerce to an instant and universal submission to his sceptre. But such a course would not be consonant, either with the nature of his plan or the constitution of things. Moral changes must be wrought by the instrumentality of moral causes.



Men must be converted from sin to holiness in view of the intrinsic turpitude of the one, and the surpassing excellence of the other. The Bible must be put into their hands, and they must learn from that what truth is—truth in reference to themselves and to God, and they must yield an enlightened and practical submission to its authority.

The wise providence of God, however, may so arrange events, and bring things on to such a crisis, that apparently the work of ages shall be done in a few hours. The development of events may be rapid, and the tide of successful execution press on with indescribable power and velocity to the appointed result, and yet no disturbing influence be felt for a moment on the natural connexion and dependencies of things. But at such times the providence of God seems to clothe itself with unusual energy, and he moves on in the path of the whirlwind. Mountains flow down at his presence, and all nature ministers visibly to his will.

But this apparently hurried and urgent movement of the wheels of his providence, is not to be attributed to any renewed purpose of action, or invigorated feeling, on the part of God. His heart was as intensely interested, and as unwaveringly settled in the purpose to carry on his work of mercy among men, during the dark ages, as it was in the recent revivals of religion: and his providence, for anything we can tell, was as actively



employed in arranging causes and directing events, with reference to a millennium and the final judgment, then, as it ever has been since. The difference between that period and the present consists in this : that then things were in a process of arrangement, now they are adjusted : that was a day of preparation, this is one of action : then it was only a feeble twilight that glimmered on the path of the church, now the splendours of a meridian sun are burning on her way. From this hour, if we do not entirely misinterpret the signs of the times, her march is to be rapid, and events of awful interest are swiftly to follow each other, and the transit to a state of glory and universal rest, is to be sudden and luminous. "For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." "And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring ; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken ; and then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory." This description accords, in most of its prominent features, to the history of our own times. This sentiment will be more fully illustrated as we proceed.

II. Hitherto, in the management of the affairs

of this world, mercy has greatly predominated over justice; but I remark that we are now come to a crisis, when justice, for a season at least, is to assume a sterner attitude and rule with a wider sway than before. The events which are transpiring, in connexion with the plain language of prophecy, authenticate this position.

When mercy deals with the guilty, it is long before justice is permitted to execute its purposes of vengeance. Mercy forbears, and expostulates, and resorts to every tender expedient, to attain its end. Not so with justice. That urges forward its work to an immediate termination. It presses on with unimpeded step, and unawed purpose, to the fulfilment of its commission. No suggestions of pity, and no arguments of interest, can divert it from its aim.

Hitherto the operations of God among men, have been controlled almost entirely by the influence of mercy. Through the medium of blessings has he laboured to gain them over to his interests, and to attain the great ends of his benevolence upon earth. It is this which has prolonged the existence of the world to so late a period, and saved it from a conflagration up to this hour. There has been wickedness enough in it to have justified God at any moment, in giving it up to the doom of fire; and he would have done so but for the interpositions of mercy, which has constantly plead for delay of judgment. To give increased energy to the opera-

tions of mercy, justice has occasionally stretched out her sceptre over men, and thrown down her fiery bolts on to the earth. Nations have fainted and passed away, under her rebuke; but still the government of the world has not as yet been confided to her hands. But the day has at last evidently arrived, when mercy itself consents, that a more severe and urgent mode of procedure should be adopted in carrying forward the affairs of this lower world: and the purpose appears solemnly to have been taken, to finish the work and cut it short in righteousness. Hence the singular rapidity with which great events succeed each other, and the decisive character which is impressed on the movements of providence, and the fearful commotions which are now agitating the world. Nothing can be more evident than that we have reached a new era, and that the hand of God is moving with unwonted energy, and decision, in executing his purposes. Nations are convulsed, and fear is taking hold of the hearts of men, and the gospel is doing a short work with sinners, and angry judgments are abroad, and there is every indication that the world is on the eve of a mighty revolution which will hurry her on to her doom.

1. The elements of society in the old world are broken up, and its institutions, sacred and political, are tottering and falling into ruins. The minds of men, by a simultaneous impulse, have been driven up from their repose, and thrown into a whirlwind

of uneasy thoughts and disquieting fears. All Europe is agitated, and the struggle is for quietude and security, but the tempest thickens, and the angry surges roll higher and higher every moment. Monarch and people, laws and religion, are hastening together into the vortex of a revolution. The nations of the earth are anxiously gazing on the scene, expecting hourly to witness the catastrophe that buries them in one common grave. It was impossible to build on the ancient foundations a structure, either in politics or religion, that would be suited to a state of millennial blessedness. The jarring elements of a false philosophy had stripped them of those attributes which give stability and moral glory to human institutions, and doomed them to decay and dissolution. Nothing could be done, therefore, to hasten the event of a universal renovation, without overturning the ancient establishments, and laying anew the foundations of society. The process of regeneration is terrible, but there is no alternative : the world must be redeemed from the bondage of corruption, and the nations that cannot be reformed, must be overthrown, and the time of the ordeal is come, and the consumption decreed is beginning to overflow with righteousness. Hence the sudden and perilous changes that are now passing over Europe, and the agonizing suspense in which the public mind is held, and the presentiment of fearful things that throbs in every bosom.



2. Another indication that we are near the crisis spoken of in the text, is found in the desperate wickedness of the times in which we live. There is a boldness, and daring, in the impiety of these days, that indicates the existence of a widespread and incurable depravity. Wickedness triumphs over religion, and public sentiment is corrupt, and the guardians of public morals are awed into silence, and those redeeming influences which keep men under the fear of God, are fast disappearing from the land. When religion comes to be regarded as inimical to the public weal, and her censorship is allowed to be exercised only over private morals, then comes the day of public calamity, and national honour departs, and private rights are invaded, and personal virtue disappears, and mortal disease spreads itself over every limb of the body politic. In the days of our ancestors, things were not as they now are. The care of religion was the first concern, individual and national, and without subjecting her guardians to a suspicion of treason against the state. Private virtue was inflexible, and the institutions of religion were deemed sacred, and he who wantonly trampled on them, was placed under the interdiction of public sentiment. The name of God was held in reverence, his authority revered, his sabbaths honoured, and men carried the fear of his presence with them into all their transactions, pub-



lic and private. The healthful influences of religion were spread abroad everywhere, and a blow aimed at her character, was a blow aimed at the public weal.

But this is not the only country in which irreligion goes forth unmasked, and tramples upon sacred things unreprieved. In Germany, and France, and other nations of continental Europe, infidelity sways an iron sceptre over human minds, and sets at defiance all divine authority, and discards all belief in the doctrine of a divine providence. Their public journals teem with the speculations of an infidel philosophy, and religion is depressed and defamed, and the people look on, and love to have it so. Infidelity was the canker that ate away the vitals of the French Republic, and it is the tornado that is tearing up the pillars which support the throne of the French Empire. From 1790 down to this date, France has been tossing on the bosom of a heaving volcano, whose fires were first lighted up, and have been kept glowing ever since, by the hands of infidels. "France," said Casimir Perier, her late prime minister, "has absolute need of religion; without it she is ruined." These words he constantly repeated during the period of his last illness. At his interment, five or six funeral orations were pronounced by illustrious men, citizens of the French capital, and in all of them not a single word was uttered conveying a religious idea. Miserable country! The day of her visitation is

at hand, when the pride of her glory must be brought low, and the lofty fabric which she has reared to give eclat to her name, and perpetuity to her renown, disappear as a dream.

The general prevalence of impiety, is a certain indication that divine judgments cannot be far off. When the wickedness of man had become great upon the earth, a deluge of waters was sent upon it; and for the same reason the cities of the plain were destroyed, and Babylon overthrown, and Jerusalem demolished, and the Jewish nation dismembered and dispersed. We find, therefore, in the prevailing wickedness of the day in which we live, substantial reason to believe, that the Lord is about to finish his work on earth, and to cut it short in righteousness.

3. Another evidence of this fact is found in the rapidity with which the obstacles that have opposed the spread of the gospel, are disappearing.

Immense empires, which a few years ago were barred and bolted against an admission of the light of Christianity, are now thrown open to the occupancy of any who may choose to preach Jesus and a resurrection. Prejudices have disappeared, false religions have been discarded, and idol temples deserted, and from ten thousand tongues the cry is heard, "Send us the bread of life." The field of Christian enterprise has widened to an immeasurable extent, and every day new doors are opening, and new facilities offering, to speed the work of

evangelizing the world. It is a day of wonders in this respect. The Lord is lifting up his hand to the nations, and saying to the north, give up, and to the south, keep not back. The cloud of darkness is retiring, and the heavenly light, radiating from a thousand burning points, is spreading, and rolling like a sea of glory, from land to land. The earth rejoices. Benighted nations, that have put away their idol gods, and anxiously waited for tidings from afar, are now beginning to lift up their voice together in the song:—"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth."

France herself, in the mania of her infidelity, in the confusion of troubled thought and direful change, is overturning the altars of her ancient faith, and bursting the chains of papal superstition that for centuries have held in cruel bondage the minds of her millions. In this way she has opened wide the door, for a diffusion of the sacred light of Christianity.

India, for ages the cruel place of Moloch's throne, the pantheon of the world, is beginning to forsake her temples and her gods, and the swift feet of the heralds of the Cross are passing with unimpeded celerity through all her realms, and the fresh songs of salvation are bursting from a thousand tongues.

The protracted and impenetrable night of paganism, that has rested on the myriads of China, is beginning to be penetrated with the rays of gospel light, and the channels are rapidly opening through which a flood of day may be poured in upon that dreary land.

The islands of the sea are now either anxiously waiting for God's law, or suddenly renovated by its power, exhibit the enchanting scene of a people recovered from paganism, to the order, beauty, and simplicity of the primitive faith.

Africa, too, is stretching forth her hands unto God, and beacon-lights, blazing from the summits of her coasts, are attracting the gaze of her benighted tribes, and they are hastening to come to the source from whence these heavenly rays proceed.

In the midst of these sudden and mighty movements of God's providence, we see the church roused in a measure from her slumbers, and pressing on to occupy the boundless field which has thus been opened to her enterprise. Her resources every hour augmenting, and the facilities to hasten and extend her conquests increasing in the ratio of her progress, it is impossible not to believe that the day of universal renovation is at hand, when the earth shall be thoroughly purged from her dross, and come forth from the ordeal, prepared to be the habitation of universal holiness and boundless bliss. We find, therefore, in the recent and extraordinary operations of divine providence, which have opened



the way for a wide diffusion of the light of Christianity, and roused to action a slumbering church, and crowned with triumphs her march, evidence to believe, that it is the purpose of God now to make but a short work upon the earth.

4. There are to be found very decided indications of this, in the peculiar phenomena that have of late attended revivals of religion. Not only have they been far more numerous than they were ever before known to be in the church, spreading from town to town, and from land to land, but they have passed over us in haste, like a summer's shower. While they have continued, they have been powerful beyond all former example, taking hold of the hearts of sinners with irresistible energy, and bringing them, often in great numbers, to immediate submission. But they have seldom continued longer than a few weeks or months. The work of the Spirit has been done with incredible despatch. Those who have lingered at all, have usually lingered until the door was shut. Those who have resisted, have resisted till the season of mercy was over and gone. The patience of God, even with his own people, has apparently not been extended to such incredible lengths, as formerly, in these reviving seasons, it was. He waits not long now, for a church—after the indications of his presence are seen—to shake off the spirit of the world, and come up in the power of prayer, and in the energy of faith, to



the divine work. A lingering, reluctant movement, provokes to a speedy, and often to a returnless departure of the Spirit.

And when the work has been commenced, and the church is arrayed in her panoply, and the Spirit, like a mighty wind, is moving on the slain, an apparently slight declension, experienced in the faith or fervour of the church, is the signal for the withdrawal of those divine influences, without which saints and sinners both die. There is, in these respects, a noticeable difference between the present and former experience of the church; and it is to be explained on the same principles, upon which we account for the energy and despatch, with which the work immediately preparatory to the destruction of Sodom was performed. When Lot lingered, the angels laid hold of his hand, and they said to him, *Escape for thy life!* The time of the catastrophe was fixed, and it was hastening on, and it urged to despatch. It is just so in reference to the work which the Lord is now doing on the earth. The great day of his wrath is at hand; the solemn, the appointed crisis has arrived, when the world must be subjected to a trial that will renovate it. But the work of mercy must be consummated first. The mark of God must be speedily imprinted on his saints, that when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it may not involve them in the common ruin that will lie upon its track. The proximity of the period of

dreadful trial, is what imparts unusual energy and haste to the movements of God's hand.

The singular power that has been manifested in the late revivals of religion, has commonly brought into action the most decided and daring opposition. Great imperfections have undoubtedly attended the instrumentality by which they were produced and sustained. But they were imperfections which would have been tolerated and pardoned anywhere else than in a revival of religion. They constitute, therefore, both an inadequate and inappropriate cause, for that reckless opposition which was, in many instances, excited against the work. The truth is, the latent enmity of the heart was roused by the searching light and awful grandeur that attended on the footsteps of God, as he moved on in the great work of salvation. And by how much greater than formerly, have been the power and glory of the Spirit's operations in these seasons, by so much greater have been the opposition and enmity which were brought into action against them. This has given occasion to God to cut short his work in righteousness with many an impenitent sinner. For that same overpowering glory and grace which have been displayed in humbling the hearts of such as have obtained mercy, have led others to oppose, and revile, and blaspheme, until, as is believed, many have suddenly passed into a state of irreclaimable impenitence. Thus have these revivals executed

the work both of judgment and mercy; and upon great numbers it has been both summary and final. In the limited period of their existence, in the sealing power that has attended them, and in the wide extent to which they have prevailed, we find evidence to believe that it is the purpose of God, now to make but a short work upon the earth.

5. The summary nature of those judgments which God is now sending down upon men, the terrible power with which they are clothed, and the immense range which they are taking, strongly indicate a fixed determination in God, to urge on his work to a speedy consummation.

These characteristics—which strongly mark the present visitation—are new and singular. Diseases as fatal to human life, as swift in their progress to a termination, and producing as great mortality where they have prevailed, have afflicted mankind before. But these characteristics were never found upon any disease that had so wide a range. With the exception of a single instance, diseases of peculiar malignity have always been confined to very narrow limits, ravaging only a single city, or at most, a district or province. No one, armed with equal virulence and power, has ever before undertaken to make the circuit of the earth. No one has ever, in so short a period, laid so many millions in the grave.

It is an extraordinary circumstance too, that

during the fifteen years in which this disease has prevailed, producing in the time more than fifty millions of deaths, and summoning into vigorous action the most acute powers of medical science, in the civilized world, no progress has yet been made in the knowledge, either of its nature or origin. Both the generating cause, the laws by which a transmission of contagion is governed, and the means by which the disease may be effectually disarmed of its frightful power, remain up to this day, among the most inexplicable and profound arcana of unexplored science. No perceptible advance has been made towards the discovery of a specific remedy for the disease. It is also worthy of remark, that most of the mitigating and preventive causes are found in the department of morals. The inference to be deduced from these facts, is this:—that the Cholera is a rod, taken into the hand of Omnipotence, for the purpose of chastising the sins of the world, and that it is to retain its vigour, and remain unbroken, till the great purposes of punishment are completely answered.

It is to be kept in remembrance also, that this desolating judgment is immediately consecutive upon these extraordinary visitations of mercy, with which the churches of our land were favoured, during the last winter. They were received with singular ingratitude, and have been followed with extraordinary declensions. This has given occasion to God to exhibit the same characteristic



energy in carrying forward the work of judgment, which marked the progress of his work of mercy.

Ordinarily, the messengers of vengeance have received their commission only against a single nation, or individual. In the present case, it takes in the world. They are charged to do the work of punishment on the inhabitants of the globe. Hitherto epidemic diseases have exhibited no peculiar partialities for vice. The Cholera selects four-fifths of its victims, from among the most debased and incorrigible enemies of God. Some of the good have fallen under the power of its murderous arm. Frequently have humanity and religion shed their tears on the grave of transcendent purity, and surpassing excellence. But it is the unvarying and uncontradicted testimony of a wide experience, that its native affinity is for vice, and vice in its most debasing forms. The drunkard and the debauchee, it pursues with an instinctive sagacity, and with an untiring perseverance; and where it overtakes, it destroys. It shows no mercy to these miserable beings. Were it not that they are irrecoverably lost to virtue, we should deplore their untimely exit. But while they live, they live only to be employed in scattering firebrands, arrows, and death around them. They live therefore only to prepare themselves for a more aggravated doom in eternity. While therefore to prolong the existence here, would be no mercy to them, their removal from the world purifies the moral atmo-



sphere, and disencumbers the wheels of the gospel chariot, and hurries on the work of moral renovation. Never before has Providence seemed to aim at effecting the annihilation of a whole class of men. He is now cutting away at a blow, this putrid limb, that has sent contagion and disease over the entire body of human kind.

It is observable, too, that this judgment from God, in its relation to individuals, is not tempered with mercy in the way, and to the extent, of ordinary visitations. It does not, like most other diseases, leave to its victim time and capacity, to attend to the concerns of his soul. It seizes with a death-grasp on every power of the system, deranging in an instant, all the functions of life, and pushing on the work of death with a most confused and terrific haste. From the moment of attack, hope departs, if mercy had not beamed on the soul before, and ordinarily the patient is expected only to groan, and gasp, and die, and sink to woe. Men usually find it difficult enough to prepare to die, when disease takes them slowly and gently to the grave. The work is often, under these circumstances, left undone, because fear, and weakness, and trembling invade. What hope, then, is there for that man, who is attacked with a disease that lays the body at once under the power of convulsive pains, and pushes its work to a fatal termination in from three to fifteen hours, if his whole preparation for eternity is to be made after the work of death is begun?

There surely can be no hope. In sending a disease upon mankind, which thus suddenly withdraws, from such immense numbers, the power to lay hold of mercy that had been long offered, and long abused, God has furnished us with striking evidence of his intention now, to cut short, in righteousness, his work upon the earth.

Did the time allow, we should here present the specific scriptural authority which we have for holding the sentiment, that a period of unexampled tribulation upon the earth is immediately to precede the day when the millennial reign of Christ shall be established over the world. But we can only refer you to Rev. 6 : 12-19; 11 : 15-19; and 16 : 13-21, which passages are understood to point in the certainty of prophecy to this awful event.

If the views which we have exhibited in this discourse be correct, then it is evident, my hearers, we live in a fearful day, and our circumstances are peculiarly solemn and responsible. The world is now passing through a process of change and revolution, that is to renovate it, and prepare it for millennial glory and the reign of Christ. The preparatory work is to be hastened, and for this cause Justice is to come down from the skies, and attend on the footsteps of Mercy, and where Mercy cannot speedily prevail, Justice will smite. In such a state of things, and when such a work is doing, the danger attending neglects and delays on the part of sinners, is imminent. The work must be

cut short in righteousness. The millennium is near, and things are in a state to require despatch. It seems to us that God cannot now, long wait upon the sinner. To-day he invites, and makes proposals of mercy. To-morrow the wheels of his providence may have rolled on so far, that to wait another hour for your submission, might cost a sacrifice of half the glory of the millennial state. Such appear to me to be the circumstances of every impenitent sinner. There is an urgency in his case, growing out of the peculiar crisis to which God has brought the affairs of the world, that demands solemn thought and immediate action. Sinners, will you not take warning, and before the hail shall descend, and the waters overflow the hiding-place, and destruction pursue, that you cannot escape, take refuge in the offered mercy of a Saviour?

Christians, how is it that ye do not discern the signs of the times? The Lord has come forth from his place, and the earth trembles, and heaves, under his step. The world is in commotion, and strange events are transpiring, and men are dying, and there is distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, and all nature is affected with a new impulse. Is it not a time that calls for vigilance, and prayer, and humility, and elevation of view, and energy of action, such as the church has not hitherto exhibited? Take warning, brethren. The coming of the Lord

draweth nigh. The day of vengeance is in his heart, and the year of his redeemed is come. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

## SERMON VII.

### CHRISTIANS A LIGHT.

“Ye are the light of the world.”—MATT. 5 : 14.

THE primitive church was not without its imperfections. There were doubtless to be found among its members, extremes of character as great, if not greater, than exist at the present day. There were degrees of merit and demerit, quite as marked and striking as are to be found now. Indeed, there is reason to believe, that as there were insulated cases of greater eminence in Christian knowledge and excellence than are to be found at the present time, so, on the other hand, the mass of professing Christians were less enlightened, and there existed among them more glaring faults and imperfections of character. Possibly the proportion of false and hypocritical professions that were then made, was not as great as it is at present, as they were subjected to a far more rigid and sifting ordeal, in espousing the Christian cause, than any to which we are now exposed.

I offer these remarks to prepare you to appreciate the force of another, which I am about to



make. It is this,—that it was of the members of that very church, which was so full of faults and imperfections, and even hypocrisies, that our Saviour said, “Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world.” He was, indeed, addressing those who were ordained to be the future ministers of his religion. But it was their Christian, and not their official character, that lay at the foundation of their qualifications for this work. He spoke, therefore, of the members of his church, and intended to include all who either were or might become his true disciples. They were “the salt of the earth, the light of the world.”

But do you not often hear the enemies of Christ's church crying out against it, because of the imperfection of some of its members, and the hypocrisy of others; and denouncing all religion, because those who profess it are not perfect? Can there be a doubt, that when Judas apostatized,—Judas, not only a disciple but an apostle of Christ, not only an apostle but one of the twelve whom Christ had selected to be his personal and confidential friends,—the cry of hypocrisy was rung through all the ranks of Christ's enemies, and every disciple was branded as a hypocrite and a knave! So it is at the present day. But, notwithstanding this, as it was then, so it is now, the church, with all its lamentable deficiencies and imperfections, is the light of the world. It embodies all the practical and visible religion there is on earth. Let those,

then, whose delight it is to defame the church, because all her members are not what they profess to be, remember that, in their judgment of this body, they and Christ are at variance; that while they regard it to be a fraternity of hypocrites, he holds it to be the light of the world. For this inimical and defamatory judgment, he holds them responsible. "He that despiseth you," said Christ, "despiseth me."

But, let us now proceed to examine into the nature and conditions of the fact which our Saviour here affirms.

He does not say that the church ought to be, or will be, the light of the world; he declares that it is. And the truth of this assertion is as obvious, as it is that there is a true church on earth. It is inseparable from the nature of genuine, evangelical religion, that it should diffuse round about it a moral and spiritual light. It is impossible to be a living Christian and not be the centre of an influence that shall be radiated, in the power and light of truth, upon surrounding minds. Christians have been qualified and endowed for this specific end, by the Spirit of God. They have been "created anew in Christ Jesus, unto good works." They have been called out of darkness into God's marvellous light, that they might show forth his praise. It is the revealed purpose of God to fill the earth with his glory; to illumine every mind with his truth. But what other active and re-

sponsible agency has he designated for this purpose, or what other can he employ to effect this end, than that of his church? This work has been put into her hands, and the most solemn charge given to her from her Lord, to do it faithfully and quickly. Now, it is in this character, and with reference to this object, that Christ calls her the light of the world. The Philippian Christians were employed in this work when Paul said of them, that they lived in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom, says he, "ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life," or, if the verb be translated imperatively, as it probably ought to be, it will read "Among whom shine ye as lights in the world."

I propose, then, to call your attention to the *manner* in which this ministration is effected.

HOW IS IT THAT CHRISTIANS BECOME EFFECTIVELY THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD?

And let me, in the beginning of this discussion, remark, that Christians have no spiritual light of their own to disseminate. It is true, that from being once darkness, they are now light in the Lord, but it is because God has shined into their hearts, to impart to them the true knowledge of his glory. And this is the source of that light which they are to communicate to others. "I," says Christ, "am the light of the world." There is its high, inexhaustible, and glorious source. From the grace and truth of Christ every ray of

spiritual illumination must proceed. But the church is honoured of God, to be the medium through which it is transmitted to others.

I. Let me remark, then, first, in illustration of the subject, that Christians become the light of the world by being themselves living specimens of the renovating and sanctifying power of divine truth. Their hearts have received its indelible imprint, and every one of their faculties has been made to yield to its sovereign sway. Their whole moral nature has been shaped and moulded by its divine energy, and there is the same correspondence between that nature and the truth as it is in Jesus, that there is between the die and the image that has been struck from it. There is, in this case, and there must of necessity be, a constant outward manifestation of the spirit of truth. The conduct and the life must harmonize with its high and sacred requisitions. This is the manner in which Christians reflect the light of truth. Its emanations are bright and convincing, when they proceed from an embodiment of its spirit in the lives of its friends. And this is just what the Apostle affirms of himself and associates, when he says, "that they had renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and by manifestation of the truth commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Thus, no unconverted man can be conversant with the life and spirit of such a Christian, and



not have the light of divine truth daily and painfully impinge upon his slumbering conscience.

II. But, I remark, in the second place, that Christians become the light of the world, by giving a specific direction to their power and influence in the dissemination of truth. This is their appropriate work. They have been redeemed and renewed for this purpose, and have an engagement with Christ to this effect. The measure of their responsibility is by no means limited to the influence of their personal example. They are capable of wielding a power that shall act directly and widely on the minds of others. They are not like a stationary, luminous body, that emits its rays from a fixed centre; but like radiant, movable points, that may be changed to any position, and expanded to any capacity. The sacred treasures of grace and mercy have been entrusted to them for distribution, and it is the great and specific end of their calling, to give them as wide and rapid a circulation over the earth as possible.

We have said, that Christians become the light of the world, by giving a specific direction to their power and influence. Let us turn our attention now to a few examples of the way and manner in which this power is exercised.

Take the book of revelation, for instance: the grand depository of the light and power of heavenly truth: the mighty engine through which, if the world is ever turned to Christ, its conversion will be effected.



Now, if Christians are to maintain the character which our Saviour in the text, gives them, can they possibly be indifferent to the circulation of this volume? Their own light is taken from this source, and all is impenetrable moral darkness wherever its divine rays have not penetrated. There can be no arresting of that downward tendency to corruption and ruin which marks the condition of the universal family of man; no breaking of the bands of wickedness asunder; no elevation of the heart and mind to God, where this sacred volume is discarded or unknown. It must be pushed forward in every direction, as the great pioneer in the work of reform, and always will the boundaries of evangelization be described by the circle which defines the limits that have been reached by its direct rays.

Christians, then, become pre-eminently the light of the world, when they embrace every opportunity, by every means and through every medium, to give the Scriptures to those who have them not. Can you doubt, then, whether these lights of the world will be active, vigilant, benevolent, self-denying friends and patrons of those institutions which are called *Bible Societies*?

But there are other agencies and means through which Christians become the light of the world. They can, in person, proclaim the truths of the gospel to their friends and neighbours, and by assiduity and skill in the use of argument and

entreaty, they may, through the blessing of God, win them to Christ. The woman of Samaria, after having herself received the truth, instantly hastened to make it known to others, and the consequence was, that the whole city was moved by her communications, and flocked out to see and hear and obey the Saviour. This is one indispensable branch of Christian duty, and every disciple of the cross should, in this manner, aim to be a burning and shining light in the community where he dwells.

Let me ask you, my hearers, with what propriety can that church be called the light of the world, which suffers a long and deep night of ignorance to brood over the minds of a large portion of the people that occupy the same territory with itself? Admit that they choose to abide in darkness; that it is their own fault that they do not read the Scriptures, and visit the sanctuary, and receive the light, and obey the truth. It may be so. It doubtless is so. But do we, therefore, as children of the light, owe them no duties? Are we to let them slumber on in their ignorance, and because they will not come to our sanctuaries, nor ask at our hands to be taught the way of life, are we therefore to do nothing to dispel their darkness, nothing to illuminate their minds? You are aware that they have no just estimate of the value of the gospel: if they had, they not only would not reject it, but would give the world to possess it. It is then, one

of the most solemn and important duties devolving on the church, to see that the gospel is carried to these benighted minds; that by means of personal visitations, and the distribution of the Bible and the tract, every one of these dark dwellings shall be filled with light. The grand principle upon which all Christian missions are built is this: that the gospel is of such infinite importance to man, that wherever, either from ignorance of its value or aversion to its truths, men will not come after it, it must be carried to them. This responsibility has Christ, in the most formal and explicit manner, laid upon the church,—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” This injunction does not authorize the church to overlook the heathen that are dwelling in sight of her own sanctuaries, in her concern for those that are dwelling in far-distant lands.

But she is also to make provision for the publication of these glad tidings to the pagan world. Where is the redeemed sinner that will disclaim the bonds of that obligation to the heathen nations, which Paul so gratefully acknowledged,—“I am debtor (says he) both to the Greeks and the barbarians; both to the wise and the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are of Rome also.” Were the obligations of Paul to ancient Rome any greater than are ours to modern China, or Africa, or to any other section of the unevangelized world? Not at

all. He felt himself to be a debtor to the barbarians of every clime; and why? because he was in possession of a treasure, through the mercy of his Redeemer, that had not only made him rich, but that was capable of making them eternally so. Let the church, then, remember that she is a debtor to the whole heathen world, and be grateful that she may be its light, through the medium of Christian missions.

But, let me remark again,—that the church is the conservator of Christian institutions, and is bound to labour with incessant diligence, to cause them to be universally sanctified, in the affections of the people. In doing so, she sustains the character given to her by her divine Lord, of being the light of the world.

Take, for example, the Sabbath. Is not the relation which this institution holds to religion, vital? Has it not been demonstrated over and over again, that without the suspension which it brings to the cares and labours of the week, and without the convocations and ministrations of the sanctuary which it affords, there can be no religion? It cannot, without the influence of these consecrated days, exist in any of its experimental or visible forms. The Sabbath, then, is to be sustained and sanctified, or the whole framework of religion goes to the dust.

But, additional to the consideration of the utility of the day of rest, and of its necessity to the exist-



ence and spread of religion, we cannot be unmindful of that imperative statute of God, which ordains and establishes a Sabbath. He has, by his own high and undisputed authority, set apart and enjoined the sanctification of the day.

Can they, then, whom Christ calls the light of the world, be indifferent to an institution that has been established by the authority of God, and on which depend all the sacred interests of man? It is impossible. The Sabbath and the Church will exist and flourish, or they will decay and go down, together. Neither can survive the other.

How dear and sacred then to every Christian heart must be the Sabbath? What cautions will the friends of God not observe in the regulation of their own conduct on that day, and what sacrifices will they not make to render it sacred in the eyes of all.

Are you then to be esteemed one of those lights of which the Saviour speaks, set up in this dark world to guide benighted and wandering souls to God, and yet this sacred institution be denied at your hands the tribute of a scrupulous and exact observance? Are you an honest and faithful disciple of Christ, letting your light so shine that others may see it and be led to glorify God, when, to spare expense or to gain time, you will journey on this holy day; or to gratify curiosity by the receipt of a letter or a paper, you will visit the post-office on the Sabbath; or to accumulate wealth,



will vest your means in railroads, which systematically and constantly and violently run down and obliterate the Sabbath? It seems incredible. This last form of Sabbath desecration seems, in my view, the worst of them all. When you travel on the Sabbath you are alone in your iniquity, and your influence is restricted to your personal example. But when you aid in creating and sustaining an instrumentality that is designed to furnish facilities and inducements to hundreds of others to trample on the divine law, it seems to me that you are a partaker in the guilt of them all. You certainly take into your hands a due proportion of the gains that accrue from those violations. There is only one supposition on which it seems to me possible to justify a Christian in holding an interest in these great engines of Sabbath desecration,—and that is, when the stock is obtained and held, with the express design of bringing the whole concern under a control that shall respect the Sabbath. And in this case, not a stone will be left unturned, to effect the object; the annual meetings will see every friend of the Sabbath at his post, and by petition, and discussion, and remonstrance, the stockholders will be plied, till the righteous demand is yielded. Or if the hope of success must give way to despair, the Christian will wash his hands of the iniquity of this sin, and bidding it adieu, will consign it to the retributions of a righteous providence.

Remember, then, if you are to be the light of

the world, you are to be conspicuous in your regard for this great institution of Christianity.

But I proceed to remark again,—that to maintain the character which our Lord here gives to his disciples, you must be vigilant and watchful of the interests, of the rising generation.

Can you be ignorant of the fact that the biases and impressions of childhood give direction to the whole course of life? Whoever obtains control over the minds of the young, will guide the destinies of the generation that follows them. This principle is in general far better appreciated by heresiarchs and infidels, than by the great body of the evangelical church. Look at the Romish Church. That body with its immense mass of ignorance and superstition and corruption, could never have been perpetuated to this time but for the untiring diligence with which they have laboured to instil into the minds of their children, the principles of their faith, and the unceasing vigilance with which they have watched over them from infancy to mature age. You never find them tampering with influences that may tend to alienate them from their religion, or win them over to another faith. You never see the education of their children entrusted to Protestants. And so fearful are they of apostacies, that even the door of free discussion and investigation is never thrown wide open to them.

Now, although this system is one that fetters the human mind, and keeps it for ever imprisoned in

its ignorance, yet it perfectly subserves the purpose which they have in view,—that of binding those who are born of Roman Catholic parents in everlasting fealty to the church.

But were the system one of freedom and of truth, who would deny its admirable adaptation to accomplish the highest good? Must not children be educated somehow? If they are not trained up to a respect for religion and an observance of its sacred laws, will they not be educated to the opposite course? Do you suppose that by keeping away from their hearts and minds definite and impressive religious influences, you leave them to grow up unbiassed, and prepared to form, at mature age, an independent and correct judgment of religion? There never was a more fallacious impression than this. Do you not know that children's minds are all the time subject to influences that are shaping the character and carrying it forward to maturity? If religious control is wanting, another control will take its place. If the mind is to be kept vacant of religious thoughts and impressions, the door will be thrown wide open to those which are of an opposite tendency and character. Forbear to instil the great principles of true religion into the hearts and minds of your children, and you may rely upon it, false and dangerous principles will be adopted in its stead.

All this results, of necessity, from the nature of mind, and from the circumstances in which it is

placed. It is as active in childhood as at any other period, and far more impressible. It seeks then, more than at any other time, to have every vacancy in its desires and thoughts filled up, and under the wayward influences of a corrupt nature, its tendencies are always, in religion, to error rather than truth.

And then, where is the man that has adopted no creed? There is not such a one to be found in all Christendom:—not a man possessing a sane mind, that has not formed his opinions on the subject of religion. And a close and vigilant observation of twenty years, has convinced me that of all men sceptics and infidels are the most active and untiring in the exercise of a bitter, cunning, and sleepless spirit of sectarian proselytism.

And this is the very class that is loudest in its denunciations of what it calls denominational influences and sectarian prejudices, warning the people not to let the schools, for the education of their children, pass into such hands. Can you be so hoodwinked, by the pitiful clamours of these men, as not to see the drift of their efforts? Do they not know that if they can keep the education of these children out of your hands, they will get them into their own: that if, by the opprobrious cry of sectarianism, they can produce a popular current that shall demand the expulsion from our schools of all direct evangelical influence, they will



see that there is floated into them, on the same current, an influence that is anti-evangelical?

I have often been astonished to see how extensively and deeply the minds of people are deluded on this subject. They take it for granted that the man who speaks out distinctly and loudly against denominational and sectarian influence, is not himself the victim of such an influence; whereas reflection and investigation will certainly show, that in every such instance, without an exception, there are covert aims and designs to bring everything under the influence of the sect or no-sect party to which he belongs.

I beg of you, then, to remember that infidels and sceptics, who have always the most to say against sectarianism, are not less bound by the prejudices of a creed than other men. Their creed is one which abjures religion, not perhaps written out, but existing in the mind in all the force of the most active and bitter antipathies.

It is also equally surprising to see how slow the mass of the people are to come to a knowledge of this most obvious truth,—that the absence of religious influences in the training of children, is the certain presence of those which are anti-religious. There is no middle ground, and there is no possible position in which the mind of a child can be placed, where it shall be exempt from these influences.

Now, if this position be true, and it is nearly or quite self-evident, then what ground ought Chris-



tians to take in reference to the education of their children.

Are they to be told that, in order to exclude all sectarianism, the Bible has been expelled from the school-room, and teachers employed who will be silent on the subject of religion? But who excluded the Bible from that school, and who employed those teachers, and who has the control of that establishment? Are they men who have no creed, and no sympathies, Christian or infidel? Have they no interest whatever to build up their own party, and overthrow all others? Who believes that these men are so much more immaculate and pure than all others, as to be free from the prejudices of their sect, and to have no other end in view in the expulsion of the Bible and of religion from the school, than the best good of the children? It is preposterous to pretend any such thing.

But are Christians to submit to arrangements like these, and suffer the immortal minds of their children to be educated for an eternal destiny, under a control that has ostracised the Bible, and placed under the ban of sectarianism all direct religious instruction?

Can they think so little of the word of God; of its authority as a divine revelation, of its principles as the foundation of all moral excellence; of its directions as the only sure guide of conduct; and of its influence as the only conservative, restraining,

renewing power that can reach the heart and purify it for heaven, that they can see it condemned and cast out as too sectarian in its character, and as altogether dangerous in its influence upon youthful minds? O never can those who are the light of the world, only because they have received into their hearts the light of this revelation, consent to entertain such an estimate of the word of God. Never can they be willing that the tender and impressible minds of their children, when in a process of education, shall be removed as far as possible from clear and explicit Bible instruction, while, at the same time, their training is in the hands of those who are ready to deny and renounce all religion in order to avoid sectarianism. No liberal-minded Christian, I think, will insist upon the inculcation, in the school-room, of those particular views of divine truth which distinguish one portion of the great family of Christ from another. This should be done in our households and our denominational Sabbath schools. But those truths which are held in common by all the evangelical denominations, and which are considered as essential and cardinal doctrines of divine revelation, I would have clearly and constantly unfolded. Every system of instruction which either omits or excludes these is essentially and ruinously defective. What, are we, as Christians, who are charged of God to train up our children in his nurture and admonition, and who have solemnly consecrated

them to him in baptism, to teach them either by our silence or negligence, or by committing their instruction to those who deny and subvert these truths, that the Bible is not an infallible revelation of the will of God, that man is not a depraved and lost sinner, that regeneration by his Spirit is not essential to salvation, that the sufferings and death of Christ constitute no atonement for sin, that the Holy Spirit of God, as to any distinct personality, is a nonentity, and that all religion, beyond that which consists in a decent outward morality, is a fable and a dream? Is it no matter what our children believe on these points? No matter whether they receive or reject these vital truths? God forbid, that we should ever consider ourselves the light of the world, if it is to be our business to pioneer the generation that is so soon to take our places in the church, into darkness so deep and bewildering as this. God forbid that we should ever be so indifferent to the spiritual and eternal welfare of those whose character and destiny are committed to our care.

Be vigilant, then, upon this subject, and let your light shine. Look carefully to the character of the teachers of your schools, and to the character and opinions of those trustees that have in their hands the direction and control of these schools. These children are soon to wield the whole influence of society, and the destinies both of the church and the world will be in their hands.

Our brethren of the Episcopal Church, in establishing a school where religion should have a conspicuous place, and be made a constant and pervading element of instruction, have not acted unwisely. They saw the danger to which their children were exposed from the operations of an insidious, infidel influence, that was at work to infuse itself into our institutions, and they wisely resolved to place these immortal minds beyond its reach. Their only mistake consisted in making their school an organism for propagating denominational peculiarities. If instead of this they had resolved only to educate their own children and those of as many others as might be inclined to co-operate with them, for usefulness and for Christ, by inculcating those great and essential doctrines of revelation which are held in common by all true Christians; and if they had left the peculiarities of the sect to the control of the family and the church, the plan would have been unobjectionable in all its features, and I have not a doubt but the most gracious smiles of heaven would have beamed upon it.

I have perhaps dwelt longer upon this topic than I should have done. But I saw such dangers and such delusions prevailing in the community on the subject of the education of children and youth, that I felt I could not longer be silent. It was time to raise the warning voice. I have done it; and I hope that what I have said upon this subject, will not soon be forgotten.



I ought now, in this connexion, to speak of the family and the Sabbath school, as being most important and effective agencies to be employed in preparing the young to act a conspicuous part in the great work of evangelizing the world. As to the family, where can so much be effected in forming the character and impressing the heart of the child, as in the domestic circle? There, an influence which is direct, and powerful, and unceasing, is in constant action, and it only requires to be under the control of sanctified minds, to make it effectual to lead the children to Christ. How careful should parents be in respect to their example, their spirit, their words, and actions, as even a glance of the eye will sometimes make an impression on the mind of a child that can never be effaced. They should also embrace every befitting opportunity, directly to inculcate religious truth, and to lead those committed to their charge, in prayer, to the God of all grace, beseeching him to renew and sanctify their hearts. Those parents who, through the blessing of God, succeed in imbuing the hearts of their sons and daughters with the genuine spirit of Christ, and in educating them in the habits of an enlightened, cheerful, active, devoted piety, confer a greater blessing upon the world, than that man would who should discover an inexhaustible mine of pure gold.

The Sabbath school is also a most invaluable blessing to the young. Its only aim is to impart



religious instruction, derived immediately from the incorruptible fountain of truth and light. And the teacher who is faithful to his duties, cherishing a lively interest in his work, and feeling his dependence on God for success, will certainly be owned at last as having been a light in the world, and his crown of rejoicing will be one of inimitable beauty and brightness. Surely every Christian should give to this institution his best influence, and his most fervent prayers. It is a glorious medium by means of which the divine light of truth is to be scattered abroad through the world. These children are not preparing to visit our grog-shops, and to fill our prisons, but they are being trained for the high responsibilities of Christian parents, for the important duties of Christian citizens, and I hope, for the noble work of Christian philanthropists.

It would be proper for me here to speak of the part which the church should take in all those great moral reformations which are going forward under the auspices of an enlightened and active philanthropy.

But I have time now only to advert to one of them,—the cause of temperance. It certainly appears to me, that there is involved in this work so much of justice and benevolence and humanity, that every Christian should take a position that would render him a bright and conspicuous light upon its path. He should take his place in the front rank, he should occupy the position of a

standard-bearer in the army that has been mustered to this earnest conflict. Who could be expected to be valiant in the defence of a cause which not only involves the dearest interests of this present time, but those which reach far into eternity, if not those who have been enlightened from above to understand and measure the magnitude of these interests? My dear brethren, who of you can compute the sufferings that have been endured, the losses that have been sustained, the minds that have been ruined, the souls that have been lost, in consequence of this vice? Who can estimate the obstacles, which at this very moment are thrown in the way of the advancing power of religion, by the ramifications of this influence? I tell you, my brethren, it will never do for us to stand aloof from an enterprise like this. It is, it must be, dear to the heart of God himself. True, it can not be said that every measure and every speech have been characterized by wisdom. Imperfections are mingled with all human endeavours. But, if to dry up one of the most prolific sources of misery and crime ever known to man, be a good work; if to staunch bleeding wounds, and heal broken hearts, and arrest rampant vice, and save ruined souls, be a work of beneficence and love, then surely no enterprise could have a more imperative claim upon the affections and prayers and strength of all the good than this. I must call upon you then to be here, as you are bound to be in every great and

good work, lights, shining with such brightness and strength that every one shall be able to mark your position, and shall be constrained to do deference to the divine Spirit of your religion.

But I must bring the subject to a close. I have endeavoured to illustrate, in a few particulars, the manner in which Christians become the light of the world; the way in which they sustain this high and responsible character given to them by our Lord. O, had I the tongue of an angel, I could not describe to you the importance of the position, which you, as the friends of God, are called to occupy amid our dark, alienated, and ruined race. Every step you take is fraught with an influence that will be felt in distant worlds.

All around you men are groping in the darkness of sin, and you are charged with the responsible duty of taking the light of heavenly truth, and scattering it upon their benighted path. It devolves upon you to maintain such a character, and exhibit such a spirit, and perform such a work, that no sinner's conscience can slumber within the circle of your influence; that no benighted mind shall be able to resist the attractions of the cross.

O let me beseech you to let your light so shine, that others seeing your good works may be led to glorify your Father which is in heaven. Do not misrepresent Christ. Do not mislead the lost; but, by fidelity to God, by obedience to Christ, by laborious and faithful efforts to spread the know-

ledge of a Saviour, aim to accomplish fully the glorious object of your sacred mission as children of the light. In short, let me exhort you, by a clear and constant manifestation of the truth, to commend yourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. So shall you gain for yourself a crown of glory, and conduct others to that blessed abode, where "the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."

## SERMON VIII.

### HOPE OF GLORY.

“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”—ROMANS 5 : 2.

IN the first two chapters of this epistle, the apostle, by a process of clear and cogent reasoning, establishes the truth, that the world, including both Jews and Gentiles, is gone into a state of entire alienation from God. The conclusion which he deduces from this fact is, that the world is in a state of condemnation to death. He then, by a course of clear and pointed remark, aims to prostrate the delusive hope which he knew was lurking in the bosom of his countrymen, of being justified before God by the deeds of the law; and having done this, in a tone of argument quite triumphant, he takes occasion to bring fully and cheerily upon the view of his brethren, the doctrine of salvation by grace, or justification through Jesus Christ as the foundation, and faith as the instrument. This doctrine he discusses at length in the third and fourth chapters of this epistle. The fifth chapter, from which the text is taken, opens with a detailed and beautiful view of the blessings



which flow to the believer as the consequence of justification, or of his union to Christ by faith. "Therefore," says the Apostle, "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."

As the field, open in this verse to our meditations, is too ample for our present survey, I would solicit your attention to the following clause: "And rejoice in hope of the glory of God." This I propose to discuss under the two following inquiries:

I. *What is meant by the phrase, "Glory of God;" or what constitutes that glory, in the hope of which the Apostle rejoiced?*

II. *What is the hope of glory, and how does it become a foundation of joy to the believer?*

I begin with the former of these interrogatories.

*What is intended, in this place, by the phrase, "Glory of God," or what constitutes that glory, in the hope of which the Apostle rejoiced?*

The word "glory" is in scripture employed with various significations.

As applied to God, it sometimes denotes that created splendour or visible brightness with which he often clothed himself when he made his appearance to the ancient saints, as when he descended upon Mount Sinai to promulge his law,—Moses is said to have gone up into the Mount, and a cloud to have covered it,—"And the glory of the

Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the Mount in the eyes of the children of Israel."

It is sometimes employed to denote that sublime display of God's natural attributes, which he has made in the material creation, as, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth forth his handiwork." The glory of God also designates a particular attribute of the Deity, as in the place where Christ is said to have been raised up from the dead by the glory of his Father: i. e. by the power of God; the effect for the cause.

It is, in general, used, however, to denote any signal or triumphant display of the divine attributes, either natural or moral, as made towards men; and, anything that operates as an occasion for eliciting that display, or tends to diffuse a knowledge or admiration of it, is said to promote the glory of God.

Finally; in its primary and highest sense, it is employed to denote that full, cloudless, and combined display of the perfections of the Godhead, which is to be made in the future world, together with the bliss which that display will impart to the inhabitants of that world. It is so used in the text: "And rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

But to exhibit a more extended and adequate view of the subject, I remark,

1st, That the display of this glory is reserved to be made in the future world.

The Apostle rejoiced in hope. The glory was prospective. While at home in the body, this holy man was in the habit of considering himself as absent from the Lord: and, as the divine Redeemer was his chief joy, he longed to depart and be with him, which he considered would be far better than a residence in this world.

When, however, it is said, that this display of God's glory is reserved to be made in the future world, it is not to be imagined that any change is then to pass upon the essential divinity of the Godhead, in order either to render it glorious, or to adapt it to the imperfect vision of the wondering multitude that will encompass his throne. Jehovah is the perfection of beauty, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He changes not. But, though upon the intrinsic nature of the Godhead, not the shadow of a change is ever to pass, and therefore no disclosure is ever to be made that can, with respect to that nature, be called new; yet such are the changes which are ultimately to be experienced in the natural and moral powers of God's intellectual creation, that with respect to them the divine glory is to be displayed in a manner which will be both wholly new and altogether augmented. These changes respect but two things. Removing interposing mediums, and elevating the capacity of the creature by a direct impulse. Were the obstacles

which at present intercept our vision to be removed, it cannot be doubted but we should be competent to much more enlarged and comprehensive views than any which we actually possess. To prepare us for this, we must be invigorated with new life, and endowed with new energies. This is accomplished for the soul at death; for the body at the resurrection; and for both, more perfectly, on the event of their reunion. Let this be done to the saints, and God has made that display of himself which will constitute the glory of heaven. He has brought them to behold him "face to face;"—to see as they are seen, and to know as they are known. Think not, therefore, that God is to reveal his glory by descending to us. The revelation will be made by elevating us to himself. If we are to behold his face in righteousness, we are to be prepared for the blissful vision by being satisfied with his likeness. If we are to behold this glory with a seraph's ecstasy, we shall gaze upon it with a seraph's eye.

It is to be remembered, however, that God is carrying on a vast and complicated system of dispensations towards his intellectual kingdom, which must be completed before the obstacles that at present obstruct our vision can be removed, and the changes of which we have spoken be effected. The consummate wisdom and benevolence which will be found to have been employed in every stage of the process, and on every part of this

immense system, must necessarily constitute an object of amazing interest to every inhabitant of the kingdom of glory. But these cannot be exhibited to a finite mind, until they are, in fact, evolved by the process. The process closes in the scenes of the general judgment. At that time, it will be both possible and expedient for God, so far to disclose the mysteries of his providence, towards men and angels, as to leave his character perfectly vindicated in the eyes of the universe. "He must reign," as the moral governor, "until he has put all enemies under his feet." He will then take to himself his great power, and, in the eyes of his whole intellectual creation, be exalted as the all in all for ever. Angels as well as men will now be feasted with the visions of fresh and hitherto undisclosed glories of the Godhead. The mysteries of redemption, on which, through the long period of this world's history, their wondering eyes have been set, will now be unfolded, at least, to a degree in which they had not been before, for the manifold wisdom of God is to be known by the church, to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

Concerning this glory, I remark,—

2dly, That it is to consist in the displays which God will make of himself. It is to be considered as a matter of prime consequence, to wrest from the creature every claim by which he would appropriate to himself, as the ultimate possessor, a single



ray of the celestial glory. He is to be honoured, indeed, supremely so, by being permitted not only to behold God, when he shall have assumed a complete dominion, and invested himself with that plenitude of glory which shall accrue to him as the legitimate effect of an impressed sovereignty upon his creation; but, also, by standing in heaven, as an occasion through eternity of the richest developments of wisdom, power, and love which the infinite mind is competent to make. To a higher station than this, or to a more pure and exalted felicity, no holy being will ever aspire. If it be proper to assign a functionary duty to the saint thus elevated, as a medium or occasion through which the Deity will display himself, I would say, that duty will consist in the perpetually reiterated ascription, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy Name be all the glory." Angels and men, an innumerable company of redeemed men, encompassing the throne with a song like this, will tell it to the universe, that Jehovah is the all in all, supreme in heaven, as the centre and source of all blessedness.

I judge, that the question, between the rebel angels and God, and between God and our world, was, not so much whether Jehovah should reign with a high and positive supremacy above them both, as whether he should reign with a supremacy that would imply the nullity of the creature. This is clearly the point in dispute between our

own world and God. And, if I mistake not, the grand and decisive triumph that is to crown the issue of this long and dreadful struggle, is to consist wholly in regaining to the throne of Jehovah, the independent and undisputed sovereignty of the universe. "For, he must reign," says the Apostle, "till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." And when all things shall be subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that did put all things under him, that God may be "all in all." This event will commence a jubilee in the kingdom of God. It will awaken a shout of joy that will peal in thunders on the lowest ear of hell. Then will be brought to pass the saying, "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Thus exalted, he will reign supreme to eternity. In seeing God thus enthroned, and in beholding these increasingly bright and incomparably glorious displays of his natural and moral attributes, by which he will amply confirm his title to exaltation, the happiness of heaven will more immediately consist.

The grand point of difference between a saint on earth and a saint in heaven is, that while the former sees God through a glass darkly, the latter sees

him face to face; while the former knows only in part, the latter knows even also as he is known; and so great is the difference between the nearest approaches which the saint, while in the body, is capable of making to God, and that proximity or intimate vision which he will enjoy in the kingdom of glory, that the former condition is described as being absent from the Lord, the latter as being present with him. It was a fearful doom which a false prophet announced, as prepared for himself, when he said, "I shall behold him, but not now. I shall see him, but not nigh."

I am, indeed, persuaded, that no created being will ever even approach to an intimate knowledge of the essence of the Godhead; and how far his intrinsic glories must be softened, even for the seraph's eye, by interposing mediums, I know not. But this much I know, "the pure in heart shall see God." They shall behold his face in righteousness. No more will the prayer be heard, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." And no more, like the pious Moses, will the wondering saint be hid in the cleft of the rock, by reason of his incapacity to gaze upon the intense brightness of that glory.

It was the language of a saint on earth: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee." How much more will this be the language of a saint in heaven, when he shall actually have come unto God, his exceeding joy! When he shall find himself truly

reposing in the embraces of the God of glory! The joyful soul will then, for the first time, be able to comprehend the import of that promise, "Fear not, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." The glorious God, as the final portion of the pious soul, is the amount of all that is promised, all that is desired, and all that can be possessed. "Father, I will," said the blessed Saviour, "that these whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

Omnipotent power and infinite love could do no more, for man or angel, than to bring him to the enrapturing visions of this glory. No more than this will man or angel ever desire.

The kingdom of God is indeed to be peopled with a glorious throng. The saints are to shine like the sun, for ever and ever, and upon golden thrones will they sit. The robes of angels will be of pure, unclouded light; and the celestial city itself, as the habitation of God's glory, will be like a sea of jasper. But it is not the glory of angels, nor of saints, nor yet of the abode of the saints, that is so ravishing to the soul of the believer. It is the living God that constitutes his exceeding joy. It is from that river of pleasure which flows directly from the foot of his own throne, that the panting soul longs to drink. So the pious David felt, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul



thirsteth for God, the living God. My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." The company of saints and angels may indeed increase immensely the bliss of heaven. But what are they without God? The glory in which they will shine, is but a reflection from that embodied effulgence which emanates from the perfections of the eternal Three. If there be beauty in any object, joy in any heart, or virtue in any bosom, it is because an uncreated, independent, all-sufficient God lives and reigns.

I come now to remark concerning this glory,—

3dly, That it is chiefly to be disclosed through the church, and Jesus Christ as the head and Redeemer of the church.

He has received this appointment; and, from the Father, glory has been given him, which, in answer to his own prayer, his saints shall behold. I say, glory has been given him of the Father. He is himself the brightness of the Father's glory, and in him all fulness dwells. He is, therefore, competent, from the all-sufficient fulness of his own divinity, to impart to every bosom in heaven, the thrill of eternal and ineffable delight. As the Mediator, however, the God-man, he has received this high commission from his Father. But in what way will he execute it? The manifold wisdom of God is to be exhibited through the church, unto principalities and powers in the heavenly places. The absolute riches of his glory he has



determined to display through the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,—prepared for this definite end. This is the circumstance which excites our wonder, that Jesus Jehovah should have selected, as the medium through which he will make this august display, that little company which from time to time came up out of great tribulation, and still greater guilt, having washed their robes and made them white in his blood. It is a wonder in heaven, and it is a wonder on earth; and still, where in the universe besides, could he have found materials for erecting a monument so splendid, durable, and great, to the matchless love and mercy of his soul, as in these poor guilty beings which he thus redeems and exalts? Truly, they will be to him for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory. By disclosing, in their strength and beauty, the relations sustained between the Redeemer and his ransomed people, a display of wisdom, love, mercy, faithfulness and power, will now be made transcendently above what men or angels have ever before witnessed. Having gathered his saints into their everlasting rest, and secured a complete triumph over the last enemy, the divine Redeemer will now sit down in the midst of the throne, encircled with a bow of glory, in sight like unto an emerald. From that spot he will proclaim, for the last time, "*It is finished.*" Over the vast and complicated plan of redeeming mercy, which is now consum-

mated, and now disclosed, every eye in heaven will throw a comprehensive and intuitive glance. From that field of glory, spread with the wonders of the cross, the eye returning will fix with ineffable delight upon the Lamb in the midst of the throne, and the bow that encircles it. Here will be read "mystery of mysteries," "God manifest in the flesh!" Then the sound of innumerable voices, as the shout of a great multitude, and the voice of many waters, will break upon the ear of heaven, in the ecstasies of that blessed song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

This is to constitute the inheritance of God in the saints; yes, the glory of his inheritance in the saints: ah, this will constitute the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints!

II. I come now to the second and last head of discourse, in which the inquiry is made, *What is the hope of glory, and how does it become a foundation of joy to the believer?*

The hope of glory is the hope of a sinner founded in the blood of Christ as constituting an adequate atonement for sin: and it lays a foundation of joy as it gives to the believer a prospective possession of the glory that is to be revealed.

That the hope is received from Christ is expressly asserted in the text: "By whom also," i. e. by Jesus Christ, "we have access by faith into this

grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." That the inheritance of the saints exactly corresponds with this hope, we are assured in these words: "made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." This is what, in another place, he styles the hope laid up in heaven for us.

There is, however, a hope that fastens upon the same blessed inheritance, and communicates to the bosom in which it is nurtured a very sensible and sustaining pleasure, which, yet, is not the Christian's hope of glory. Of this kind the world is full. How are they to be distinguished from each other? I answer: As truth is to be distinguished from falsehood, the day from the night, heaven from hell. In their grand features there is not a shade of resemblance. Look at their origin. In the text it is said,—“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.”

The rock of ages, Jesus Christ, is here placed as a broad and deep substratum, on which the hope of glory is built. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid,” and safely build upon it this animating hope. It is represented, in the text, as the immediate result of justification by faith, and also in that passage which I just now cited, “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of glory.” Aside from that atonement which Christ has made by the shedding of his blood, there is no provision for the justification of the sinner, and, even now, though

an atonement be made, abundantly adequate to sustain the honour and dignity of the divine character while he dispenses pardon to the guilty, no hope of glory can the sinner ever have, until he flees for refuge to lay hold upon it, by yielding his heart in faith to the crucified Redeemer.

The impenitent sinner's hope, on the contrary, is built upon the sand. As a foundation upon which to rear a superstructure for eternity, how vast the difference between this unsubstantial sand and the Rock of ages! But these hopes differ, not less from each other in their legitimate effects upon the heart. That of the Christian, is, in its very nature, purifying. "He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure." It is a hope, too, through which the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. In this way it transforms the soul into the very image of its Maker, and thus prepares it for the inheritance of the saints in light. No matter what may be the worth of that sacrifice paid by the Son of God, to make atonement for sin, the soul is lost that dies a stranger to this purifying hope. The hope of the sinner, however, is not only compatible with the undisturbed repose of every sin, but it is the very aliment on which these plants of death are nourished.

As to the different results of these hopes, I need only say, the one is like the giving up of the ghost when God takes away the soul,—while the other,



on the same event, will be like the breaking of a summer's morning. The one terminates in endless day, the other in eternal night; the one in heaven, the other in hell.

I have before remarked, that this hope constitutes a foundation of joy to the believer by giving him a prospective possession of the heavenly inheritance. The hope of which, I have spoken, renders the possession prospective. But what is intended by possession? The glory of God's kingdom is to be ours in a sense vastly higher than anything we are said to possess in the present life.

In the terrestrial sense, nothing becomes completely ours till every foreign claim is extinguished. In the heavenly, everything becomes ours by extinguishing our own. In the present world our right to possession is founded in the sacrifice we have made or the equivalent we have rendered. In the other, the blood of the cross will seal it to us entire, with no sacrifice of our own, no equivalent given. Here we struggle for possession that we may not be dependent. There we shall surrender all, that our dependence may be complete. It appears paradoxical, but so it is. In heaven we shall own nothing, and yet all things will be ours. We ourselves shall not be our own, for we are bought with a price, and yet the God of glory will be ours. How is this mystery solved? Ah, the wonder is here unfolded: "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Everything becomes



ours by our being God's. It is that blessed union, which makes us one with Christ, that constitutes an identity of possession. When this union is perfected, conflicting interests will cease for ever.

I close with three brief reflections.

1. The saints of God have ample occasion to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. For them a city is prepared, the light of which is to be the Lord God and the Lamb. Are you, at present, the subjects of affliction either from within or without? I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in you. And, besides all this, they are working out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, than you would otherwise have. What is the present condition of your hopes? I fear they are too low and grovelling. They do not bring before your eye the heavenly inheritance in the richness and amplitude of its glorious possessions. If they did, I am sure you, like the Apostle, would long to depart and be with Christ. You would find nothing below these heavens that could charm your vision. The world would be for ever crucified to you, and you to the world. Friends, riches, honours, and emoluments would be alike impotent to claim your preference for this earthly habitation, or to prevent your soul from centering, with eternal joy, upon the dear bosom of your God. The language of your heart would be,—“Whom have I in heaven but thee,

and there is none on the earth that I desire beside thee." O how joyful will be the day when the feet of the saints shall stand within the gates of the city of God; a city which hath no need of the sun or the moon to enlighten it, because the Lord God and the Lamb shall be the perpetual light thereof.

Is there anything fearful in the conflict which at present you are called to sustain with the world, the flesh, and the devil? Let not your heart be troubled. The conflict will speedily issue in a triumph, if you are faithful to him that hath called you to glory and virtue. How can you fail to be conquerors and more than conquerors through him that hath loved you and given himself for you?

Is there anything distressing in the prospect of being shrouded shortly in the night of the grave? Remember, it is but a little while, and you will emerge from that darkness into the splendours of a cloudless and eternal day; a day created by the presence of the Lord God and the Lamb in the holy city above.

I call upon you, then, to rejoice in the prospect of glory not only, but also to live like strangers and pilgrims on the earth, the expectants of a better country. You are journeying to the city of God. Let your loins be girded about, divest yourself of every weight, let nothing impede your course. Why should you linger on these low grounds, where sorrows grow and every pleasure dies?

Above all, be not dead to a sense of that amazing debt of gratitude which you owe to Christ. The glory of which I have spoken was the purchase of his blood. He bestows it upon you as a free gift. If it be thought too much to give in return the little which you call your own, and with that little your soul and body, then I call upon you, in his name, to surrender your hope of glory. For, as God is true, in thus seeking to save your life you will assuredly lose it.

2. God forbid, that in the animating prospect which the heavenly inheritance presents, any of you should be disposed at present to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. In our world beside, there is not a spot where a single plant that is blooming for glory has ever sprung up save at the foot of that cross. It is wonderful, but so it is; our glory springs from abasement: the former abasement of the Saviour, the present abasement of ourselves. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

3. Turn ye to the strongholds, ye prisoners of hope, and ye prisoners of sin. For you, at present, nothing is written on the register of God either within or without, but lamentation, mourning, and woe. No, nor will there ever be, except you flee to Christ, and there ground the weapons of your rebellion. You would be an infinite loser were you to exchange heaven for earth. Compute, then, the loss which strips you of both, and gives you in

exchange an abode in the world of despair. There is but one door through which you can enter the kingdom of glory. That door is Christ Jesus. Nor, is there but one single position by which you can enter, even by him. That is the position which Peter took when he said, "Lord, save or I perish:" or the publican, when he cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The door is open to-day. To-morrow, it may be shut. To-day, the saints invite you to Jesus. To-morrow, they may weep at your tomb. To-day, angels beckon you to glory. To-morrow, you may wail on the darkness of hell. To-day, the Spirit and the bride say, Come. Jesus says, Come, and God, the God of glory, says, Come. If you will come, I am authorized to say, that when He who is the believer's life shall appear, you also shall assuredly appear with him in glory. If not, I am commanded to proclaim it, you shall indeed see the God of glory, but not nigh.

## SERMON IX.

### STRIVING FOR HEAVEN.

“Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able.”—LUKE 13 : 23, 24.

It may perhaps be a matter of surprise to some of you, that I should preach upon such an old text as this. But this text is not so old as many a one that I could select from the Bible, which would appear entirely new to you. And besides, this is not the rule which I adopt in selecting subjects to present to you. I look for such subjects as seem to be adapted to your state, and such as, though they be fraught with the most solemn interest, seem to be the least regarded.

This passage, though it be familiar to the tongue of every child, has nevertheless an import which few adults either understand or appreciate. It contains a decision given by our Saviour on a question of the most vital moment to every living soul. The decision, however, has no immediate reference to the question which gave rise to it. The question was, “Are there few that be saved?” This was in-



directly answered, on another occasion, when our Saviour said,—“Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

But the question decided on this occasion was, whether any could enter heaven without the most intense, laborious, and urgent efforts to do so: and the decision was that they could not. “*Strive* to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will *seek* to enter in and shall not be able.”

*Seeking* is a term which imports something more than a state of inactivity or indifference. It implies a degree of effort, an indefinite degree, both of effort and desire to enter heaven. They may be carried to great length and yet not come up to the point denoted by that strong expression, “*strive* to enter in.” A man may, without having any of that feeling which this term imports, be moral in his life, and pay an outward regard to every law of religion. He may do this from the force of early habit and instruction. He may do it because he sees others do it, or he may do it from an honest conviction of its utility to the general interests of society. In fact he may do it from a heartfelt desire to be saved at last,—for *seeking* implies such a desire,—and yet he may know nothing of those strong emotions, and those high aspirations, and those

ardent efforts which the term *strive* clearly implies.

Let us look then for a moment at the import of this word. The Saviour tells us expressly that *seeking* to enter heaven will not take us there; not because *no* effort is made in this case to enter heaven, but because the effort is defective in point of interest and energy: but, on the other hand, he declares implicitly, that if we *strive* we shall enter in. The only difference between the two terms seems to be, that the one has a more intensive force than the other.

The original word employed by the Saviour, and which is here translated *strive*, is *agonidzesthe*, from the Greek verb *agonidzomai*, to be a combatant, to fight, to strive earnestly, to be in an agony of effort. I mention this simply to show you that our English word *agonize* comes directly from this verb, and, also, to say that the two are substantially of the same import. The Saviour could not have selected from the whole vocabulary of the Greek tongue a word more expressive of intensity and vehemence both in feeling and effort than this. It is the same word which the Greeks used to employ to describe the energy and vehemence with which a competitor in their games contended for the prize. And it is the same word which he would have employed had he undertaken to describe to us the real condition and feelings of a father when hastening to rescue from death a drowning child.

You can see then, how, according to the decision of Christ, a man must feel and act if he would obtain salvation. He must do something more than seek for it, as he would for an object which he really desired, but with the importance of which he was not so deeply impressed as to lead him to make great efforts and sacrifices to obtain it. He must have a feeling very different from that, which though it leads him to seek a given object, is yet not sufficient to rouse up all his powers and put them upon the pursuit.

Now I wish to show you, my dear hearers, that Christ did not upon this occasion use the language of hyperbole; nor did he mark out an extravagant and arbitrary course, which the nature of the case did not demand. He alleged no new or extravagant claim, but told a simple truth, which every sinner was concerned to understand and regard.

What then is there in the circumstances or condition of a sinner to demand such extraordinary efforts to obtain a place in heaven? What is there to create in his mind so deep an interest as is required to lead to these efforts?

Look at his circumstances. Has not the sinner, by being an enemy of God and transgressing his most righteous laws, forfeited all to divine justice? I surely need not go into an argument to prove that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. We hardly need the testimony of God's word to prove this. Our consciousness is sufficient.

But can a transgressor be justified by the law? In no case, whether it be a law of God or of man. The transgressor has incurred the penalty, and he can satisfy the law in no way but by suffering the penalty. The penalty of the law of God is such, that for a transgressor to expiate his own guilt he must suffer for ever. He cannot atone for sin by suffering for any assignable period of time, both because the penalty is not restricted to time, and because also a course of suffering which involves a constant increase of guilt, can make no progress in cancelling a claim to obedience which has been previously violated. This, then, is the condition of every sinner. He has an immortal nature, and must live for ever; but is actually condemned to a state of misery and suffering, which, on account of its indescribable horrors, is called in the scriptures death, and which is to last as long as his being endures. To this he is liable; to this he is exposed; and to this dreadful state the law condemns him and his just desert consigns him. So truly and really is this his condition, that let death hurry an impenitent sinner to-day out of the world, and he will begin to-day to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. I have no disposition to make the matter any worse than it is. I have no pleasure in torturing the mind with sights of woe. But I wish to tell you the truth, and I am bound to do so, by every consideration which either duty or benevolence can suggest. The truth is, the solemn

truth, that sin dooms men to an eternity of suffering, and all that keeps them from entering at once upon that dreadful state is the forbearance of God: and even this gives no assurance to a single impenitent soul that he shall not commence his endless wailings to-day.

Now, it is true, and I love to proclaim it, that Christ has done for us what we could not do for ourselves—he has atoned for our sins. He has borne the curse in our stead. He has virtually revoked the stern decree of the law against us. He has, in short, by the peerless sacrifice which he has offered, so exalted and honoured the law, that if we are not made to suffer its penalty, it will receive no detriment on that account. The pardon of our sins is not only rendered possible, but every way desirable, as tending not only to magnify the grace of God, but also infinitely to improve the condition of man. The provision is so ample, the satisfaction is so complete, that there is, in fact, no necessity whatever, growing out of the nature of the case, that any individual of you should suffer the penalty of the broken law. But you all know very well, that to make an atonement for sin, and actually to save a soul from death, are two very different things. It is one thing to open the way to heaven, and quite another to induce men to walk in it. The offer of a pardon by the Lawgiver, and its acceptance by the guilty transgressor, are things so different in their nature, that



the one does not, in any case, *necessarily* follow the other. The offer of a pardon is an act of God; its acceptance, the act of the sinner. The power to pardon is already obtained, and the heavenly gift is offered to all; but it depends on the will of the sinner, whether it shall be accepted or not. If accepted, it must be accepted in a certain way:—with due confessions of guilt,—with an humble heart,—with a trustful mind, and with an obedient, grateful, adoring spirit. There are, in fact, mighty difficulties in the way to entering heaven, after all;—difficulties having reference, not to the provisions of mercy, which are most ample and free, but to the inclinations of the sinner, which are always and powerfully averse to the conditions of pardon. These conditions are such as to secure two ends,—essential, in the nature of the case, to the success of the plan,—viz., the glory of God in our salvation, and a suitable preparation on our part for the enjoyment of heaven. The conditions are therefore not arbitrary, but originate in the nature of the case.

You see, then, my hearers, that notwithstanding the ample provision which has been made for our pardon and salvation, through the sacrifice of Christ, the issue rests altogether with conditions which none are inclined to perform, and which comparatively few ever have performed, even through the help of God. “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life,

and few there be which go in thereat." That word, "*strait*," indicates not only the existence, but the greatness of these difficulties. The gate is contracted; the way, through which we pass into heaven, narrow and difficult.

Look, for a moment, at the nature of these difficulties,—at the magnitude of these obstacles. They may be arranged under three heads: Example, Custom, and Nature.

1. Example. Who has power to breast himself against the influence of popular sentiment, ever flowing in one direction, and always with an urgent and resistless tide? The spirit of the world, which is antagonistical to that of the gospel, moulds its habits, and manners, and opinions, which, though they be not always opposed to the outward forms of religion, are always at variance with its inward and humble spirit. Religion has never acquired such an ascendancy in the world, that there was not always a heavy balance in the scale of popular influence against it; so that almost the first difficulty which presents itself to the mind of that man, who is beginning seriously to ponder the question of a personal consecration to God, is that which rests in the contempt that awaits such a change, and the overpowering influence of that scornful sentiment and adverse example which prevail around him. Men, in general, scorn to be thought wanting in decision and independence of character. They spurn the imputa-

tion of being swayed and bent from the upright position of an independent judgment, by the force of popular sentiment. But, the truth is, there is not one man in a thousand, who has the moral courage to be a Christian, even where the internal convictions are all in favour of it. Men are enslaved by the power of example. Its influence over them is like a mighty spell, which it requires a superhuman power to break. It meets them everywhere,—it is felt at all times and in all places. On the impetuous current of this mighty stream, millions have been borne to the gulf of ruin.

Need I say, that he who goes to heaven, must go there in the face of this influence? Not a soul ever entered the strait gate but he came in direct conflict with this power, and, through grace, triumphed over it. But how many, let me ask, are likely to do this? How many have the moral courage even to attempt it? When we look at the invincible power and the all-pervading nature of this influence, who does not see that it opposes a mighty obstacle in the way to salvation, an obstacle which can never be vanquished, unless it be met in the spirit of our Lord's injunction to *strive*, to agonize, to enter in at the strait gate.

2. But, secondly, let us look at the influence of personal habits and customs. The sinner is accustomed to sin. Every one of his habits, of a moral nature, has been formed under its influence. It is

the atmosphere in which he has lived, and moved, and breathed. It has encircled him from the first dawn of life. I do not mean, by this, that he has no amiable dispositions, and no moral habits; but simply that the heart, the seat of spiritual life, has been wrong,—that its affections have been perverse, its thoughts wicked, its desires and aims contrary to the will of God;—in short, that there has been a constant aversion cherished towards that great law which binds us to love God supremely, and our neighbour as ourselves. From such a heart have our habits sprung, and in such a soil have they taken root.

Who is ignorant of the power of habit? Even where it holds no relation to the moral feelings, it is often so strong as to produce involuntary action. What then must be its force when it is inwoven with all the moral sensibilities of the heart, and has acquired such an ascendancy as renders it the tyrant of our thoughts and passions? What must be its power, when it has been constantly acquiring, from the first dawn of being, its strong dominion over the soul? Well might the prophet exclaim, in view of this fact, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.”

Now, these habits, so deeply rooted, so long cherished, so undisputed in their sway, and so ascendent in their power, are every one of them,

like so many cords, binding us to our idols and our lusts. Under their mighty impulse, the sinner is rushing on to ruin. He goes headlong, and the attractions of heaven are insufficient to draw him an inch out of a straight line to perdition. But if a man would enter the narrow gate, and pass on to heaven, must not these iron chains be broken, and the soul be emancipated, completely emancipated, from the dominion of these tyrant habits? It is as clear that this must be done, to insure our happiness hereafter, as it is that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

I put it to your reason to decide, whether any of those feeble and heartless efforts which are referred to by our Saviour, when he says, many shall *seek* to enter in and shall not be able, will do this work? I ask, if anything short of that great, and determined, and desperate struggle, indicated in the word *strive*, agonize to enter, can give us emancipation from this dreadful power?—freedom from this debasing thralldom? Even the drunkard, in contending against the force of a single habit, that has its stronghold in his appetite only, must do all this. How much more the sinner, whose habits are like the twisted roots of the oak, which not only branch in a thousand directions, but strike so deep that it can stand erect against the blasts of a tempest. Let the sinner seriously ponder this point, and I am sure he will be convinced that "many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."



3. Thirdly. There is a still more serious difficulty than any which I have yet named. The sinner, to enter the strait gate, must contend against the force of nature itself, and with a power that shall subdue it. I speak here of our moral nature, and mean no more than the Apostle meant, when he said, "The carnal mind is enmity against God;"—"In me, i. e. in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing;"—"And were, *by nature*, children of wrath, as even others."

The moral nature of man is wholly corrupt. There is not a single cord in the heart that vibrates to the love of God. And, worse than this, if the inspired testimony just cited above is to be credited, there is a deep and implacable disaffection cherished there towards God. And to show you that this is not the transient and occasional state of a few individuals, but that it is a moral disease, deeply radicated in every heart, and incorporated into the moral nature of man, it is only necessary to state, that the Scriptures declare that there is no difference, in this respect, between the Jew and the Greek, between one man and another. All observation corroborates the truth of this statement, and universal experience demonstrates that no invention of man has ever been able to heal the dreadful malady.

Now, you will observe, that it is this state of the heart that renders man susceptible to temptation. It is this, which gives to the world such a mighty

power over him:—which renders him so easy a prey to its allurements, its fascinations, its deceitfulness, and to the wiles of the devil. He has that in his heart which responds to their calls, and gives him right into their power. All these things stand between him and heaven. He is surrounded on every hand with enemies, with whose fair speech he is charmed, but in whose coils he is bound hand and foot, and hurried on blindfold to the pit.

I ask then, what is the sinner's prospect as it respects heaven? If the influence of example and habit and nature is to be overcome, or his being lost, lost for ever, lost in hell, is there not room, I ask, for the most gloomy forebodings, the most painful and distressing apprehensions? True, the Saviour has died; an atonement for sin has been made: but, what will all this avail, if he can have no interest in heavenly things, unless he shall break through these influences and subdue these hostile and mighty powers? The prospect is indeed distressingly dark and gloomy. All this, however, is possible, for many have already entered the strait gate through these same obstacles and gone to heaven. But are there *few* that be saved? The solemn response is "*many*,"—"*many* shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

That no obscurity may rest upon any part of this interesting subject, I wish now to say, that God has not only removed every obstacle to our salvation, which his justice and the penalty of the vio-

lated law created, but has in his infinite mercy freely tendered to every sinner the assistance necessary to enable him to overcome those other obstacles which we have just mentioned. These were not touched by the atonement. They are as much in our way to heaven, and retain their power as completely as though Christ had never died. The obstacles created by the law are removed, but these are not removed. Our habits of sin and our love of sin retain their full force; our inclinations and desires are as selfish and wayward and wicked as they would have been if Christ had not died. The world is just as much a foe to grace as it ever was; and Satan is just as artful, and plies us with his temptations as assiduously, as though no plan for our salvation had ever been devised. It is true, we have other motives to stimulate and nerve us to the conflict, than we should have had if Christ had not suffered for us. But what have motives to do with removing difficulties? They may stimulate our minds to a more zealous and powerful conflict with them. But can they change our nature? Can they diminish the power of temptation, or weaken the force of habit? In no way only as they may animate us to encounter and resist them. But can they do even this, on the mind that is closed against their influence? Not at all. We see then how dangerous and pitiable is the condition of every sinner, notwithstanding what has been done for him by the death of Christ. There

remain for him, enemies to encounter, which he has no heart to meet and no power to vanquish. I mean by this that he has no disposition to meet them. The condition, therefore, of every sinner would be perfectly helpless and desperate, were it not for that infinite love of God, which, not content with making an atonement for sin, freely tendered him his almighty aid to enable him to overcome those obstacles to his salvation which existed after an atonement had been made.

But it is necessary that I should say a word upon the nature and extent of that aid which God proffers us. Do you not know that there are many who suppose that God offers to remove these difficulties himself, and exempt the sinner from all responsibility in reference to them? This view of the subject is, however, utterly fallacious. God makes no such offer to any sinner. The sentiment is entirely at variance with every precept which he has given to the sinner, especially with every injunction like that which our text contains. The Saviour says,—“Strive to enter in at the strait gate.” Would he address such language as this to the sinner, if there were no difficulties in his way, or if he expected to remove them all himself? By no means. The truth is, God does not propose to take one of these difficulties out of the way. He simply offers to help the sinner to overcome them. And without his hearty concurrence and co-operation, not one of these obstacles will God ever re-



move. The sinner, it is true, can do nothing without God's help. God will, also, do nothing without the sinner's most cordial concurrence and co-operation. Divine intervention is needed, chiefly, to open the blind eyes of the transgressor, that he may see his true condition; to rouse up his sleeping heart, that he may attend to the claims of God, and feel the bitterness of sin; and to nerve up his feeble and slumbering energies, that he may contend successfully against the enemies of his soul.

True indeed it is, that regeneration, by which I mean that change in the heart which transforms it from enmity to love, is entirely the work of God: but what is this, so far as it respects our present state, other than a thorough preparation for that victorious conflict with our spiritual enemies to which our Saviour in the text exhorts us. It is the Spirit which clothes us with that burnished armour with which we go to the conflict. It is not the Spirit, however, that wears the armour; it is ourselves. It is not the Spirit that presses on through floods and flames to the kingdom of God; it is the sinner, under the quickening, animating, strengthening power of the Spirit of God. It is not the Spirit that conquers our habits of sin, and breaks the influence of a corrupt example, and spurns the allurements of the world, and defeats the machinations of the adversary. It is the sinner, animated with the love of God and filled with the inspirations of hope and faith, through the



power of the Holy Ghost. It is, in short, not the Spirit that strives to enter in at the strait gate, but it is the sinner whose eyes have been opened by the Spirit to a full view of the difficulties that obstruct the passage, and the amazing interests that are staked on the success of the effort. How clear, therefore, it is, that as the atonement of Christ has not removed these difficulties, so neither has the Spirit of God; and, that there exists the same necessity for intense, resolute, urgent effort on our part, that there would be if heaven and eternal glory depended entirely on ourselves. O yes, and how obvious it is that this is the great end of the Spirit's high commission to the sinner's heart, to rouse him up to this great struggle, and to strengthen him for this mighty effort! And if he cannot succeed in this, omnipotent as this glorious agent is, and free and full as his love towards the sinner may be, he can never, by any other appliances or through any other medium, bring that sinner into heaven.

If a man, launching his bark from the shore at Chippewa, should row vigorously till he had reached the centre of the Niagara, and should then haul in his oars, and commit his frail vessel to the power of the current, would he have any reason to expect that he should reach the opposite shore? If he had the energies of a giant, would that prevent his being carried down the cataract, and buried in the gulf below? An expectation of reaching the oppo-

site shore entertained by that man, when folding his arms and whistling to the fury of the current, would be just as reasonable, as an expectation of reaching heaven entertained by the sinner who sees himself borne down on the current of worldliness and sin to the gulf of perdition, and yet will make no resolute efforts to resist the tide and bear himself to a place of safety. Of what avail is it that the Spirit of God, omnipotent in his power, tenders his aid to the sinner, and visits his heart, if, after all, that sinner cannot be roused to such a state of feeling and effort as are indicated by the emphatic language of our Saviour used in the text? Believe me, dying sinner, the Spirit of God has not come into the world that he might leave you to slumber, while he fights your enemies, and through mighty obstacles opens to you the way to the kingdom of heaven. This is not the manner in which he teaches us to fight the good fight of faith. This is not the meaning of that exhortation,—“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;” nor of that urgent language of Christ,—“Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” No, no: it is the Spirit’s work to show you your sins,—it is yours to flee from them. It is the Spirit’s work to convince you of your danger,—it is yours to escape it. It is the Spirit’s work to impress you with the magnitude of the difficulties that environ your way to heaven,—it is yours to

encounter these difficulties. It is the Spirit's work to convince you of your helpless condition,—it is yours to cast yourself upon Christ. In short, it is the Spirit's work to arm you for the warfare, it is yours to go forth to the conflict and to conquer.

Now let me inquire, has not this blessed Spirit often tendered you his aid to bring about these very ends? Have you not frequently had an awakened sense of guilt, and a keen perception of your danger? Has not some secret voice frequently whispered to your guilty conscience,—“Awake, O sinner, and escape for thy life?” Have not urgent admonitions often troubled thy soul; and guilty fears come thronging on thy heart? O yes, this heavenly Spirit has often knocked thus at your door,—

“Has waited long, is waiting still,  
You treat no other friend so ill.”

Here is the difficulty. You have refused to hear his voice. You have resisted his admonitions. You have barred the door to his entrance. This is the reason, why to-day, surrounded with spiritual enemies, and with your way to heaven all blocked up with difficulties, you are in a repose as quiet and secure as though the battle had been fought and the victory won. This is the reason why, instead of having to-day a bright prospect of heaven, you are on the very verge of ruin.

And this consideration, the consideration that

though so great a work remains to be done, there is no certainty as to the length of time remaining to do it in, very greatly enhances the force and importance of our Saviour's exhortation.

If you had a work to do which with ordinary advantages it would take a year to accomplish, and which according to the contract was to be completed in that time, or a heavy forfeiture to be incurred, how would you feel and what would you do under circumstances which left you but half of the year to perform it in? Would not the time increase in value just in proportion as it was diminished in quantity; and would not your energies be put forth and your efforts acquire vigour in the same ratio? Undoubtedly they would. Now the work which you have to do, as I have already shown you, to prepare for a better world, is in its nature far more difficult than any earthly enterprise. The time assigned by Heaven for its performance, is already cut down, it may be, to a mere fraction of the whole amount, so that instead of years, you have possibly only a few days or a few hours of it left. The forfeiture to be incurred in case the work is not done, is a loss of heaven, never to be regained, a destruction in hell never to be brought to a close. And can you, under these circumstances, suffer trifles to divert your attention? Can you slumber and sleep, while the current of time is rushing on, and while the decisive hour and the solemn assize are drawing near? O that I could



arouse you to your danger, to a sense of the urgent and pressing exigencies of your condition. The importance of salvation to an immortal soul, who can estimate? The sufferings and death of Christ shadow it forth to some degree. They prove to us that Heaven, which is able to comprehend the mighty interests of an eternity, thought no sacrifice too great to be made, to create a simple possibility of salvation to a lost sinner; for after all that God has done, in opening the way of life, the righteous are even now "scarcely saved." O how great was that sacrifice! No greater could be made. The universe furnished no object to be compared with it in value. It was the Creator of the universe; it was God's dear Son, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that was offered a sacrifice for sin. On him were laid our iniquities. In his death we have expiation of our guilt. Here we may read the value of the soul. In this we may see the price which God hath set upon it. O what wonders, wrought by omnipotent power and love, to prevent our ruin and save us from hell! And yet, after all, so blind and infatuated is the sinner, that he goes down to death.

The difficulties in the way of effecting his escape from ruin, are indeed great and numberless, after all that God has done for him, but they are not invincible. Aided by almighty grace, which is most freely and abundantly offered to all, not a sinner will ever go to hell because the difficulties



in his way to heaven were insurmountable. Men will go to death because they would not accept the proffered help of God, and strive to enter into life. They will be overwhelmed with destruction, because they would not take warning and flee to the refuge which God had provided. But remember what I have told you in this discourse. You may obtain heaven and eternal glory through Jesus Christ, if you will resolutely, in the help of God, rise up against your sins and crucify them; resist the current of the world, which is a foe to God and grace; and trusting for pardon to the blood of Christ, and to his Spirit for sanctification, take your hitherto alienated affections and give them to God, and your powers of soul and body and consecrate them to his service, actively and perpetually. You may thus secure everlasting peace and rest and glory. Nothing short of this will do. Nothing less will make heaven sure. Certain I am, the Saviour meant all this when he said, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate;" and, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me." If this seem too much to perform, then consider whether it be as much as Christ did, not for himself but for you; and consider, also, whether a man is profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul. Consider, too, whether it be as much as it would be to suffer the unalleviated miseries of an eternal death. Come to a decision to-day, then; a decision that

shall shape your future course, and mark out your future destiny; a decision which you will not have occasion to regret when you shall see the righteous and the wicked separated to their final and everlasting abodes in the world to come. But it is time to conclude.

1. From our subject, thus discussed, we see why it is that so few, even of those who have some solicitude about their salvation, and are strictly moral in their deportment, and always respectful towards religion, ever attain to a satisfactory and well-established confidence of their interest in God's love. They have never made thorough work of religion. They have rested in its forms. They have shunned its crosses. They have reluctated to forsake all for Christ. They have had convictions of guilt; they have made some sacrifices to religion, but never gave the whole heart to God: never, with unwavering purpose and undivided affections, consecrated all to him. Can any doubt but all this class belong to that miserable company of whom the Saviour said, "They shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able?"

2. Again: Is it not clear from our subject, that there are many in the church on earth who will never enter heaven?

We see multitudes who are amiable in their dispositions, and upright in their conduct, and even regular in the outward observance of religious duties, who yet seem to want that fervent, energetic, ab-

sorbing, consecrated spirit, which the Saviour, in our text, clearly makes essential to salvation. I know there are seasons of declension with true Christians, when their faith and love and zeal are so low that they can hardly be said to be *seeking* after heaven, much less *striving* for it. But they will not always live after this manner. There is reason to believe that seasons of such deep declension, with true Christians, will not last long. But I speak rather of those who are uniformly without that deep interest in religion,—and who never make that solemn consecration of their bodies and souls to God, which we have reason to believe belongs, at some period, to every true Christian's experience, and which, for the most part, characterizes his history ever after his conversion. There is the most solemn ground of fear in reference to all this class. "Many (said the Saviour) will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." It is a dreadful thought that any should go down from the church; from its ordinances and prayers and privileges and fellowship, to dwell for ever with the enemies of God; to spend an eternity in cursing and blaspheming his name. O let me be faithful and assure you all that neither a moral life, nor a Christian name, nor a religious profession, will ever answer the high.

demands of God or open to your souls the gate of heaven. It is the heart that he claims, and the whole heart, and if he has that, he will have everything; the powers of body and of soul will be devoted to him entirely and for ever. Then shall you each be able to say at the close of your career, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me at that day." Blessed, thrice blessed will you be, if when you come to leave the world, you can thus look back upon a life that has been devoted to God. It will give you more joy in that hour than it would to have all the riches and honours and sceptres of the earth, brought and laid at your feet. O be wise then, and from henceforth let the soul and God and heaven reign in your thoughts and command your every power. Strive, O "strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

## SERMON X.

### CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”—MATT. 28 : 19.

THE ministers of Christ derive from this passage their authority to baptize with water. Here is contained the institution of the Christian ordinance of baptism. Christians, of every name, are agreed, as it respects their views of the origin and authority of this rite. They believe it to have been divinely instituted, and to be obligatory upon all the disciples of Christ. But their views, with respect to the mode in which the rite is to be administered, are not so harmonious. The Baptist denomination, it is well known, differs from the Presbyterian Church, in this respect, not only, but also from all other denominations of Christians throughout the world. They make the essence of the rite to consist, not in the application of water, in honour of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but in an entire submersion of the body in this element. They hold that no baptism is valid, no administration of the rite scriptural, but that which is performed in this particular way. A minister



may sprinkle or pour water, or apply it in any other manner to the person of a convert, that convert has not been baptized, in their view, until his whole body has been actually plunged and buried in the liquid element. And so tenacious are they of this sentiment, so certain of its correctness, so assured, beyond all doubt, that the Bible neither authorizes nor admits of any other way, that they reject all who have not been so baptized from their communion; and thus exclude from their fellowship by far the greater and more eminent portion of the church of God.

All will acknowledge, that, to justify such a course of conduct, the evidence in favour of that mode of baptism should be very clear and explicit. It should be so perfectly plain that no honest mind could possibly mistake it.

*We shall proceed now to inquire whether such be really the fact.*

But, preliminary to this, I shall just state, that during the five years which I have laboured here, I have never once taken up this subject, publicly to investigate and discuss it. The reason of my silence has been, not that I felt myself unable to vindicate, from the word of God, the practice of our church, in relation to this doctrine; but that I have ever been under the influence of a predominant desire to maintain peace with our brethren of the Baptist Church, and also to refrain from diverting the attention of inquiring sinners or rejoicing

converts from those things which I knew to be of infinitely greater importance to them, than any question relating to the manner in which water should be applied to them in the external rite of baptism. I have been ready, at all times, to communicate my views to such as have come to me for instruction upon this subject; but I believe all will bear me witness, that I have made no efforts at proselyting. I have been willing to leave young converts to go to the word of God, and make up a decision for themselves. And I should be willing and desirous to be so still, were I not compelled, by the constant efforts which are made by our Baptist brethren, honestly, no doubt, but tending at the same time to harass and unsettle the minds of young converts, in relation to this matter. For a series of Sabbaths, their attention has been called to the mode of baptism, both in the church and at the water's edge, and frequently, too, at the domestic fireside; and, in some instances, members of our own church have been solicited to change their views, in relation to the subject in question.

Now, I do not complain of this course, so much as I lament it. Controversies on baptism are, to revivals of religion, just what water is to fire. They always check, if they do not entirely suppress them. And this is one very convincing proof to me, that the *mode* of baptism is not one of those important things for which the great Head of the church would have us *earnestly contend*.

Nevertheless, when a thing, unimportant in itself, is so far magnified as to be made the occasion of stumbling, and dissension, and reproach in the church, it is then time to rise and strip it of its borrowed worth, and sink it down to its proper level.

The ordinance of baptism, I allow, indeed, is not unimportant. No class of Christians esteem it so. It is a divinely constituted rite. But the quantity of water used in administering the rite, and the mode of applying it, are, in our view, circumstances that possess no marked consequence.

Why was water appointed to be used in this ordinance, in preference to anything else? Undoubtedly, because it constituted an expressive emblem of the purifying of the heart by the Holy Ghost. The fitness of the symbol resides in the *nature*, not in the *quantity* of water used. A pailful is just as emblematical of moral purity as an ocean; and a pint just as expressive as either. Hence, the fitness or expressiveness of the emblem has nothing to do with the quantity of water, nor with the manner in which it is applied. Water is water, whether there be more or less of it, and whether it be applied in one way or another. Hence, we say, that a small quantity of it sprinkled upon the forehead of an individual, is just as significant of moral purity, as a quantity sufficiently large to bathe the body in. This, I believe, is a common-sense decision. And Christ has taught

us the same thing. When he came to Peter, with the intention to wash his feet, this disciple thought the office too humiliating to his Master. He therefore said to him, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Christ replied, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Peter thought, if that was the case, he had better be washed all over. "Not my feet only," said he, "but my hands and my head." But Christ informed him, that the application of a little water to his feet, was just as expressive as an entire bathing: "He that is washed, needeth not," said he, "save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." This declaration we consider decisive, in respect to what the power of such an emblem consists in. As an emblem, water is used in this ordinance, as I have remarked, to represent that inward moral purity which is effected by the operations of the Holy Spirit.

Now, the operations of this Spirit, in the regeneration and sanctification of the soul, are never compared to immersion in water. They are never represented under this figure. They are uniformly described in language appropriate to *sprinkling* or *pouring*. "Ye shall receive power," says one of the Apostles, "after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." "*Is come upon you,*" are words marking the act of the Spirit, in administering the spiritual baptism. "Jesus being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father

the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath *shed forth* this which ye now see and hear." "Hath shed forth," are words pointing out the mode in which the spiritual baptism is given. To fall upon, to pour out upon, and to sprinkle, are expressions also used to mark the act of the Spirit in bestowing the spiritual baptism. These various expressions certainly determine, that a man may be baptized in an element, by having that element poured upon him, shed forth upon him, come upon him, fall upon him. They exactly describe the act of baptizing by sprinkling or pouring. But they cannot be twisted or tortured so as to agree with the idea of immersion.

This view of the subject is well supported by a reference to those prophecies which contain allusions to the particular state of the Church in gospel times. In the 52d chapter of Isaiah, we have a prophecy of this description. It commences with the 13th verse, and extends to the end of the next chapter. In this prophecy, particular mention is made of one of those ordinances which Christ should establish, and extend to many nations. This ordinance is baptism. The 15th verse of the 52d chapter reads thus: "So shall he sprinkle many nations." "As many were astonished at him, so shall he sprinkle many nations." This was a prediction informing the Jews how things should be in the Church when Christ should appear in the world.

Now, to understand this clearly, we must recol-



lect, that Moses, who was a type of Christ, sprinkled one nation, and only one. This was the Jews. The Apostle speaks thus of the transaction: "For when Moses had spoken every precept, to all the people, according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and *sprinkled* both the book and *all the people.*" The Prophet informs the Jews, that, when Christ should come, he would do differently from this, not differently as it respected the *mode* of applying the baptism, but as it respected the *number* to which he would extend the ordinance. He would sprinkle, not *one* nation, but *many*. "So shall he sprinkle many nations." Now, we may safely challenge any one to show us anything that looks like a fulfilment of this prophecy, if it be not found in the Christian ordinance of baptism. And this ordinance was instituted by Christ himself, and enjoined in these words, "Go ye, therefore, and teach *all nations, baptizing them* in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

If this be not the fulfilment of that prophecy, "So shall he sprinkle *many nations,*" then we ask any one to tell us where it has been fulfilled. There is nothing like sprinkling in the whole Christian economy but baptism. In *baptizing* all nations, therefore, the disciples of Christ were instructed to go and *sprinkle* them.

A similar prophecy is found also in the 36th

chapter of Ezekiel, 24-26: "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 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. "A new heart, also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."

This prophecy refers to the time when the Jews, who are now dispersed throughout all countries, shall be brought back to their own land. Then it is, that Christ will *sprinkle* clean water upon them. When they forsake their infidelity and become Christians, then the Christian ordinance of baptism shall be administered to them, not by *immersion*, but by *sprinkling*. This seems to me to be the plain and simple import of the passage. And I am free to say, that no passages in the Bible are as clear and explicit in defining the mode of baptism as these.

Yet our Baptist brethren, just as though they were in possession of an explicit precept to baptize by immersion, triumphantly challenge us to produce explicit authority from scripture to justify an administration of the ordinance by sprinkling.

Where is their authority for administering the rite by immersion? Is the word immerse, or dip, or plunge used at all in the scriptures, in connexion with the ordinance of baptism? Not once, to my knowledge. Is the word sprinkle, or pour,

used in connexion with this subject? Yes, repeatedly, as I have just shown you.

But the Baptists assert, that the word which the translators of the Bible have rendered baptize, means to *immerse* or *plunge*, and ought, in *all* cases, to have been so rendered.

I deny that this is correct. I could easily refer you to numerous instances where this word was used by Greek authors, authors who lived and wrote near the times of the Apostles, to signify to stain, to tinge, to wash, to sprinkle. Learned authors, in every age, who have had occasion to advert to the meaning of this word at all, have declared it to be one of equivocal import; i. e. a word used in various senses. It sometimes means to sprinkle; sometimes to tinge or stain; sometimes to immerse. Homer, the prince of Grecian poets, says of a certain lake, that it was *baptized*,—this is the word which he uses,—*baptized* with the blood of a frog. He certainly did not mean *immersed* in its blood, but only *tinged* with it. Aristotle, another eminent Greek writer, who lived before Christ, speaks of a substance, which, being pressed with the hand, *baptizes* it. He meant only, that it *stains* it. I could here mention a large number of names, of the most learned men who have ever flourished in the Church, some of them living near the times of the Apostles, and some of them later, who have given their opinion in so many words, that the original Greek word, translated baptize,

means to sprinkle as well as to immerse. The primary signification of its root is to stain, dye, colour, and not to immerse. The derivative includes all these meanings.

It is plain to see, therefore, that the *mode*, in which water is applied in baptism, cannot be determined at all by the import of the word. But, we must ascertain, as far as we can, how the inspired writers understood and applied the term. They are the best expounders of their own language. When they used the word *baptism*, did they intend to be understood as referring to a plunging of the whole body under water, and that the ordinance of baptism could be administered in no other way? We say, by no means. Let us now examine this question.

Though this word frequently occurs in the original Greek of the New Testament, it has not once been translated either to dip, or plunge, or immerse. Now, it is very singular, that these learned translators should not have given this rendering to the word in one single instance, if its import be so obvious as the Baptists say it is. In all the instances in which it is used, in reference to the sacrament of baptism, they have translated it *baptize*. In other instances they have rendered it *wash*. And in no instance, plunge or immerse.

There is a passage recorded in Mark 7 : 4, that will help us, in some measure, to determine how Christ understood and employed this word.



Speaking of the traditions of the Pharisees, he says, "And many other things they have received, as the *washing* [Greek, *baptisms*] of cups, pots, brazen vessels, and tables." The cups might easily enough have been immersed in order to cleanse them. But will any one pretend that the other articles, especially the tables, or rather couches, for that is the meaning of the word, and they were large enough to seat three or four persons:—will any one pretend that these were cleansed by *immersing* them in water? It cannot be supposed. Here, then, is a use of the word baptism where it cannot mean immersion.

The word occurs in another place where the meaning is still more clear and decisive. The Apostle, (Heb. 9 : 10,) speaking of the Jewish service, represents it as having consisted "in meats and drinks, and divers *washings*," in the original Greek, *divers baptisms*. What did he mean by *divers baptisms*? How were the *baptisms* administered? He tells us in the 13th verse of this chapter, "For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, *sprinkling* the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh," &c. We are informed, also, in Num. 8 : 7, that these baptisms were administered by sprinkling. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, take the Levites from the children of Israel and *cleanse*," or *baptize*, "them. And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them, *sprinkle* water of purifying upon them."



From these and similar passages which abound in scripture, it cannot but be seen, and seen clearly, that the word baptism is interpreted, by the sacred writers themselves, to mean *sprinkling*. This fact being admitted, and it will be denied by no candid person, the interpretation given to this word by the Baptists, is certainly shown to be false. While there is not a single passage of scripture in which it can certainly be determined that the word *baptize* is used to denote dipping or immersing, there are several in which it is certainly used to denote pouring or sprinkling.

We find another argument, to prove that immersion is not the only valid mode of baptism, drawn from the manner in which the application of water is spoken of. The same day in which Christ ascended to heaven, he said to his disciples: "John truly baptized *with* water, but ye shall be baptized *with* the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." If Christ had been speaking of immersion here, would he have said, *baptized WITH* water, baptized *with* the Holy Ghost? And how would it have read, had he used the word *immerse*, or *plunge*, instead of baptize, "John, indeed, immersed or plunged you *with* water, but ye shall be immersed or plunged with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence;" and yet, on the Baptist theory, this translation is much more correct than the one which stands in our Bibles.

But I shall proceed now to a particular conside-

ration of the several instances of baptism which are mentioned in the New Testament. A particular and candid examination of these with their attendant circumstances, if it does not help us to determine the precise *mode* in which baptism was administered by the Apostles, may nevertheless assist us to ascertain the validity of those exclusive claims which our Baptist brethren set up; for it ought to be borne in mind through the whole discussion, that they not only claim to be right themselves, but they assume the province to say that everybody else is wrong. They hold that the mode is so essential to baptism, that there is no such thing as being baptized without being immersed. We, on the contrary, hold that water applied by an authorized person in the name of the Trinity, whether it be done by sprinkling, pouring, or plunging, is valid baptism.

Every one must see that our Baptist brethren assume high ground, and that to justify them in doing so, they ought to be able to produce the most unequivocal, Scripture instructions upon this subject. But everybody knows that nothing like an express precept can be found in the Bible enjoining the administration of this rite by immersion. Nor do they, to my knowledge, ever pretend that there is any such precept. But they make much of example, which is everything in this business. They call upon us to follow Christ down the banks of the Jordan and to lie by his side in a watery grave;

though the baptism which Christ received was not the ordinance which he himself instituted and enjoined upon us, nor did he command us to imitate him in those respects. These are two things which they always *assume* to be true, but never did and never can prove them to be so.

In the first place, they take it for granted that the baptism administered by John was Christian baptism, whereas this cannot be proved,—but, on the contrary, it can be easily proved that it was not Christian baptism.

This is evident from the fact, that those disciples which were baptized by John, as soon as they came to know and believe on Christ, were baptized over again. There is certain proof of this. “Paul came to Ephesus,” says the Bible, “and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism? Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him;” i. e. on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Why were these disciples rebaptized? Evidently because they had not received the Christian baptism.

John had never used the name of Christ in the

administration of baptism. Nor did he ever know him until his own course was almost ended. But that cannot be Christian baptism, which is not administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. For the baptism which Christ instituted was expressly commanded to be administered in this way. The baptism of John, therefore, can furnish no comment upon the command of Christ to baptize.

“The apostles, preaching in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, addressed *all* their hearers as destitute of Christian baptism. ‘Repent,’ said they, ‘and be baptized *every one* of you in the name of Jesus Christ.’ Jerusalem had, however, only two or three years before, been baptized of John in Jordan. How could the apostles call upon *every one* of their hearers to receive baptism, except on the supposition that John did not administer the baptism which they preached?”

The baptism of John can therefore afford no example and no authority for our practice at this day. It was not the baptism instituted by Christ.

But as the Baptists rely much upon the example of Christ, and lay very great stress upon his going down *into* the water and coming up *out of* the water, it will be necessary to attend to this case a little farther. Admit, for a moment, that John administered the true Christian baptism to Christ, and that our Lord was actually baptized in his *own name*, and baptized unto *repentance* too, though he

had no sins to repent of. Suppose that all this could and really did take place, and our Saviour's baptism is an authoritative example for us: can it be proved after all that Christ was *immersed*? Does the history of this transaction state any such thing? Not at all. It is indeed said that Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water. But that does not prove that he was immersed. The proposition translated *out of* in this passage,—“He went up straightway *out of* the water,” may, with equal propriety, and as many pious and learned men have supposed, with far greater propriety, be rendered *from*. “And straightway coming up *from* the water, he saw the heavens opened.” This word is so translated in almost innumerable instances in the New Testament. The same remarks are true as applied to the prepositions *in* and *into*. “And Jesus was baptized of John, *at* Jordan, and straightway coming up *from* the water.” Every one at all acquainted with the Greek, knows that had these prepositions been so translated, it would have been entirely correct. They are far more frequently translated so than in any other way in the New Testament. The passage thus rendered would be very far from suggesting the idea that our Saviour was baptized by immersion.

But suppose that he really did step into the water, which is a point that can never be certainly proved, is it certain that he was immersed after he arrived there? By no means. It was as easy to



apply water by sprinkling or pouring, to a person standing in the brim of a river or waist-deep in it, as it would be in this house or in any other place.

But you are struck with the circumstance that John and the apostles of Christ should be so often found at the river Jordan, and in places where there was much water, administering baptism. You inquire why, if they administered the ordinance by sprinkling or pouring, did they not do it in houses and churches as we do? I shall show you by and by that they did frequently administer it in this way. But to explain the reason why they were ever found administering this ordinance in any other places than houses and churches.

In the first place: There were no houses nor churches sufficiently large to accommodate the vast congregations which attended on the preaching of John and the disciples of Christ.

The people were not at that day divided into fixed and settled congregations as we are, every one having his own house of worship. There were indeed synagogues, but the disciples of Christ were excluded from them, and most of the preaching was performed in the open air. The great multitudes also who attended on the preaching of these men, passed days and weeks away from home, at these places of religious instruction. It was absolutely necessary therefore in that hot climate, where fountains and streams of water were extremely scarce, to select stations where water in abundance

could be obtained for the refreshment of the great multitudes of men and beasts with which they were constantly thronged. Situated as they were in these respects, we should, without any doubt, do just as they did.

Now, had we been informed in reference to every instance of baptism which is recorded in the New Testament, that the person to be baptized, accompanied by the administrator, went out to a river or pool or lake to receive the ordinance, this circumstance would have created a strong presumption, though nothing but a presumption, in favour of immersion. But it happens that only just so many such instances are mentioned as necessarily grew out of the circumstances of the congregations and the habits of the times, without having any immediate connexion with the ordinance of baptism. When we come to consider the baptism of the three thousand, of Paul, of Cornelius, and the jailer, we shall find not only that they were not stationed near a river, but that baptism could be administered without their going out to one.

But there are one or two circumstances more which I wish to mention concerning the baptism of John. These are such as render it nearly or quite certain that he administered baptism in some other way than by immersion. "He baptized *in the wilderness* as well as in Jordan and at Enon. He baptized with water. He baptized in the open field, where there were no accommodations for a change of apparel,—a very important circumstance

in administering baptism by immersion. And, above all, he baptized vast multitudes in a short space of time. His ministry could not have continued more than a year and a half. In this short space of time he baptized Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about Jordan. Some of the Baptists, even, have supposed that he baptized at least five hundred thousand in this time,—some have thought a million. But in order to immerse five hundred thousand in one year and a half, allowing only a minute for the immersion of each, he must have been constantly in the water through this whole period, for more than fifteen hours in each day. Is this credible? We are assured that John wrought no miracles. Could any miracle related in the New Testament have been superior to this?"

Many of the circumstances relative to the baptism of John, to which I have now called your attention, appear to me quite sufficient, when taken singly, entirely to overthrow the Baptist scheme, so far as it rests upon the example or practice of this distinguished forerunner of Christ. But when taken collectively, these circumstances appear to me sufficient to force upon every mind the irresistible conviction, that no authority for baptism by immersion can be derived from anything that is related to have been said or done by John.

Let us now examine the particular instances of baptism which are mentioned in the New Testament.

There are nine instances of baptism recorded in Scripture as having been administered by the Apostles.

The first of these is the case of the three thousand converted and baptized at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Not a single incident is mentioned in the history of this transaction, which would lead us to imagine that this great multitude were baptized by immersion. On the contrary, there are many circumstances which would lead us to suppose that baptism in this way could not have been administered to them. They were chiefly strangers, and had no more expectation in the morning of that day of becoming Christians and receiving baptism, than they had of suffering martyrdom. They were, consequently, entirely unprovided with a change of apparel, so essential where baptism is received by immersion. They were at least twenty miles from the river Jordan and the many waters at Enon, and no hint is given that they went out to any stream or fountain to receive the ordinance there. "No public baths had been engaged or could be, as the whole city was violently opposed to the Christians."

Besides all this, there could not have been over four or five hours in which to make all the necessary preparations for baptism, repair to the water, procure a change of apparel, and administer the ordinance to three thousand. Now, there were but twelve individuals, at most, who were to be employed in immersing these three thousand, as is



very evident from the whole chapter. Had each one of these twelve apostles been constantly employed during the four hours, but a trifle more than a minute could have been allotted to the immersion of each. It seems, therefore, to be utterly impossible that these three thousand should have been baptized by immersion. Sprinkling or pouring must then have been the mode adopted in this instance.

The next instance of baptism mentioned in Scripture is that of Simon (Acts 8 : 12, 13) :—“Then Simon himself believed also, and when he was baptized he continued with Philip.” This is all that is said in relation to his baptism. It therefore determines nothing one way nor the other relative to the particular mode.

The next instance is that of Paul, who was baptized at Damascus, about one hundred miles north-east of Jerusalem. Every circumstance mentioned relative to this case, militates directly against the idea of his having received baptism by immersion (Acts 9 : 17–19) : “Annanias went his way *and entered into the house* ; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord—even Jesus—hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.—And he received his sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized,” or, literally rendered, *standing up, he was baptized*. No intimation is given of his having repaired to a river or bath, or of his even having left the room, and, indeed, it is not probable that



he was able to walk at all, as he had been three days in Damascus, without sight, and had neither ate nor drank. And it is said that, after his baptism, when he had received meat, implying that he was very weak before, he was *strengthened*. He rose up where he was, i. e., in his room, and was baptized. It is almost demonstrably certain that this man was not immersed.

The baptism of Cornelius and his family is the next instance to be considered. This took place at Cesarea, thirty-five miles west of Jerusalem (Acts 10 : 46-48) : "Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." The easy construction of Peter's inquiry is this, "Can any man forbid the *bringing* of water, or *object* to the bringing of water for the baptism of Cornelius and his family?" Is not this the most natural and obvious meaning ; an idea which the form of words and mode of expression instantly excites in the mind? Accordingly, there is no hint of their going abroad, or of any other preparation in order to baptism, than that of bringing a little water into the room? The history leads us to believe that they were baptized at the very juncture when Peter commanded it, and in the very apartment where they were then assembled.

The next case to be considered is the eunuch mentioned in Acts 8 : 36-39, "As they went on their way they came to a certain water, and the

eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?—And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.”

Suppose we at once grant that the eunuch was immersed: this would be merely granting that immersion is baptism—a point which we have no necessity to call in question. But would this prove that immersion was the only authorized mode of baptism? Not at all. It would only just prove that the eunuch was baptized in that way, without saying that that was the *only* way.

But we are very far from believing that the eunuch was baptized by immersion. No such thing is said in the history.

You are to remember that Philip and the eunuch did not come to this place *in search* of water. They were travelling, and happened to espy the water, just at the time when the eunuch was convinced of the necessity of baptism. Whether it was a spring, or brook, or river, or lake which they saw, history does not mention. But in all probability it was nothing but a small spring or fountain of water, for this transaction took place in the desert between Jerusalem and Gaza; and Jerome, one of the early fathers, who travelled

much in Judea, says that this water was a spring or fountain, rising at the foot of a mountain in the tribe of Judah, and that its waters are sucked into the same ground that produced them. A more modern traveller (Sandys) bears testimony to the same fact. If this account be correct, the immersion of the eunuch was entirely improbable, if not impossible. But there are other circumstances tending very strongly to corroborate the opinion that he was not immersed. "The eunuch was doubtless apparelled in a manner becoming his station, and consequently not suitably attired for a decent immersion." Nothing is said of his having changed his garments, or of doing anything also preparatory to baptism, but just getting out of his chariot and going to the water. And this he must have done to receive baptism in any way. He could no more have been baptized by sprinkling or pouring without getting out of his chariot and going down to the water, than he could have been by immersion. It is at least gratuitous to suppose that he had any vessel with him by which water could have been brought to the chariot. He must therefore have done precisely as he did do, get out of his chariot and go to the water to be baptized, in *any way*. Does his alighting and going to the fountain prove then that he was immersed? By no means. But you say he went down *into* the water and came up *out of* the water. What if he did? Does that prove that he was immersed? This is the

practice of those who administer baptism by pouring water on the head, even in these days. And often baptism by sprinkling or affusion is administered in this way.

“But you are to remember that the original words here translated *into* and *out of*, might, as they are translated in many other passages, have been rendered *to* and *from*. The particle here rendered *into* is in this very chapter six times translated *to* and *unto*, and is rendered *into* but once, a circumstance in no small degree deserving the attention of the advocates for immersion. And the other particle here translated *out of*—‘they went up *out of* the water,’—is rendered *from* one hundred and two times in the five first books of the New Testament, and *out of* but seventy-seven times.” I could wish that the Baptists would remember this.

It is further to be observed concerning the baptism of the eunuch, that in the connexion of that particular portion of Scripture which we are told he was reading when the Apostle met him, stands this remarkable passage,—“So shall he *sprinkle* many nations.” (Isaiah 52 : 15.) It is entirely probable, therefore, that the eunuch obtained his first impressions concerning baptism from these words. And if he did, would he be likely to consider immersion or *sprinkling* the proper mode? But enough has been said in relation to this case.

We will now attend to the instance of Lydia and

her family, who were baptized near Philippi, a city in Europe, standing eight or nine hundred miles northwest of Jerusalem. (Acts 16 : 14, 15.) The conversion of Lydia took place by a river's side, where it seems pious persons were in the habit of going to hold worship, not to administer baptism. It was a place where *prayer was wont to be made*, not a place where baptisms were wont to be administered : no such thing is said. It was on the Sabbath day when they assembled there, not to baptize, but to attend upon divine worship. Lydia while there was converted : she did not go there for the purpose of being baptized, but after being converted she was baptized either there or at her house, the history does not say which. Nor does it say one word about the mode in which the baptism was administered. It was no doubt a *convenient place* for administering baptism by immersion, but if *convenience* of place simply excites a presumption in favour of the mode, then it cannot be doubted at all but sprinkling is the proper mode, for that may be done anywhere.

The last instance to be noticed is the case of the jailer, mentioned Acts 16 : 33 : "He took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes ; and he was baptized, he and all his, straightway."

These events took place in the prison, and at the dead of night. The Apostles had been removed from the inner prison or the dungeon, but removed only to another apartment. Everybody knows that



had the Apostles been at liberty to leave their prison, the dead of night was not the time to go in search of a river or pond or lake for immersion. But every one knows, too, that the Apostles had no such liberty, and that they would not leave their prison even on the following day until they were honourably and lawfully discharged. And the jailer would certainly not have run the hazard of conducting these obnoxious men, contrary to law, away from the prison in search of water for baptism. Every circumstance in this account is such as not only renders it improbable that the jailer was immersed, but next to absolutely impossible. We are told by the Baptists that there *may have been* cisterns or tanks of water placed there, as is the case in some of the prisons at Calcutta. But we must be excused if we do not so readily fall in with the plan of putting a tank of water into that prison, merely because the immersion of the jailer cannot be proved in any other way. Had the Apostle just mentioned, in connexion with the baptism of these persons, the existence of these conveniences for immersion in the prison at Philippi, or did the fact that tanks of water are found in some of the prisons at Calcutta *now*, prove that there was one in the prison at Philippi *eighteen hundred* years ago, why then the case would be different. As it now stands, the thing is irresistibly clear, that in whatever other way the jailer

and his family were baptized, they certainly were not baptized by immersion.

I have now done with the examination of these particular instances of baptism which are mentioned in the New Testament. To me it appears that they furnish no evidence whatever in favour of immersion; and not even a slight presumption in favour of immersion, as the only and exclusive mode. And it does appear to me that every unprejudiced mind must discover that the preponderance of argument, derived from these cases, is altogether on the side of baptism by sprinkling or pouring. There are many circumstances attending these cases that admit of no rational explanation but on supposition that the Apostles did administer baptism in other ways than immersion, while on the other hand, there is not one circumstance but what may be readily and satisfactorily explained on supposition that baptism by immersion was never administered.

In examining these cases we certainly must have been struck with one fact; it is this. In *whatever place* a sinner professed faith in Christ, *there* he was baptized. Whether it was in the heart of a city, as the three thousand in Jerusalem; or in a dry and sandy desert, as the eunuch; or in a private house, as Paul and Cornelius; or in a prison, as the jailer and his family;—just where they happened to be converted, *there* they were baptized. There was no delay as to time, no retiring from the place where Christ was confessed, in order to

receive immersion in a river; no changing of garments, but wherever they were, there the ordinance was *immediately* administered. How different was this from the practice of our Baptist friends! Seldom or never even in this land of rivers and streams do they baptize one in the place where he was converted. They must always go out, and go out on purpose, and go to a river, in order to administer the rite of baptism at all. How different this from the practice of the Apostles!

I must invite your attention now to a brief examination of one or two passages more in which the word baptism is used.

There is a passage in Romans 6:3-5, where we are said to be "buried with Christ by baptism unto death;" and there is a similar passage in Colossians 2:10.

The baptism here spoken of is spiritual baptism, as every one will clearly see on examining these passages. The effects resulting from this baptism are such as none but those who hold to the regenerating power of an outward rite, will ascribe to water baptism. They are the destruction of the body of sin, and causing us to walk in newness of life. It is by or through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that we are buried, as it respects the body of sin, or crucified in the likeness of Christ. The Apostle did not intend here to compare water baptism with the burial of Christ, but he intended to compare the destruction of the body of sin, through

the baptism of the Holy Ghost, to the destruction of the body of Christ.

There is, therefore, not the least allusion in these passages to the mode in which water baptism is administered, and some of the most eminent Baptists have themselves conceded this. The Rev. Mr. Judson, Baptist Missionary to India, admits that these passages have no reference to *water baptism*; and he says that every one who has been *born of the spirit*, has been "buried with Christ by baptism unto death," whether he has received water baptism or not.

There is another passage contained in 1 Cor. 10 : 1, 2 : "Moreover, brethren, I would not have you ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all *baptized* unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Their passage through the Red Sea is described in the fourteenth chapter of Exodus.

Here we are informed that Pharaoh and his host were immersed and buried in the waters, but that the Israelites passed through on *dry land*. It is certain, therefore, that they could not have been immersed. But probably they were *sprinkled* by the spray; and we are told with apparent reference to this same event, that "the clouds poured out water." (Ps. 77 : 17.) If this passage prove anything, therefore, in reference to the mode of baptism, it proves that sprinkling meets everything that is necessarily implied in the word.

I do not know that there are any other passages in the Scriptures, than those which I have now examined, that are ever employed by the Baptists in defence of their system. All these passages I have endeavoured to investigate with candour, and so far as I know, have presented them in their true light. The evidence which they afford against the doctrine that baptism by immersion is the only legitimate and scriptural mode, seems to me to be not only clear, but overwhelming. They pour a degree of light upon the subject that dispels all doubt, and divests our brethren of the Baptist church of those lofty and exclusive claims by which they have felt themselves authorized to bar the door of communion against by far the greatest portion of the true disciples of Christ.

I shall now ask your attention to a few separate considerations, designed to bind and cement the arguments already offered.

1. The first is this: That had the Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Head of the Church, attached as much importance to the *mode* of baptism as the Baptists do, it is very certain that he would have delivered a clear and express precept upon the subject. The mode in which water is applied in baptism, is made essential by the validity of baptism itself; and being made essential to its validity, it becomes essential to church membership, and thus becomes essential even to the existence of the Church. If this view of the subject be correct, and



it is the view which all close communion Baptists take; then by far the greatest portion of all the true disciples of Christ are still visible aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, are living in a state of entire separation from all the privileges and obligations of church membership. This is certainly an alarming truth; a state of things which might have been averted by uttering and recording *a single sentence*, defining the *mode* of baptism. This subject is treated in the Scripture just exactly as we should expect it would be, on supposition that Christ did not esteem the *mode* of baptism essential. But had he viewed this subject as the Baptists do, can any one think, can any one imagine, that he would not have defined *expressly* and *repeatedly* the mode in which this ordinance was to be administered? It is therefore certain beyond all doubt, that Christ never considered the *mode* of baptism in any way *essential* to the validity of the ordinance.

2. The Baptists require those qualifications for admission into their church, which Christ does not require for admission into heaven. They acknowledge that those who profess to be Christians in the Presbyterian, Methodist, and other churches, are really what they profess to be, and that they will go to heaven, and will not be excluded from communion with Christ or his saints, because they have not been baptized in a particular way.

But these same persons, they hold, are disqualified for communion with them here upon earth. I

say, therefore, that they require for admission into their church, other and different qualifications than those which Christ requires for admission into heaven. In other words, they are more particular about whom they commune with, than Christ is. This is what the Scriptures call "being righteous *overmuch*."

3. Antecedently to the twelfth century, immersion was never considered as *essential* to baptism. There were those who preferred this way previously to that period. But ecclesiastical history informs of no church, of no sect, of no minister until the twelfth century, that considered a total immersion of the body in water as essential to the validity of baptism. Antecedently to this, close communion Baptists are unknown in history. The comparatively recent origin of this sect, is certainly very strong presumptive evidence against the orthodoxy of their peculiar views.

4. The inconvenience of the mode, and the impracticability of administering the ordinance in certain cases, by immersion, is another circumstance which strongly militates against the divine authority of this way.

The ordinance of baptism is made by the command of Christ *universally obligatory*. There are no limitations, no exceptions. But cases often occur where it is impossible to administer this rite by immersion. It can in no case be administered to the sick and dying. I once knew a person who

fully embraced the Baptist views on this subject, fifteen or twenty years previously to her death, and was not able during that whole time to receive the ordinance, and consequently never held a covenant relation to the church nor to God, and never partook of the memorials of Christ's death. Her health was such as to allow her often to go to meeting, but never, subsequently to her conversion, was it such as to justify her in receiving the ordinance of baptism by immersion. She died unbaptized.

Now, it appears to me, that Christ would never have suspended church membership and the comfort of his ordinances upon an external rite, which none but those in perfect health could ever safely observe, however qualified in heart they might be. But such are the views of our Baptist brethren.

Nor, further, can we view immersion as the mode best adapted to the situation of the church, scattered as it now is, and is hereafter more fully to be, through barren deserts and frozen climes; while baptism by sprinkling or pouring may be administered "at any place, whether at home or abroad; in any situation, whether in sickness or in health; in any apparel, usual or unusual; in any season, whether cold or hot, wet or dry, and in any hour of the twenty-four, whether morning, noon, or night."

5. It cannot be considered otherwise than uncandid and ungenerous, to reproach us, as the Baptists often do, especially when standing by the river side, with

declining to follow the example of Christ, in descending the banks of the Jordan, and lying by his side in the liquid grave. They impute this to fear and shame in bearing the cross.

They might, with the same justice and the same propriety, call upon us to imitate Christ, in being nailed literally to the cross, and, with as much reason, reproach us if we did not. I have detailed to you, in this discourse, the reasons why we do not see fit to baptize by immersion.

As it respects shunning the cross, I am sure, if I wished to do this, I should soon adopt their mode in preference to ours. The shafts of ridicule have ever been pointed at those who baptize by sprinkling, rather than at those who baptize by immersion. But higher motives, I trust, ever have, and ever will actuate us in the discharge of this duty.

Finally. Baptism by immersion, where this is considered the only mode, involves consequences that are totally abhorrent to the very best feelings of the Christian's heart.

The predominant feeling of the convert's soul is love; and, I may say, this is the predominant feeling of every heart where grace reigns. This love is always excited wherever the image of Christ is seen, and it inclines one, by an almost irresistible power, to fellowship and communion with the saints. And no exercise did Christ more solemnly and repeatedly enjoin upon his disciples

than that of mutual, fervent love; and nothing is more characteristic of true grace than this. It is hard for this love to find itself shut out by an immutable decree from communion with those whose society it expects to enjoy in heaven, and in whose friendship it delights on earth. It cannot, without a painful struggle, put itself in this condition; and it is with a painful, protracted struggle that it must ever after keep itself there. Hence we find the term of *limited communion*, prescribed in the Baptist Church, invariably repulsive, when first proposed to the mind of the young convert. The idea of being excluded from communion with those whom he loves, as members of the body of Christ, and whom he has often occasion to acknowledge and feel are far more eminent in Christian attainments than himself, bear a nearer resemblance to his Lord, is just like cutting and gashing the heart.

The circumstances are often such as to effect a separation between the child and the parent. The child renouncing Christian fellowship and communion with the father and mother, whose prayers and tears have followed him from his infancy up; and whose holy example, like the sun, has shed a brilliant lustre on the whole path of his pilgrimage to Zion. O, it is affecting to see the stripling in years and in knowledge, barring the door of Christian communion and fellowship against the venerable saint, whose piety is now already ripened for



the world of glory. This is an unnatural sight, revolting to every feeling of human affection, and every sentiment of Christian love. Can it be, that he, whose parting instructions, and whose valedictory prayer was, that his disciples might all be *one*, even as he was *one* with his Father, should, by the imposition of a *merely external rite*, thus sever and divide his own mystical body, the church redeemed?—thus sunder the tie on earth that is to bind in eternal fellowship and immortal union the church triumphant in heaven?

Judge, now, whether we speak the language of inspiration, of truth, and of love, when we say, that the sentiments held by our Baptist brethren, with reference to the ordinance of Christian baptism, are wrong, wholly and for ever wrong.

O that the time were once come, when the prayer of the blessed Saviour were fully answered, in the *union* of the church on earth!

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; *that they all may be one*, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be *one* in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

## SERMON XI.

### PREPARATION TO MEET GOD.

“Therefore, thus will I do unto thee, O Israel, and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.”—AMOS 4 : 12.

THE announcement of this solemn message to the house of Israel, by the prophet Amos, was preceded by a distinct enumeration of the judgments with which God had in quick succession visited the sins of that people. These were five in number, each of which afforded a signal instance of the divine displeasure, and loudly summoned that guilty people to arise and return to their God. They were, however, unheeded, and God, in the words of the text, announces to the people his last resolve: “Therefore, thus will I do unto thee, O Israel, and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.” This is most manifestly the language of patience exhausted. Jehovah had endeavoured to allure this people to an obedience of his laws, and love of his character, by a long series of the most signal mercies towards them. In fact, he had nourished and brought them up as children. But they rebelled against him. He had endeavoured to effect the same

thing by dispensing mercies, mingled with judgments towards them. But they continued a rebellious people. He then dealt out to them a severe distribution of judgments, rapidly succeeding each other, as described by the Prophet Amos, in the verses preceding the text. But all was to no purpose. Their heart was hardened. What more could divine love, and mercy, and judgment do for this nation that they had not done, to reform and bless them? Most manifestly it was time for the summons to go forth, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel;" and a most fearful summons it was, to be issued under the circumstances that I have named.

It is not improbable that many of you may think me quite beside myself, in an endeavour to appropriate the topics suggested by this subject, to a useful purpose on the present occasion. But I do assure you, that I have greatly mistaken your condition, if both the providence and the word of God do not thunder in your ear to-day, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." I am not disposed to call your attention to any invidious comparisons between yourselves and that degraded and sinful nation, the ancient Jews. But, surely, I may be permitted to say, that I cannot consider them as sinners above all that have dwelt upon the earth besides, because they suffered so often and so severely for their sins. Nor, indeed, do I perceive, that the fearful summons addressed to them by

the prophet, in the words of the text, had then a solemnity of import, or weight of authority, or urgency of motive, which it has not on this day, and on this very occasion. I perceive, indeed, that the divine hand has shed a plenitude of temporal blessings upon you; that God has given you health, and peace, and plenty, in all your habitations. This reminds me of mercy rather than of judgment; of the full tide of an overflowing love, rather than of chastisement and rebuke.

But the picture is most sadly reversed, on turning my eye to your spiritual condition. Worse by far than blasting and mildew, than drought, or famine, or pestilence, or sword, is the curse of a spiritual abandonment by the favourable presence of Israel's God. Now, some of you remain to this day rebels against Heaven, in spite of both the mercies and the judgments of God towards you. If you are unable to discover that Jehovah has summoned on to your path rebuke and terror, as the ministers of vengeance, to punish you for your sins, and drive you back to him; still, you cannot but have known, that his mercies have invited you to obedience; that they have dropped from heaven, like the dew upon your path, aiming to win your soul to the love of God. Now, to persist in impenitence and rebellion, in the face of God's mercy,—mercy, too, that has wept, and bled, and died, for the rebel,—is somewhat more fearful than to struggle our way onward in the face of un-

mingled judgment. Others of you did once set your faces toward Zion, and your way for a while was as the shining light. But your glory seems to have departed. You are as those that dream. The chiefest among ten thousands, and the one altogether lovely has now no charms for you. His yoke, which once you assumed as easy; his cause, which once you espoused as precious; and his face, which once you sought as lovely,—ah, lovelier than the light,—are now objects unseen, unsought, nay, it may be, shunned by you. If by a course of unmingled mercy, the Saviour of sinners has sought without effect to win your souls to a love of his dear person, and an espousal of the interests of his dear kingdom, then, be sure you are proof against judgments. The only alternative is to summon you to a preparation to meet your God. But, others of you, I would hope, are dwelling by the side of the mercy-seat; are already awake to the business of a preparation for meeting your God. One of two things, however, must be true, even with respect to you. Either you are very few in number, or very weak, even in your collected strength. Else why hear we no inquiry from those that are at ease in Zion, “Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?” Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night? Why hear we no voice of alarm, and terror, and distress, breaking upon the stillness even of the midnight hour? What must we do to be saved? “O Lord Jesus, thou Son of David, have



mercy on me?" Why listen we so long in vain to hear the sound of God's goings in the tops of the mulberry trees? In short, why is it that the windows of heaven are not opened, that God might rain righteousness upon us, that there should not be room enough to receive it? Doubtless, Jehovah had very good reasons for sending me to this people with the summons which I have read in your hearing to-day: "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel," and I see not how I can faithfully acquit myself of the duty I owe you, as the official bearer of this message, but by unfolding its import, and displaying the nature and practicability of the solemn duty which it enjoins. I ask, then,—

What it is to meet God in the sense of that summons which Jehovah has sent us to-day?

In prosecuting this inquiry, let me not divert your attention from the solemn truth so beautifully and yet so impressively inculcated by the Psalmist: "Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. 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." Go then where you will, and the omnipresence of the Deity will most assuredly secure you a meeting with God. And a dreadful

truth this is, though but little felt;—a truth rendering our condition not a whit less affecting and solemn than though we were momentarily enveloped in a cloud of visible glory. But in this sense we are for ever meeting God. The nation of Israel could not therefore have been summoned to an interview of this character. There are occasions more definite, and senses more specific in which we are said to meet God.

At the time when Jehovah descended upon Mount Sinai, exhibiting himself in thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud, Moses is said to have led the people out of the camp to meet with God. They were now summoned to look upon the visible glory of Jehovah, and in a dispensation from the burning mount to receive the laws of their King. On this occasion, therefore, they met him as their Lawgiver.

With respect to the mercy-seat which was above the ark, God announced to the nation of Israel that he would there meet with them and commune with them. So also with respect to the tabernacle. He declared he would meet them at its door, and that it should be sanctified by his glory. In these cases they met him as a sin-pardoning God; an all-compassionate Saviour. But, it would seem that the nation of Israel were not now summoned to meet God either as a dispenser of laws or of mercy; for laws they already had, and as to mercy, they desired it not, neither would they place themselves

in a posture to receive it. What then was the purport of the summons? It was this, that they should prepare to meet God as their judge; an avenger of laws that were broken, of mercy despised, and judgments spurned. The summons was, therefore, calculated to throw dismay on to every heart, and to fill the whole land with mourning.

Not only did the people at this time appear to have been carried to a returnless distance from God, but certain parts of the message, delivered them by the prophet, seemed armed with a sternness and decision, that left them nothing to hope. "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not dwell in your solemn assemblies;" said the God of Israel to this guilty people. "Though ye offer me burnt offerings, and your meat offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols." But, though the rebellion and idolatry of this nation appeared amply to have fitted it for a sudden and consuming visitation from Heaven, though justice had now broken away from its slumbers and armed its red right hand for vengeance, Mercy, with her listening ear and weeping eye, and melting heart, yet stood by to plead the cause of this ungrateful and fallen nation. "O Ephraim! how can I give thee up? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zebaim?" Notwithstanding the nation seemed al-

ready to have taken its last step in the career of rebellion, and to have awakened in the bosom of Heaven a settled and irrevocable purpose to award to it a deserved retribution, I even find the manner of a return to God five times prescribed in the subsequent chapter; the duty of a return five times enjoined; and the promise of a gracious reception, in case they would return and seek the Lord, five times given in the course of a few verses. Now I discovered so much of the deepest mercy in this proposal, so suddenly and so entirely was the cloud dissipated,—a cloud that hung like night on the prospect of this guilty people,—that I could not but feel it clothed my mission to you this day in new and lovelier attractions, gave it an aspect that could not but charm your heart. I therefore come to you, not merely to proclaim in the language of authority and terror, “Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel,” on a throne of judgment; but in the language of the sweetest and kindest mercy, to invite you to a return to God, assuring you, in his name, that if you will seek his face you shall live. I have come, commissioned to point your eye, not only to the terrific and consuming glories of the burning mount, where Jehovah appears as your Lawgiver, but to ask your attention to the melting yet spirit-reviving scenes of a bleeding cross, where Jesus appears as your all compassionate Redeemer. I have come to tell you not only that a meeting with God is inevitable, but that to

meet him in peace is practicable: not only that the anger of the Lord of hosts is awakened, and will assuredly consume you for your sins, if you persist in rebellion, but that his mercy is higher than the heavens, and will as surely pardon your transgressions, if you will abhor and forsake them, taking refuge in his promised grace. Come then with me; and I will tell you what constitutes a preparation for meeting God; I will show you the way, and open the avenue, the only avenue, that will admit you to a safe retreat in the "munition of rocks."

I supposed, in the outset, that I was addressing my message to three classes of men in this assembly: those who have made no preparation for meeting God; those who are at ease in Zion, and of course are but partially prepared for the solemn interview; and lastly, those who are looking and longing for the coming of the day of God, as a day of life and redemption to the soul.

To the first class, the solemn responsibilities of my office oblige me to say, I have a dreadful message for you. "The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, surely I will never forget any of their works. For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins. Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord. To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not



the day of the Lord be darkness and not light, even very dark and no brightness in it?" Your meeting with God promises then to be a solemn one indeed. The day is to be characterized by total darkness; the event of meeting him, anguish and dismay. You are to meet him as a strong man armed. With what emphasis, then, may I repeat to you the words of the text, "*Prepare* to meet thy God." Now, fellow-sinners, you cannot be ignorant of two important facts relative to this preparation. One is, that it *must be made*, or you cannot abide the meeting; the other, that it must be made at the *time* and in the *manner* which the message prescribes, or you only increase the hazard of the interview. It has been announced to us from heaven, that our world, to a man, at a future day, are to meet in one vast assembly around the throne of God, not to enter upon a trial for life under a new dispensation of laws and rewards; not to receive proposals of mercy and life and peace, again pressed upon us by a compassionate Saviour; not to be urged on anew by chastisements and rebukes to a choice of the better alternative of our being: but to receive the adjudication, and enter upon the unalterable assignments of eternity. The oracles of God inform us, that the two great issues of our being are suspended wholly upon the moral character of our probationary history. But it happens that every page of that history records us as rebels against God. It is a single event, therefore, in the

history which is to decide the fate of our being. For had no Saviour bled, we should have said nothing to you of a doubtful suspension of the final issue of life on the character of the testimony which your moral history will present. Conscience would have forestalled the doom. It would have pointed us to an issue that was *one* and uncontrolled. But now, notwithstanding the whole testimony of life makes against us, and blots from the bosom every hope of a peaceful and happy issue of our final meeting with God, provided that meeting must arraign and adjudge us on the ground of positive merit in character,—yet, such is the mighty influence which the death of the Son of God has had upon our relations, that we are now competent by a single act to give an entire new aspect to our whole history, and so to qualify ourselves for abiding the trial of the last day, that it shall result in most consummate felicity upon our being. That one act consists wholly in the submission of the soul to God. And it is the very thing to which the text alludes, and which it so authoritatively enjoins. “Prepare to meet thy God.” This duty implies and involves repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, without which the soul can never exercise an unfeigned submission.

I have not, now, time extensively to unfold and forcibly to exhibit this first of all duties; and if I had, I could do no more than inculcate a duty upon you, which you well understand, and which you

know is at this moment pressing itself upon your attention under the weight which divine authority imparts. Now had I an angel's tongue, and could kindle upon my theme into a seraphic fervour; ah, could I stand here and preach to you a preparation for meeting God under every advantage which a fresh mission from heaven, day by day, could impart, till the last sun should have set upon the world: depend upon it, I should tell you of no other Saviour than Jesus Christ; I should point you to no other healing fountain than his blood; I should speak of redemption for the world through nothing but his cross; and I would tell you with my last breath, go you to the grave without having personally submitted to God, without having made a cordial and complete surrender of your all to Christ, renouncing your sins, the world, and your very self, and you are better prepared for a war in league with angels, and men, and devils, than for a meeting with God in judgment. Repent of sin, and go to Christ as your life, *now* when he invites, and you cannot be harmed. The day of your final meeting with God will be infinitely more blissful than the day of your espousals. This, then, constitutes your preparation, and let me add, the preparation must be speedily made, or never.

The second class of my hearers, to which I some time ago alluded, and to whom I wish now to address myself for a moment, are those who have forsaken their first love; those who once gave them-

selves away to God, took his solemn vows upon them, and promised to be his for ever ; but who are now fallen asleep, apparently indifferent, whether Jesus the Saviour ever have another friend on earth or not. Ungrateful men, is this the way in which ye requite the dying love of Christ ? Does this constitute your preparation for meeting him ? I know not that I can say anything that will awaken you from your lethargy. I know not but I speak to the dead when I speak to you. But, sure I am, could I fasten your eye upon your obligations ; to say nothing of your danger, to say nothing of the import of that declaration which is connected with the text, “ Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion,” I could summon you from your guilty and perilous slumbers. But there I cannot fasten your eye. It is sealed up in the repose of a deep and unconscious slumber ; a slumber which nothing but the Spirit of God, or the trump of the archangel will ever break. But, if my time would permit, I would try to spread before you the law of God, in the extent of its sacred claims upon you ; I would speak to you of the holiness of God, which urges you to an entire circumspection of life ; I would tell you of his justice, which demands your perpetual fear of him ; and, above all, I would speak to you of his mercy, which challenges your unceasing gratitude, your unbounded love, your never-tiring zeal in his service ; a perpetual consecration of heart and hand, soul and body to his dear cause.

But I cannot now do this ; I can only say, go to the Bible, and take along with you the record of all that you have done and felt for months that are past, and lay them side by side. Read of what Jesus has done for you, and then of what you have done for him. If you can rise from the task without smiting on your breast and crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," then be sure, the voice of the Saviour to you is, "Prepare to meet thy God," and the chance is as a thousand to one against your ever meeting him in peace.

But, I have spoken of a third class of hearers, to which I now turn for a moment. I have supposed that some few, at least, of those who now hear me, are standing with their loins girt about, and their lamps trimmed and burning, are in a state of actual preparation for meeting their God. How far this conjecture is true, I know not. But, surely, it revives my languishing hope for the issue of my message to-day, upon this people. For I remember what prayer has done, and how the Lord holds in sweet and eternal remembrance those that think upon his name, and speak often one to another of the things of his kingdom. When, however, I speak of your being in a state of actual preparation for meeting God, I do not intend that such preparation is absolutely complete, or that you have no more to do, no, nor even that you have done all that you ought to have done. I mean only that you do not sleep as do



others ; that you have not wholly divested yourselves of the armour of light ; that you are even now struggling your way onward to the kingdom of glory. I suppose you not to have deserted your closets, nor to have neglected your Bibles ; nor to have forgotten your Saviour, nor to have enthroned in your hearts an idol. I have supposed your soul awake to everything that concerned the honour of Christ and the prosperity of his dear kingdom, that you were ready to make any sacrifice which the interests of this kingdom should claim. If it be so, then sure I am, the supplicating attitude of the dear Zion of God among us, has often melted your heart. “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion,” said the mourning Hebrew captives, when they saw Zion in ruins, and themselves far removed from her lovely palaces. And, is not this the language of your hearts ? Now I have purposely reserved for this opportunity the mention of another meeting with God than that of which I have spoken to you, though I regret that my time permits me only to name it. I mean such a meeting as the people of God have with their King, when he descends and fills the tabernacle with his glory. To a preparation for this interview, I would now summon this whole congregation. O what a day would this be to our loved, though weeping Zion, should the King of Glory enter our

doors. Who is the King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, the Lord strong and mighty, he is the King of Glory. Then lift up your heads, ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Let the response of every heart be, Arise, O Lord, unto thy rest, thou and the ark of thy strength.

## SERMON XII.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S VICTORY.

“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—1 COR. 15 : 57.

THESE words stand at the close of that great argument on the subject of the resurrection of the body, which the Apostle Paul constructed, and transmitted to the Corinthian Christians. He had brought it down to that point where he was authorized to declare, that our corruptible bodies must and would become incorruptible, at the resurrection. This event would be the fulfilment of a saying that had been written by the Prophets Isaiah and Hoseá, namely, “death is swallowed up in victory.” When the body should be raised and rendered incorruptible and immortal, a victory over death, complete and final, would be obtained. From that period his power over the body would cease, as it would never after be subject to infirmities or to decay. The Apostle next proceeds to inform us what it is that arms death with a power so terrible, for he acquires a momentary victory, even over the saints, and is the terror of a guilty world. “The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the

law." Sin arms death with that mortal sting which it bears. It is sin that puts into his hands the envenomed and deadly dart which he hurls. If it were not for sin, death could have no power over us. It could never inflict one pang upon the body or excite one fear in the soul. But the strength of sin, its whole power, is derived from the law. Sin is a transgression of the law. It is a violation of that law whose penalty is death. Here, then, is the source of that terrible power which death exercises over us. Sin subjects us to the penalty of God's holy and immutable law. It gives us up to its vengeance, delivers us over to its curse; and but for one consideration, the death which it inflicts would reign in eternal triumph and terror over us. This consideration is suggested in the context, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory." The victory here spoken of, is a victory to be acquired over death as the proper penalty of sin; and the conquest is to be achieved, not through our own power, but by our Lord Jesus Christ. And who can refuse to give thanks to God at the prospect of obtaining the victory over such an enemy as this? Who can withhold praise from Him who, in our stead, has become the conqueror of death?

To appreciate the victory over death which Christ obtains for us, it is necessary to understand who and what this enemy is. I must remark, then, what perhaps is obvious to you all, that the Apostle does not here allude to the simple dissolu-

tion of the body, the demolition of that house which the Spirit here inhabits. The victory is obtained for no one in this sense, not even through Christ. All die, saints as well as sinners, the friends as well as the enemies of God. The body is, by a decree of heaven, inevitably doomed to death, and there is no discharge for any one, whatever his relations to God or claims to mercy may be. It is appointed to all men once to die. You will see, therefore, that natural death, the death which consigns our bodies to the grave, cannot be either the proper penalty of God's law, or the enemy over which Christ gives us the victory. For if it were the penalty of the law, then those who are Christ's would be exempted from it, as they cannot come into condemnation, but are passed from death unto life; and if it were the enemy over which Christ gives us the victory, then the saints would never die.

But, though the death of which we are speaking be not the proper penalty of the divine law, it is nevertheless a consequence of sin. "Sin has entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death has passed upon all men."

It is in this death that *that* one begins, the victory over which our Apostle in the context so joyfully celebrates. But for the sacrifice and mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, our expiring breath would be only the commencement of the pains and fears and agonies of dying. There would follow that



event, a prolonged and eternal death. The body would indeed be raised, but it would be raised to shame and everlasting contempt. It would be raised, not to enjoy life, but to suffer death. This is the enemy whom Christ has subjugated and vanquished; an enemy who, with scorpion stings, would have pursued our weary and quivering spirits for ever, had not Christ disarmed and overcome him. There would have been no refuge, no escape from his fatal power. O what an enemy was this; an enemy commissioned of God against our being, and pursuing us, with the sword of his justice, for ever and ever! To die, and yet not cease to be; to live, and yet for ever die. There is no capacity in our being for a destiny worse than this. This is sin drawn out into its legitimate and natural results. Yes, it is sin drawn out into its inevitable results, if no benefits be derived from the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Let a sinner pass into the eternal world unpardoned, divorced from all the influences of the cross, and all the benefits of Christ's death, and can he escape the sting of death which is sin, or the strength of sin which is the penalty of the law? Can death be conquered, where sin reigns? If the sting of death be sin, and the strength of sin be the penalty of the law, then surely sin must be taken away, and the penalty of the law averted, or the sting of death cannot be removed. Sin and death are leagued together. The bonds of their union are indissoluble.

If one is to be vanquished, then the other must be. If death is to be overcome, sin must be destroyed first. But, who has the power to meet and vanquish these leagued and affiliated foes? Who can atone for sin? Who can eradicate it from the heart? Or, who can turn away from the transgressor the hand of inflexible justice? The sinner surely cannot. There is no hope for him here. Sin has bound him hand and foot, and justice has promised him to death for a prey. The sinner cannot pardon his own sins, and he will never of himself forsake them, and there is no being that can pardon him, till the demands of that infinite law which he has trampled upon be satisfied. Here, then, we may have, if we will, a complete view of the magnitude of that conquest over death which Christ the immortal Deliverer has achieved for us. It is an achievement which none but Christ could perform, and one which the prolonged anthems of heaven will celebrate in deathless strains. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Such will be the song of heaven. The glorious Conqueror of death will be the admiration of all hearts. I cannot stop, now, to notice the manner in which this mighty conquest was achieved. The marks of those wounds which Christ received in the conflict, he will bear upon his person for ever.

But, let us proceed to notice more particularly

the extent of this victory, and the way in which we become conquerors through Christ.

I. We obtain the victory over our fears of death. There is torment in fear. It has power to extinguish all sense of enjoyment, and to kindle up a burning volcano in the bosom. No human being, under the entire dominion of the fear of death, in the certain anticipation of receiving the full wages of sin when the body is dissolved, can save himself for a moment from falling under the power of insupportable sufferings. Despair and anguish will take entire possession of the soul. Who would wish to live if all hope were extinguished, and the mind given up to the raging whirlwinds of unmixed fear? But these fears are well grounded, and would exist in all impenitent minds, if prejudices were removed, and the prospect of a future reconciliation through Christ did not flatter them. "The fear of the wicked," says the Scripture, "it shall come upon him." But, these fears are all conquered through Christ. He removes them by taking away the occasion of them. It is a sense of guilt that produces them. He removes our guilt. He takes away our sin. He stands between us and the fiery sword of justice. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." What ground of fear is there to those whose sins are pardoned, and whom the violated law no longer pursues with its threatenings? What ground of fear where God is reconciled, and Christ engages to respond to the

demands of the law, on the sinner's account? True, indeed, the fears of those whom Christ loves, and for whom he has engaged to answer at the decisive trial, are not in general perfectly subdued in the present life. But this is owing not to the insecurity of their title to heaven, not to any inadequacy in the provision made for removing their fears, but entirely to the weakness of their faith. They may if they will, and in fact they often do, rest upon Christ with a confidence and love so perfect as to cast out all fear. I have seen the bosom of the saint more than once, when in conflict with the last enemy, serene and peaceful as the atmosphere of the heavenly world. I have heard them exclaim, when launching away upon the billowy floods,—“Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.” Why should they be dismayed and tremble, when the conqueror of death stands by them and whispers his soft voice in their ear,—“Fear not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God.”

II. One of the ingredients of that death which Christ has vanquished for us, consists in a feeling of remorse, a deep and agonizing sense of guilt. Perhaps human experience is acquainted with nothing so subversive of all happiness, so sharp and poignant in its power as this. Deep and continued remorse is insupportable. No mind can long bear up against its influence. Sometimes the murderer, who has escaped the hand of human justice, has

been forced to come out with a confession of his crime, that he might disburden his soul of the insupportable anguish that preyed upon it. This will be the bitterest ingredient mingled in the cup of the wicked in eternity. When the veil which sin casts over the eyes comes to be rent away, and the mind takes a clear and comprehensive view of its guilt, of its crimes against God, of the nature, tendency, and aggravations of sin, where will it find a refuge from the power of self-revenge? How will it protect itself against the keen and withering rebukes of conscience? The sting of death is sin. Who can survive the infliction of that sting? a sting pointed at the heart, and diffusing its mortal poison through the soul. Here is the worm that never dies. This is the fire that never shall be quenched; a sense of guilt, aggravated and immeasurable guilt, unpardonable guilt, inexcusable guilt, guilt which no remembrance of the past can diminish, and which no hope of the future can alleviate,—standing in contrast for ever with the benevolence of God and the infinite holiness of his law. Who can abide the visitations of that mortal foe to happiness and peace,—remorse of conscience, the parent of despair?

But over this fiercest of our enemies has Christ obtained the victory for us. “His blood cleanseth us from all sin.” He pardons it. He breaks its dominion in our hearts. He removes its curse; he plucks away its sting. The Christian will never



forget that he has been a sinner. He will never be insensible to the evil of sin. But no feelings of remorse will visit his bosom. The rebukes of conscience will be stilled, and all be perfect peace and love within. Christ has cancelled his guilt, and his own heart is divorced from its influence and purified from its stains. There can be no longer any conflict within. The claims of justice are answered, and every movement of the heart is in perfect unison with the will of God.

III. The bodies which we commit to the grave, apparently the trophies and the irrecoverable prey of death, are not his to hold for ever. Christ has vanquished the great enemy upon this field, and led captivity captive. He indeed acquires a partial and momentary triumph. He succeeds in deranging the machinery that supports our animal life, and he demolishes and dissolves into dust the stately fabric that had been reared by the skilful hand of God for the habitation of the spirit. But the power of death over the body is to be short. "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust." There is nothing, however, desirable in a resurrection to shame and everlasting contempt. No pæan will be sung at this event. In its anticipation no voice was ever heard exclaiming, "Death is swallowed up in victory." But, a resurrection of the bodies of the saints will be a different matter from this. It will be a resurrection to glory and immortality. This event will be

the crowning, consummating triumph of Christ over death. "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written,—Death is swallowed up in victory." Death, with the saints, is from that moment abolished. The effects of sin either on their bodies or spirits will be felt no more for ever. The victory gained is complete. There are no more contests to be waged with sin, no more fears to be felt, no more struggles to be made, no more wounds to be received; but every enemy is for ever cast down, "overcome by the blood of the Lamb," and the song of salvation, the pæan of victory has commenced, which is to be prolonged in sweeter and louder notes down through revolving ages. "After this," says John, "I beheld, and lo a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms," the emblems of victory, "in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Thus are we made conquerors and more than conquerors over every enemy.

IV. The victory of which we are speaking, extends to a complete triumph over all the arts and appliances of Satan.

Man has no greater or more vigilant enemy than

this. He is not seen indeed, and he works through agencies that are subtle and mysterious, and that do not betray his presence, but he exists, and is the Christian's great and ever vigilant adversary. As he is endowed with superhuman powers, and is permitted to tempt, and perplex, and entice the Christian, and do what he can to unsettle his faith and overthrow his integrity, it is a miracle if one escapes all his devices and enters heaven at last. But through Christ even this may be done. How gloriously did the Saviour triumph in the hour of temptation on the mount! With what ease did he meet and vanquish the powers of darkness, that seemed to reign in the hour of his trial, that gathered round his cross, and exulted over his tomb! But he rose, he rose, having spoiled principalities and powers, and took possession of his throne, where he reigns Lord of all, all enemies being put under his feet. But he conquered for us. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory."

But how is this victory obtained, and to whom is the glory of it to be ascribed? God dispenses to us the victory in consideration of Christ's death. Here begins the work:—in the ministry of Christ, in his incarnation, and sufferings, and death. "The strength of sin is the law." The penalty of God's holy, but violated law, stood against us. It demanded our death. That law, being holy, just, and good, could not remit its demands against us. Christ undertook to satisfy them on our behalf. To accomplish this end, he suffered in our room

and stead. His blood was shed for the remission of sins. But something more was required, in order to vanquish death, than just to atone for sin." "The sting of death is sin,"—sin reigning within us. Our mortal enemy dwells in our bosoms. It is the love of sin, its internal power, that opposes the greatest obstacle to our salvation. Nothing can be done effectually to vanquish death, till his citadel in the heart is broken down. The tyrant must be expelled from that flinty throne. His dominion there must be broken up. The soul must be subjected to God, and sin must not have dominion over us. God gives us the victory here, by dispensing to us, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, his Holy Spirit. It is through his agency, that sin in our hearts is subdued; that a willing surrender of the soul is made unto God. But for his sanctifying power, we should remain for ever under the dominion of death. The sting of death, which is sin, would remain unextracted, and consequently we should be the subjects of its torturing power so long as we retained a capacity to suffer. This is the way in which God gives us the victory over death through our Lord Jesus Christ. He does it by giving us the victory over sin, and in no other way. While sin reigns, death must reign. It is an ingredient of death. It constitutes its vital energy, its mortal sting. Hence the necessity of having the heart freed entirely from its power. Life, spiritual, felicitous, immor-

tal, can never be the possession of that soul that is not purified from sin.

Hence we infer from our subject, and directly from what has now been said, that the salvation of a sinner is impossible without repentance. Repentance is the first movement of the heart in putting away sin. It is the sundering of the cord that bound it to the soul. Till repentance begins, the dominion of sin is complete. No purpose of revolt against its iron sway, not a disloyal feeling to its ascendant power, is ever cherished. But the moment repentance begins to soften the heart, a war of extermination, inveterate and invincible, is commenced against the foe. Sin is never more suffered to reign in its subduing and primeval power over that heart. Then life begins, spiritual, immortal life, and though death lingers still around his ancient citadel, making his assaults upon it, the entire ascendancy is never regained.

“ Though hell and sin resist our course,  
Yet hell and sin are vanquished foes ;  
The Saviour nailed them to his cross,  
And sung the triumphs as he rose.”

Through grace obtained from our Lord Jesus Christ, we are made in the end more than conquerors over sin and death.

Is repentance, then, so absolutely essential to the annihilation of the power of death over us, and the commencement of life immortal within? Why, then, is there so much delaying to repent? Why so much coveting and courting the sting of



death? Is it not amazing that there can be a relentless heart, an immortal soul cherishing within itself the sting of death? Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Shall sin, then, be your choice, this parent of death, this architect of the prison of despair? Will you refuse, can you delay to rid yourself of his dominion, when the way of escape has been pointed out, and the means of rescue are at hand? and when, if it continues to reign over you, the miseries of eternal death must come upon you? The first step in the way to life, in the escape from death, is to repent. You can advance not a step towards heaven till this work is done. How long shall it remain undone? How long before you will be ready to begin the contest against that mighty enemy whom Christ has come to help you conquer, and whose progress must be arrested, or you are undone for ever?

I infer again, from what has been said, that if we ever obtain the victory over sin and death, and enter upon the felicities of an endless life, it will be owing to the infinite grace and almighty power of God. It is infinite grace that pardons, and almighty power that conquers our sins. Not that we are silent and inactive spectators of the conflict, having nothing to do to obtain the glorious victory, but that, independently of God, apart from his grace working in us and by us, we must inevitably and universally fall under the power of death eternal. Who could resist the strength of sin which is the law? Who could answer its de-

mands? who could avert its penalty? Surely we have reason to exclaim, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory."

And how many among us, let me inquire, are prepared to join in this ascription of praise to God, for the victory over death which Christ has obtained for us?

Is it, to any immortal soul present, a matter of no concern whether he obtains this victory or not? Is any one indifferent whether sin reigns unto death, or grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life? It seems impossible. When we look at the suffering Saviour,—when we behold the bleeding cross, where the conflict was maintained and the victory won, can we say—can we feel that death has no terrors, sin no power, that we should be afraid to meet our enemy, singly and alone? See what the victory has cost. Compute the priceless value of that crown which the conqueror has won.

"He seized our dreadful right, the load sustained,  
And heaved the mountain from a guilty world;  
A thousand worlds so bought were bought too dear;  
To man, the bleeding cross has promised all;  
Shout, earth and heaven, this sum of good to man."

But can we all unite in ascriptions of praise to Christ for having opened to us the pathway to immortal life? How can *they* praise him for this blessing, who are really yet not willing to receive it! Oh, what ingratitude! Refuse the blessing, and you of course withhold the praise. But such a choice is madness. It is certain death. Without

Christ, without faith in him, without a commitment of all to him, you may rest assured you will never see life—no, never; but the wrath of God will abide upon you. You will come to the hour, sooner or later, when death and you will have to face each other. The mortal conflict must begin. The fate of more than empires will hang upon the issue. If you fall, if sin in the strength of the law prevails against you, then you bid adieu to life, not to existence, but to life in all its hopes and promises, in all its enjoyments and privileges, and death, armed with his mortal stings, takes you into his power, and makes you the object of his unrelenting fury for ever. And such must be the result if Christ be not the strength of your heart and the refuge of your soul. All other dependencies must fail.

But how glorious and animating is the prospect to such as have committed their cause to Christ, and are moving forward under him as the captain of their salvation. They are to be conquerors and more than conquerors, through him that hath loved them. “Neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers” can harm them.

How ought the Christian, then, to be animated and raised above this dying world, as he approaches nearer to the hour when his spirit shall be completely released from the power of death, and heaven shall shout him welcome to the skies!

“Death has no dread but what frail life imparts;  
Nor life true joy, but what kind death improves;  
Life makes the soul dependent on the dust;  
Death gives her wings to mount above the spheres.”

Oh, then let Christians live as those who expect the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. No victory was ever won where ease and indolence and luxury prevailed. You must be harnessed to the conflict. You must be girded to the combat. "To him that overcometh," says the Saviour, "will I give to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." "Be thou faithful unto death," &c., "and I will give thee a crown of life." Remember the condition, the unalterable condition, on which the crown is to be obtained.

Dear children of God : I know the number and power of your spiritual enemies. They are a host ; their name is legion. But are there grounds for fear when He who has vanquished death and triumphed over the powers of hell, is appointed to be the captain of your salvation ? We may dismiss our fears, but must renew our faith, and following implicitly the blessed Saviour, and committing all into his faithful hands, we may say—

"Then let my soul march boldly on,  
Press forward to the heavenly gate ;  
There peace and joy eternal reign,  
And glittering robes for conquerors wait.

"There shall I wear a starry crown,  
And triumph in almighty grace ;  
While all the armies of the skies,  
Join in my glorious Leader's praise."

## SERMON XIII.

### THE MINISTER'S ENCOURAGEMENT.

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

It is as true of those minds which are deliberate and well-balanced, as it is of those which are ardent, that some prominent object excites and rules their ambition. Whatever that object may be, it will hold the mind of the pursuer to a steady purpose, and all other objects will have to yield their claims to this. This is a law of our nature, and it holds as true in reference to one individual as it does to another.

Now, there is but one object that is worthy thus to absorb our ambition, and this is one whose intrinsic and incomparable value is perceived by few. The writer of our text was one of this small number. He apprehended this object; and its excellence and magnitude so fired his ambition, and electrified his powers, as to render him the most effective and successful labourer that ever entered the service of a king.

He had once loved and pursued the same objects



which other worldly men pursue. But these he had now utterly relinquished; and he had seized upon others, far transcending them in excellence and glory. His views are clearly indicated where he says,—“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.” He was absorbed in the one desire to honour and to win Christ. Every other purpose was abandoned, and every other aim relinquished.

Now, as he had been brought largely to participate with Christ in that benevolence which brought him from heaven, and as he was concerned only to honour him, to what else could he devote his labours and his life, but to the proclamation of his gospel, and to such collateral aims as would tend to secure its complete success in the sanctification and salvation of men. This, then, was his grand aim; to this one end were directed all the astonishing energies of his mind, and here were centred all the sympathies of his heart. He cared for nothing else but the glory of Christ in the salvation of his people. He had no ambition for any other object than just “to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus unto God.” The church was his “hope, his joy, his crown of rejoicing.”

And in these views and feelings, every true minister of Christ sympathizes with this benevolent Apostle. No man, who has really devoted himself to the work of the ministry, and received from his Master the great commission, and the

anointing which the work demands, can make it his aim to accumulate wealth, or win for himself a glorious renown, or in any other manner to advance himself in those interests which are temporal. He lives for higher and nobler ends. The church is his care. To enlarge its boundaries, to strengthen and confirm its members, and to lead them all to honour Christ, by pursuing steadily and devotedly those great ends which he has set before them, is the grand object for which he toils and lives. This gives to every one committed to his spiritual charge a constant remembrance in his prayers; a living and abiding interest in the deepest anxieties of his heart. And when he sees them all walking in love and in fellowship of the Holy Ghost, adorning their sacred profession, commending their blessed Redeemer, and shedding the bright light of a spotless example around them, then are they his hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing. Then is he prepared to say with Paul, in the chapter which follows that containing the text: "For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before God?"

But when these redeemed people forget their covenant with God, and yield to the temptations that assail them, and lose the distinctive spirit of their religion, and so conform to the world, and blend with it, that they cannot be known from it,

then is the heart of the faithful minister filled with inexpressible anxiety and sorrow. His aims are defeated; his labours are all rendered void; his hopes are crushed; and in every path of his toil he meets an influence that baffles and confounds him. The Apostle describes his feelings in reference to all such when he says, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."

But we will now inquire, more particularly,—What does the Apostle mean, when he says of Christians, that they are his hope?

We must not understand him to say, that he regards his own salvation as depending upon them. For, however intimately his present peace and happiness might be connected with their state, his future blessedness was secured to him by the grace and promise of Christ. He knew that his faithfulness and power could never fail him; and that though all that professed to love him should turn traitors to him, yet if *he* remained faithful, his salvation was secure.

But there was another and most important sense in which these Christians were his hope. He depended upon them for a living exemplification of the power and excellence of religion. He looked to them for an influence that should open the way before him, for a successful ministry of the word; by attracting attention to the truth, by living down

prejudices, and by carrying conviction to the heart, of the divine power and sublime tendencies of the gospel. He hoped, that through their co-operation, and the illustrious example which they afforded of the beneficent and glorious influence of truth upon the character, he should be able to turn many to Christ, and finally to present them as trophies of redeeming grace, unto God. In his great and difficult work, he needed their prayers, and their sympathies, and the whole influence of a bright example, and all the advantages of an energetic and faithful co-operation. And how could he expect to vanquish the difficulties that lay in his way, and to move on successfully with his work, unless he could have these advantages? It was an unbelieving world that he was labouring to reform and save,—a world at enmity with God, reprobate concerning the truth, ignorant, proud, idolatrous, and pleasure-loving. The religion which he preached, and through which they were to be saved, if saved at all, was a holy religion, to be received in humility and faith, and demanding from them a renunciation of everything that was at variance with the glory and dominion of Christ, and with the peace and purity of their own souls. And how could he hope for success, when the lives of those Christians among whom he laboured, continually denied the truth of what he preached, or threw around it an air of levity and insignificance? He could do nothing in such a state of things. He could calcu-

late upon no signal triumphs of truth. It would be better, far, to labour where there was no church at all,—in the midst of those heathen, who had never heard of a Christian,—than where religion had only been misrepresented, and caricatured, and defamed by faithless professors. There would, in this case, be no influence to resist and neutralize the truth, brought from the example of a false profession. It would be left to its own free action, unembarrassed by any entangling relations with false friends.

Well, then, might the Apostle consider the Thessalonian Christians as his *hope*. The success of his ministry depended upon them.

And so it is with every faithful minister of Christ. The Christians among whom he labours are his epistles of commendation to the world. And if their conversation and deportment are such as to illustrate the truth, and to give an honourable and faithful testimony to the gospel which they profess to have received, the ministrations of the sanctuary cannot fail to become searching, and powerful, and prosperous. But if, on the contrary, these epistles of Christ are indistinct, or illegible, or filled with insinuations against the doctrine and character of Christ; if these witnesses for the truth are unfaithful to their trust, and give in a false testimony against it, how is it possible but the cause should go to an unrighteous judgment before the world, and fail to be vindi-



cated to their reason or their hearts? What can its most eloquent or faithful advocate do, when the testimony of its own friends is given in against it? And you know, my hearers, that when the cause is judged at this tribunal, the decision is not made up upon its merits, but entirely on the testimony of living witnesses. And this is the reason why our Lord imposed such heavy penalties upon false or delinquent friends. He demanded of every one of his disciples, that he should give an open and faithful testimony to the world, though it were at the risk of his life. He would overlook no delinquency in this respect, though such delinquency should be the only means left to the disciple of effecting an escape from the pains of an immediate and most cruel death. "He that confesseth me before men, him will I also confess before my Father."

Our Saviour understood perfectly all the springs of action in man, and all the principles upon which depraved minds would make up their judgment of his cause. He knew that if his disciples were to be governed in their conduct by the maxims of the world, and to be conformed to its fashions and opinions, and pursue a faithless and temporizing course, the great instrumentality which he had appointed for the spread of his truth and the conquest of the world, would be rendered powerless and void. The ministry of the word could effect nothing: and so his death would be in vain. It

was proper, therefore, it was right, that he should demand of every one professing to enlist under his banner, of every disciple that should enter his church, an unswerving fidelity to him, in all his conduct before the world, on pain of being denied by him in the presence of his Father and of the holy angels. Under these circumstances, has not the faithful minister of Christ good reason to say of the members of the church, "ye are our hope," and to have that hope die within him, when he sees them entering into all the gay and frivolous amusements of the world, and sacrificing to their love of pleasure the privileges, and joys, and distinctive attributes of the Christian life? What can he do, what progress can he make in his work, what success can attend his ministry, if those upon whom he is to rely for a living exemplification of the power of truth in renewing and transforming the character, are to repudiate principles by which even an inspired Apostle declared that he would be governed: "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth;" and not only eat the meat, but eat it when they know that it is unsuitable to nourish and sustain the Christian life; and even when it has been proved in thousands of instances to be a most baneful poison. How can we expect to win the world to Christ, when those who profess to have been so won pay so little regard to his instructions, and are so little concerned to testify to it, as their Saviour did, that its works are evil?

O, my brethren, you are our hope, our reliance, so far as human aid is concerned, for the success of our ministry; and when you are faithful to your Christian vows, and stand by us, in our work, and pray for us, and labour with us, and let your light shine, so that the world takes knowledge of you, that you have been with Jesus, then are our hands invigorated, and our hearts are filled with joy, for ye are not only our hope, but our joy. "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing; are not even ye? Ye are our glory and joy."

And from what has been said, you may clearly see that the laborious and devoted minister of Christ can have but little joy in his work, unless he be surrounded by a praying and faithful church.

The nature and ground of this joy you will see on adverting to the description of his own feelings, which the Apostle has given. Addressing himself to the Corinthians, he says,—“And I wrote this same unto you, lest when I came I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you, with many tears.” Here was his joy in their faith; and here was his affliction and anguish of heart, when he heard that they walked not according to the truth.

He said to the Colossian Christians, “For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, that their hearts

might be comforted, being knit together in love. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ."

Could he have taken such an interest in their spiritual welfare, and not have had his heart filled with joy or grief, according as they prospered or declined?

To the Thessalonians he says,—“We give thanks to God always, for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. Ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God.” Could he feel such an intense anxiety for their spiritual state, and yet have any other joy than what resulted from seeing them walking worthy of God?

He adds, concerning them, “When I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.”—“Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress, by your faith. For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy where-

with we joy for your sakes before God. Furthermore, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more."

His deep affection for the Philippian Christians, and his great anxiety for them he expresses in these words: "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." And he entreats them so to live, that they should be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom, says he, "ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

O what could the world do to inspire joy in a heart all absorbed and filled as was Paul's, with anxieties for the Church, and love to the souls of men? What could make him sorrowful, if he saw those who had been converted under his ministry, walking in truth and holding forth the word of life, and adorning the doctrine of Christ? He could take joyfully the spoiling of his goods, he could bear afflictions, and persecutions, and distresses, for Christ's sake, without a murmur; but to have the children of God, for whom he had laboured, and prayed, and wept, turned away from the truth, and moved from their steadfastness, and beguiled into a



conformity to the world, overwhelmed him with unutterable anguish of spirit. The reason was,—it enfeebled his own hands, it dishonoured Christ, it ruined them, and it arrested the work of salvation.

The experience of Paul in these respects, is an experience which is common to all Christ's faithful ambassadors. The Church in its purity, and in the vigour of a flourishing spiritual life, is their joy; in its declensions and defections, it is their grief. Every one of them can say as the Apostle John did, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." What can be more beautiful than a consistent profession of religion,—a life in harmony with the truths believed, and the profession made by a sincere Christian? O what a soft and attractive lustre is reflected from his life; how pure, how bright, how winning! The world will, at heart, yield a homage to that man, such as it yields to no other being; while the inconsistent professor, who gives in to the allurements of the world, and plunges into all its gayeties and follies, and takes the side of the world against the cause of his crucified Lord, however much he may be applauded and caressed by his gay associates, will surely receive such an estimation from them, at heart, as they never award only to the hypocrite. They know how a Christian ought to live. They know what his vows and professions are, and there is not one of them but thinks, whatever he may say, that the Christian looks

better in a prayer-meeting than in a ball-room, and does more to honour Christ when he labours to discourage, than when he strives to enjoy, the dissipations and amusements of a frivolous, perishable life.

But there is something over and above what belongs to the simple beauty, the attractive charms of the Christian character, to inspire the heart of the servant of God with joy. These are results arising from such a state, indescribably glorious and enduring. "Ye are," said Christ, to his disciples, "ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world." When the spirit that pervades the Church is the spirit of Christ, and the whole body of believers is found walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, then is there a power put into the hands of that community, to overturn the strongholds of wickedness, and to carry conviction to the hearts of sinners, that is searching and irresistible. In that place the ministry of truth will be a ministry of life, and the dry bones of the valley of death will hear the word of the Lord and awaken into life. There will be joy on earth and there will be joy in heaven over repenting sinners. And can any benevolent heart contemplate such a result, and not rejoice?

And will not such a state of things honour Christ? O what can be more afflicting to the heart that knows its obligations to him, that remembers his sorrows and his death, and gratefully

ascribes to these its own immortal hopes, than to see this kindest and dearest friend put to open shame, and crucified afresh by his own professed disciples? And on the other hand, what can give such satisfaction to the Christian, what can so inspire his heart with joy, as to see all praise and glory given to Christ? It was for this end, that the primitive Christians cheerfully suffered the loss of all things, and counted not their lives dear to themselves. And it is, above all things else, the joy of Christ's ministers, to see men brought to honour the Saviour by beholding the power and glory of his doctrine and grace reflected from an active, praying, faithful church.

But there is still another gradation in the sentiment of the text that requires our attention for a moment. The Apostle styles the church his *crown of rejoicing*, in the presence of Christ at his coming. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

This doubtless refers to the time when "Christ shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in them that believe." It will be when he shall be seated on his glorious white throne, and all nations shall be gathered before him. Then the faithful pastor shall reach the summit of his joy, he shall attain the highest perfection of his bliss, when he shall present unto God those who through his instrumentality have been converted

to Christ, and led on through the trials and temptations and dangers of this world, to the bright abodes that have been prepared for them in heaven. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." This is the event to which the Apostle refers, when he says to the Corinthian Church, "Ye have acknowledged us, in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus."

So when he exhorts the Philippians, to live as the "sons of God, without rebuke, and to shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice," says he, "in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain." And to this church it was that he addressed the impassioned language, "My dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown."

O what a scene will be witnessed, when the faithful pastor and his people shall meet together before the throne of Christ, and he shall cast his eyes upon that portion of his dear flock that followed the Lamb whithersoever he went, resisting the allurements of the world, and stemming the tide of temptations that threatened to bear them away from the cross; adhering to Christ through evil report and through good report; continuing faithful through all difficulties unto death, and overcoming at last through the blood of the Lamb!

O what transcendent joy, what ineffable delight will enrapture his redeemed spirit, as he thinks of the grace, the sovereign, matchless grace that has accomplished this work, and of the glory that will redound to Christ from it! And when he contemplates, too, the songs of praise, the hallelujahs, the rapturous hosannahs that will be shouted from this ransomed throng, and of the high delights, the pure and boundless bliss, in which they shall revel for ever, O will not the crown of his rejoicing be brighter and more glorious than the sun? Will not the cup of his joy be made to overflow?

But there is another part of this scene which he is to witness, which, were it not that he will be exempt from the imperfections and infirmities of the present state, would embitter all this joy; and that is, when the separation shall take place, and some of those for whom he had laboured and prayed and wept, and to whom, perhaps, he had even given the bread and the cup of the sacramental feast, "shall begin to stand without and to knock, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. And he shall profess unto them, I never knew you." Retaining all the passions and weaknesses that attend the present state, no faithful pastor could survive the shock which such a scene would give. But God will make all things clear, and will bring forth his righteousness as the light.

Let me then close this discoursé, by once more adopting the language of the Apostle to the Church,



and may God give you grace to realize its import. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy."

Remember, my brethren, that this is the responsible and solemn relation which you hold to our ministry; and may all your conduct be such before an unbelieving world, that we may rejoice, in the day of Christ, that we have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

## SERMON XIV.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S CROWN.

“In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of his people.”—ISAIAH 28 : 5, 6.

THERE is scarcely a more striking evidence to be found of the corrupt and perverted state of the human heart, than that which is furnished in the views which commonly prevail of the distinctive features of the Christian religion. The popular current of sentiment out of the church is not commonly found to set in direct opposition to the name and the ordinary forms of religion. But to its distinctive spirit and its personal claims the popular feeling was never found, in any time or place, either to lend its smiles or yield its sanction. It has always decried, and always treated with a sort of contempt, the serious, humble, prayerful temper and deportment of the disciples of the cross. The pageantry and pomp of a false religion it will admire and approbate; but the spirit of the true it has ever contemned and repelled as a spirit of weakness, fanaticism, or bigotry.

Now, to show you how indescribably perverse

and wicked is this popular sentiment, I need only inform you that the spirit which it so characterizes and so contemns, is what God in our text styles "a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty" to his people.

In the verses which precede this passage, God denounces against Israel, under the name of Ephraim, his most terrible judgments; while under the designation of "the residue of his people," he speaks words of peace and love to Judah. "In that day," says he, i. e. when he should pour out his indignation upon Israel, "the Lord of Hosts shall be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people."

The crown and the diadem are, in the eyes of the world, objects of great beauty and value. They are usually set with diamonds, and with the most brilliant and costly gems, and are worn not only as ornaments, but as the insignia of royal authority and power. Hence they are properly employed as emblems to represent that which God regards as the most precious and beauteous ornament of his people. He says he will be to them for a crown of glory and for a diadem of beauty. By which he means, that he will impart to them by his grace, that which shall render them more glorious in his view, and which shall be infinitely more dear and valuable to them, than the most costly crown that ever monarchs wore. He shall be their crown of glory and their diadem of beauty. The spirit which

he inspires, the endowments of the heart which he gives, the repentance, and faith, and love, and peace, and hope, and joy which he bestows, constitute, in the view of God, an ornament far more beautiful and glorious than the most splendid diadem that ever decked the brow of princes.

It is then the lustre of a spiritual crown, the glory of a heavenly diadem, that is to be so comely and beautiful upon the people of God. It is the soul, taken by the grace of God, from its pollution and misery, and adorned with heavenly purity. No perishable crown, though studded all over with gems of the purest lustre, could ever attract the gaze or excite the admiration of the inhabitant of heaven, like this. Holiness constitutes the beauty, it is the light of the glory of that world. When the spirit of man is adorned with it, when all its attributes, and affections, and sympathies, and energies are brought under the influence of the love of God, then is it arrayed and adorned in a manner to make it beautiful to the eye of heaven. This is what the Psalmist meant, when he prayed, "that the beauty of the Lord our God might be upon us." This is what led him to call the Church "the *perfection of beauty*." "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." She has been adorned with the spirit of holiness. She has been arrayed in the spotless robe of the Redeemer's righteousness.

It is on this account also that the inspired poet

has set forth the Church in language so elegantly descriptive in the 45th Psalm. "The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework. The virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee; with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought. They shall enter into the king's palace."

In language not less descriptive of the elegance and richness of her spiritual attire, has Solomon spoken of the Church. He represents her Lord and Redeemer as addressing her thus: "I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels; thy neck with chains of gold. We will make thee borders of gold, with studs of silver." "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant? The smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon. Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" Such is the language employed by inspiration to describe the beauty of the Church.

But remember, it is a spiritual beauty, a comeliness of soul that is here set forth; a glory which God sees, and not man. He has employed these



figures, borrowed from objects which the world most admires and loves, to represent his own exalted estimate of those endowments of the heart, which his own divine Spirit has imparted to his people. The world sees no such glory or beauty in the saints. The very endowments which in the eye of God impart to his people such an indescribable beauty, are, in the estimation of the world, spots and blemishes. With what contempt does the haughty worldling regard the meekness and humility of the cross? With what scorning does he contemplate the posture of the suppliant soul, when breathing forth its humble prayer to God? What, in his estimation, is the value of those endowments of grace which distinguish the true Christian,—the repentance, the humility, the self-renouncement, the love, the fear, the faith, the hope,—what are all these in his view, when compared with the glory of the world, the endowments of personal culture, of wealth, and honour, and pleasure, and fame? Things utterly uncared for and despised. Nevertheless, they are the very things in which the Lord God is for his people “a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty.”

In the Apocalypse, the Church is represented under the figure of a woman, richly attired, but her ornaments are all heavenly. She is clothed with the sun, and the moon is under her feet, and she wears upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

In another place, the same writer speaks of the saints as having been made kings and priests unto

God. And Christ says of them that they shall sit with him in his throne, and reign with him there for ever.

But in what deep obscurity at present, are these heirs of heavenly royalty, these inheritors of glorious crowns! Most of them unknown to fame, multitudes clothed in the humble garb of poverty, and regarded often as the dross and refuse of the world. It is to this circumstance that the Apostle Peter refers, when he says, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you."

But when her warfare is accomplished, and she comes up out of the wilderness to be presented unto the king in raiment of needlework and of wrought gold; and the starry crown is given into her hand, and the glorious beauty of the Lord her God is shed in its fulness upon her, O what a revolution in sentiment, with reference to the humble and faithful followers of Christ, will then take place. "Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels," i. e. when he shall prepare his crown. Then shall the whole world see the true glory of the people of God; the glory which God has given them, in the renovation of their souls in his own image, and in the ineffable exaltation and blessedness to which he has finally

raised them. And they shall inquire, Are these the people that were so despised on earth? "Who are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" And it shall be answered, "These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "Therefore are they before the throne of God." "In that day shall the Lord of Hosts be for a crown of glory and for a diadem of beauty unto his people."

But would you not like, my hearers, for a few moments, to contemplate some of the characteristics of this heavenly crown, by which it is distinguished from all earthly crowns?

1. Remark then, first, that it is unfading and imperishable in its nature. The Apostle calls it an *incorruptible* crown, and a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

In the verses which precede the text, the prophet opposes this crown to that blasted and fading glory which appertains to the possessions of the wicked. "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower."

Who is there that sees not the vanity and inconstancy of all worldly glory? It fades like the flower. It passes from us like a shadow. The crowns of monarchs, made up of perishable substances, can give to their possessors, for only a brief period, a fading and uncertain lustre. They

are every hour exposed to revolutions, that may cast the darkest shadows on the glory of their state.

But, it is not so with the glory that has been given to the saints. This is substantial and immortal. The love of God is unchangeable, and the development of his image in the saints, is progressive, from glory to glory, until the divine portraiture is completed. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father for ever and ever." This is an inheritance that is incorruptible; a crown that is of fadeless lustre and beauty. "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light," says the prophet, "and thy God thy glory."

2. This crown will be worn without care or peril. The crowns of earthly princes are set with thorns. The cares, and perplexities, and dangers, that always attend them, render them a bane and a curse to their miserable possessors. Who would wish to hold an honour so short-lived and uncertain, if it must entail upon the heart insufferable cares, and upon the life perpetual and imminent dangers? The glory, in this case, is not worth the sacrifice. It costs all, and is worth nothing.

But such is not the crown of glory that awaits the saints. No uncertainties, no perplexities, no dangers shall ever gather around it. It is the gift of God, guaranteed by his own power to his people, and the lustre of it shall be the effulgence of his own bright glory, the pure radiance of his own infi-

nite holiness and love. Now, it is necessary to exhort the Christian to hold that fast which he has received, that no man take his crown. But, then, dangers will be past, and weakness, and ignorance, and sloth, and ambition, will no more put in jeopardy the great interests of the soul. The glorified spirit, although in possession of untold wealth, of a crown such as the treasures of a hundred earthly kingdoms could never buy, will still know no fear, no care, no sorrow. It cannot fade, it is made of imperishable materials; it cannot be usurped; neither stratagem nor power can succeed to wrest it from the hands of its protector, God.

But not only will it be worn without care or peril, it will have the power to satisfy every want of its possessor. It is in itself an accumulation of all blessings that can flow from the love of God; knowledge, and wisdom, and peace, and purity, and safety, and blessedness in absolute perfection, and in perpetuity. Whoever shall wear that glorious crown, that diadem of beauty, shall never know what it is to have an ungratified desire. There is no kind or degree of glory which earth affords, that is adequate to satisfy the pantings of human ambition. But the glory that is found in the religion of the cross, perfectly meets and satisfies the highest desires of the loftiest spirit. Above or beyond this, it will never send a wish or a thought.

3. Again. This is a "crown of righteousness," so the Apostle styles it,—“A crown of righteous-



ness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day,"—rightfully obtained, and rightfully possessed,—indicative, on the part of the Giver, of his own perfect righteousness, and expressive of his approbation of that righteousness in which our Lord Jesus Christ has arrayed his people.

How different this from those crowns which earthly princes wear! often obtained by fraud and violence, and saturated with blood,—emblems of injustice and tyranny, and frequently held by power, without right.

But the crown of *righteousness* which the Lord shall give us, is dispensed to us from the Cross, where, indeed, it was dyed in blood, but in the blood of that sacrifice which was offered to the righteousness of God on our behalf. It is, therefore, a memorial, an imperishable monument of the unspotted justice of God, while to us it stands in the place, and subserves all the ends of a perfect personal righteousness. A glorious crown, therefore, it is, receiving its bright and stainless lustre from the inimitable purity of our divine Redeemer. He it is that has wrought it for us, crimsoned in his own blood, and studded all over with the gems of his own infinite purity and love.

This is the reason why, in our text, this crown is called a "diadem of beauty." All its beauteous lustre it obtains from the glorious perfection of Christ's work as our Redeemer. It is a crown of

righteousness,—the result of the great work of God in maintaining and displaying his righteousness in the sacrifice of Christ. It endows us with its beauty, not only as it restores to our own hearts the purity that they had lost, but as it throws around us the beautiful garment of the Redeemer's righteousness, that we may not come into condemnation for past transgressions.

4. But I remark again, that the crown of which we are speaking, is a crown of life. "Be thou faithful unto death," says the Apostle John, "and I will give thee a crown of life." It is so called for two reasons:—one is, that death has no power over it; it cannot deprive us of it; neither can it in any way impair it. The other, that it is the sure pledge of a perfect and immortal life.

"I give unto them eternal life," says the Saviour, and they shall never perish. The inheritance reserved in heaven for them, is described as being "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Life will be *life* in heaven,—not that weak, imperfect, suffering, half-developed existence which we have here; but, of angelic stature and proportions, we shall enjoy a maturity and perfection of powers and privileges, that will render our life one uninterrupted scene of gladness and glory. "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. And

there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever."

But are the crowns of earthly monarchs crowns of life? Are they unfading, and do they exist for ever? The brightest that was ever worn, has yielded to the power of death. And all, whether monarchs or subjects, who have gone down to the grave rejecters of that "crown of life" which our blessed Saviour has purchased for us, though they still live, and will live for ever, yet have an existence which might better be called *death* than life. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." "This is the second *death*."

Now, in conclusion, have we not good reason to call upon you all to strive to win this crown? Is it not a prize of infinite worth,—ten thousand times more valuable than all the honours of earth? What can compare with it? The riches of a thousand worlds could not buy it. And without it, what would the riches, or honours, or pleasures that might be gathered from a thousand worlds be to you? Death will turn them all into dross. But this glorious crown you will never win, it will never be yours, but as the result of a struggle that shall wake up every power, and give employment to every energy of the soul. The slumbers of sin must be broken up, and you must come to Christ,

who, by his bloody agony and death, has obtained this immortal crown for you; and there you must not only receive the precious boon, but in turn devote your all to him for ever. I solemnly declare to you, that neglecting or refusing to do this, it is my settled conviction, that you will never see life; but the wrath of God will abide, without measure and without end, upon you.

Can Christians understand the value of this crown, or its nature, or the mode of its procurement, and not feel that obligations the most solemn bind them to the love and service of their Redeemer? It is holiness, my brethren, that imparts to this crown its stainless lustre, its incomparable beauty and glory. Strive then to be holy as God is holy, and perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. This is the way in which to increase its beauty, so that the bright radiance of its light may attract the eyes of others, and lead them to the Cross. This is the way in which to testify your gratitude to Him, who, through death, obtained for you eternal life. O, brethren, remember the Cross; remember the price, the inestimable price, at which your crown was purchased,—“not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.” “A thousand worlds, so bought, too dear.” When you see your Redeemer meeting the great demand which stood against you, and baring his bosom to the stroke of justice; when you behold Him meekly offering

himself as the victim, on your behalf, to injured goodness, and quenching the fires of wrath in his own blood; can you think it hard, that the appointed way for you to possess the crown is to bear the cross? O, with what alacrity and joy should you answer to every claim of this redeeming and dying love! You shall know its greatness when you come to possess the crown. You cannot know it now, but you shall know it then.

THE END.



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