Discourse
written during the third week
in February 1840.

For the Middletown Congregation

From the text:

"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!"
John 1:29.
The author of this exclamation was one of those remarkable characters of which the history of the world furnishes but a single one. We may say that from the creation of the world to this time there never has been and from this time to the end of the world there never will be (because from the very nature of the case, there never can be) another just such a man as was John the forerunner of Christ, himself the subject of prophecy, as the morning star which was to herald the dawning of that light of the Sun of righteousness which was to enlighten a darkened world. He stands on the isthmus which joins the old and the new dispensation—the link which connects the one undivided, indissoluble chain of the Old Testament and the New Testament Church. John occupies a solitary and
and a sublime position in the grand view of the history of the Church. Sooke among the longest list of the Prophets both the Greater & the Less and then you find none who are as great as was John the Baptist. Even the hallowed life of Isaiah were touched with a live coal from off the altar of the living God and he spake in words that burned his thoughts which breathed—and he spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost—and Jeremiah too was the favoured recipient of the direct teaching of the Spirit of God—and Ezekiel the son of man with whom God talked in visions of holy entrance—delight—and Daniel the special favourite of Heaven and who foretold with so much exactness the time of the coming of H—and Hosea & Amos & Joel & Obadiah & Nahum & Habakkuk & Zechariah & Malachi—all were distinguished as having direct communication with God in prophetic visions—yet none were so great—none
so highly honoured as was John the Baptist. Four hundred years had now elapsed since the Book of Prophecy was closed, and the last of the Prophets had said in the word of the Lord “Behold I send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come with the Lord of Hosts.” During the long period which had passed shadows clouds and darkness had rested upon the Church of God. The old Dispensation had waned and its types and shadows had almost become indiscernible and unintelligible, amidst all the corruptions which Idolatry and Ignorance had enveloped her. There were still however some left among the thousands of Israel who had not departed from their Father’s God and their Father’s faith and devout men waited day and night for the Consolation of Israel. And to those
who had made the Prophets their Study, there was a certainty that the set time was near at hand when the Messiah should come. Evidently some wonderful manifestation of God's favour to his once honoured, still loved but unfaithful people was about to be made. But still before this day star arise and this day spring from on high the visit his people—there was a needful work of preparation to be done. John came to do this work and as a forerunner stove the highway and remove all obstructions out of the road which some great monarch is soon to travel. So John humbled the pride of the Jews and counteracted their prejudice, and instructed their ignorance and shew'd them the true way of Life, and thus by his preaching prepared the way for the heavenly instructions of the Great Messiah that should come after him.
It cannot fail to strike our minds as a remarkable feature in the character of John that while he was thus honoured of Heaven, and while great multitudes were daily surrounding him and wonder and applause were excited on all hands while he had every opportunity to impose himself upon the credulous populace as "some great one"—while the wonder-loving and superstitious Jews were already prepared to fall into a flame any latent aspirant of ambitious vanity that might have slumbered in his heart—by the supposition that he was either Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the Prophets that had risen—and some went so far as to ask him if he were not the Messiah—yet amid all this John i, distinguished by a singleness of purpose just to occupy that singular position and fulfill that remarkable office which he did fill—as the forerunner of Christ—to suggestions of others however flattering to his vain
could for a moment induce him to swerve, or assume a character & situation above his own— but he steadily confessed, I am not the Christ!" But told his inquisitors, "I am the voice— yea, nothing but the voice— of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Esaias." How rare the humility of John, when to the minds of common men he had the opportunity of securing consequence & influence by assuming a character, which considering the credulity of the people, could have been sustained so easily! And John thus presents not only proof of a great mind to be above such artifices, but thus he shewed the most certain evidence of his Divine Mission. It was no degradation to John either— it cost him no effort to mortify his pride when he said, "I indeed baptize you with water but there standeth one among you whom ye know not, He it is who..."
coming after me is preferred before me whose shoe latchet I am not worthy to unloose!" For did he hesitate to direct his own disciples and all the multitude with which he was surrounded to turn away their attention from himself? I look upon this when with a spirit of holy, joyful humility he exclaimed: "He must increase, but I must decrease!" and therefore he bade them "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" Would to God, my heart, we had somewhat of this spirit! So that we could lose sight of self and forget our own merits and claims to notice and be content to yield the palm to Him — to be content with Paul to "know nothing but Christ crucified." I feel that we wish to glory in nothing but the cross of Christ Jesus our Lord!" Let us endeavour then to cultivate this feeling, to do it effectually.
We inquire now how it may be properly styled a Lamb. The answer to this question is two-fold. He is a Lamb inasmuch as he was a sacrifice offered to atone for sin. By attending to the provisions of the Ceremonial Law of the Mosaic Dispensation, the analogy may easily be traced.

It will be recollected that the sin offering was to be a lamb without blemish. And that this victim was to be offered for the sins of the meritorious people. That the Priest should bring the lamb up to the sacred place and there confess over him the sins of all the people and laying his hands upon him should then signify that their sins were transferred to the lamb and upon this the Lamb was to be slain as the victim instead of the offenders themselves. Thus it is with Christ. He is predicted under the image of an offering for sin—Melchizedek was
to be "cut off but not for himself." As a Lamb he was offered up as a victim for sin, not for his own — the just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty.

2. He is justly styled a Lamb, however from the peculiar qualities that meet in his character, the Lamb it is well-known, is characterized by innocence, meekness, and meekness. Let us look at its gentleness. This we may see in every word and action of his life as it is recorded. Whether he was surrounded by the great multitude who bring with intense delight upon the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth or the bitter enemies who sought to catch something out of his life whereon to base an accusation or by the ferocious mob of brutal persecutors who thirsted for his blood and never rested until they had crucified him — whether in the humble cot of the son of a daughter of affliction and poverty —
in the beloved circle of his own friends, or in
the hall of Pilate—whether on his heavenly mis-
sion of mercy in the desert on the mountain
on the sea—by day & by night—wearied & hungry
he was ever the same gentle & benevolent and tender
hearted Saviour. Hear him, when he beheld the vast
multitude who had accompanied him to hear
his wisdom and behold his miracles, and had
compassion upon them on account of their desti-
tuations, commanding his disciples to minister to
their wants as he fed them by a miracle. Behold
him as he sat by Jacob’s well wearied & thirsty.
An abandoned female came up and asked
of turning from her with contempt he entered into
conversation with her & speaks to her the words
of eternal life. See him at the house of Simon
as he sat at meat—when the poor guilty woman
enters and begins to anoint him with precious
ointment to wash his feet with tears to wipe them
with the hairs of her head. And while the bosom of the
self-righteous Pharisee was swelling with indignation
at her presumption he said within himself "This
man if he were a Prophet would have known what
that manner of woman this is that toucheth him
for she is a sinner!" And he would have turned
her with contempt from him — but what did the
gentle Master? He rebuked the overheated zeal of the bigot
and having told him how much more kindly the woman
had treated him than he himself had done — he said
with the kindness of his own gentle nature — "Wherefore
I say unto thee her sins which are many are forgiven
for she loved much " he said to her "They sins
are forgiven." And if more is needed — go to the grave of
Samaray to see him weeping from the tenderness of his
signifying & gentleness of his nature — or go to the
city of Sennai and there as the funeral train of
a young man winds slowly & mournfully out of
the hills — see Jesus having compassion on his mother.
widowed I received of her only son—stopping the
vain & raising the dead & delivering them to the
astonished mother or yet more go with him to the
judgment hall & as one who late had solemnly
vowed to go with him into prison & unto death.
I heard by the innocent prisoners now with fierce
bitter outcry & cursings declaring his ignorance of
him—see Jesus turning that one silent eloquent
melting look on Peter—nor of repentance but pity
more in sorrow than in anger. And to crown it
all—how did Jesus feel for the penitent Peter?
I wish to heal his broken heart & contrite spirit
when after his resurrection he sent a special
message to him “So says he I tell Peter” And
lastly to clothe the accumulation of proof of his
gentleness—behind him in his conduct towards
his enemies. When he stood upon the brow of a
hill that overlooked the great city of
Jehovah, wherein most of his mighty works were done & thought of all their ingratitude & hatred & persecutions of him & his Prophet—when he saw the city he burst into a torrent of tears and exclaimed in the bitterness of his sorrow
"O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! &c and on the cross when reiled & mocked & derided & pierced & stabbed at & smote & insulted—bear him "rather forgive them &c &c then after death had been consigned & when he was giving his Commission to his disciples to go & publish the glad tidings of the Gospel be directed them especially to begin at Jerusalem and make the first offer of pardon to his enemies & murderers! Matthew, gentleness, Godlike & unparalleled! Well is the emblem of a Lamb selected to represent Christ the gentle Saviour.
But not only his gentleness—his innocence justifies his being called a saint. Whoever heard of his being chargeable with any deviation from the straight forward way of duty? Where was there ever known a human being that maintained a perfectly spotless character throughout all his life? Yet Jesus did. And he was a predictor of the Prophet—he should be the Holy One—the Holy Name—the Holy One of Israel. So is he represented by the Evangelist who recorded his life as free from any the slightest stain of guilt. So is he spoken of by the Apostles who said of him that he was without guile neither was deceit found in his life. So testified the weak and trembling Titus. So said the wretched traitor Judas. I find no fault in him—so said the wretched traitor Judas. I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood—so said his enemies who were sent to take him. 'Never man spake like
this man." Yea to said the Devil, "I know
thee who thou art the holy one of God."
But his Patience forever him a Lamb as
when reasoning with the blinded and perverse Jews
who disputed his word and charged him with
blasphemy and attempted to stone him; he bore it
with meekness. Or when suffering in the garden
betrayed by Judas instead of commanding 12
legions of angels to come to his assistance
he even rebuked the fiery zeal of Peter who
drew his sword and smote off the ear of Mal-
chus—submitted with patience—and then when
buffeted—spit upon—smitten—treated with all
manner of insult and mockery, he bore it without a
murmur and with no resistance—and then when dying
on the cross instead of rescuing himself from
his enemies—destroying them with one word
of his power—he prayed for them: "Father forgive them.
They know not what they do." He is a Lamb.
I remark again, He is the Lamb of God. He is so in a threefold sense. 1. God appointed him to be the Lamb of Sacrifice. From all Eternity it was so appointed. Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning. And as He knew what would be the state of the world that He should create—as He knew that man would violate His Holy Law and thus incur His wrath and curse—that He would involve His whole posterity in guilt and ruin and bring them into ruin unless He should interpose He, therefore for His own glory and by His own Power He moved by His own infinite Love appointed this Spotted Lamb as the victim which was to atone for the sins of this lost and ruined world. Hence it is the Lamb of God. 2. He is the Lamb of God by the repeated expression of His approbation upon Him during the period of His human life. Witness the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus at the time of His Baptism.
and witness the repeated expressions of this approbation
by a voice from Heaven saying "This is my beloved
son in whom I am well pleased."

But 3. He is the Lamb of God by the fact of God's having
accepted his atonement as a sufficient satisfaction
to his violated Law.

Again, "He took it away the sin of the world"
not by taking it out of the world nor by saving every body in the world.
General mercy a mistaken notion. But by rendering a satisfaction such as would
admit of God's forgiving sin consistent with
his Holiness and Justice.
The victim under the old dispensation was
a type of Christ as confessed overlaid and it
then it was carried off. Thus took away the sins of the people—
So we. Our sins were laid on him.
bore there in his own body on the tree
The Lord hath laid on him re
By his stripes are we healed
He was bruised for our iniquities
wounded for our transgressions re
He was not guilty — tho' he bore our guilt
He was not a sinner but a sin-offering
He takes away sin by the sacrifice of himself
By imputation —
Again "of the world"
not of every individual in the world
This, has been supposed to mean them
But let us examine it —
If he takes away every man's sin — Why does any
perish? Because it is said they will not believe
But was it intended or designed for every
If so who designed? God well then God's design,
can be nullified by man's will and some of those he intended to save will perish. As the meaning of John is that the Gospel dispensation is wider and more extensive than that of Moses, whereas the laws, plain under the latter, only took away the sins of believing, whereas their salvation belonged to the Jews—now it was to extend to the men of all nations equally—all without distinction not all without exception.

To conclude

Behold! Now?

1. With admiration—wonder of Heavens

2. With Love! Herein is love

3. With Confidence—Believe he saved

4. With Imitation: Let the same mind...
With obedience
Behold him now as he is represented to us our Prophet our Priest our King our friend our Savior our Advocate and Intercessor with God He is still held up to us — we have yet opportunity to adore love obey trust and imitate him.
But soon the scene will be changed in such an hour as ye think not And every eye shall behold him once more revealed from Heaven in the cloud of glory They shall look on him whom they have pierced and mourn Behold the Lord cometh de
But then you will not be called on to Behold the Lord of God but they
of all the Earth—the dreadful sentence will be those mine enemies who would not that I should reign over them bring either to lay them before me.

There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.