

Pants  
Shoes  
Collar  
Vest  
cut socks  
down coat  
Amphibian

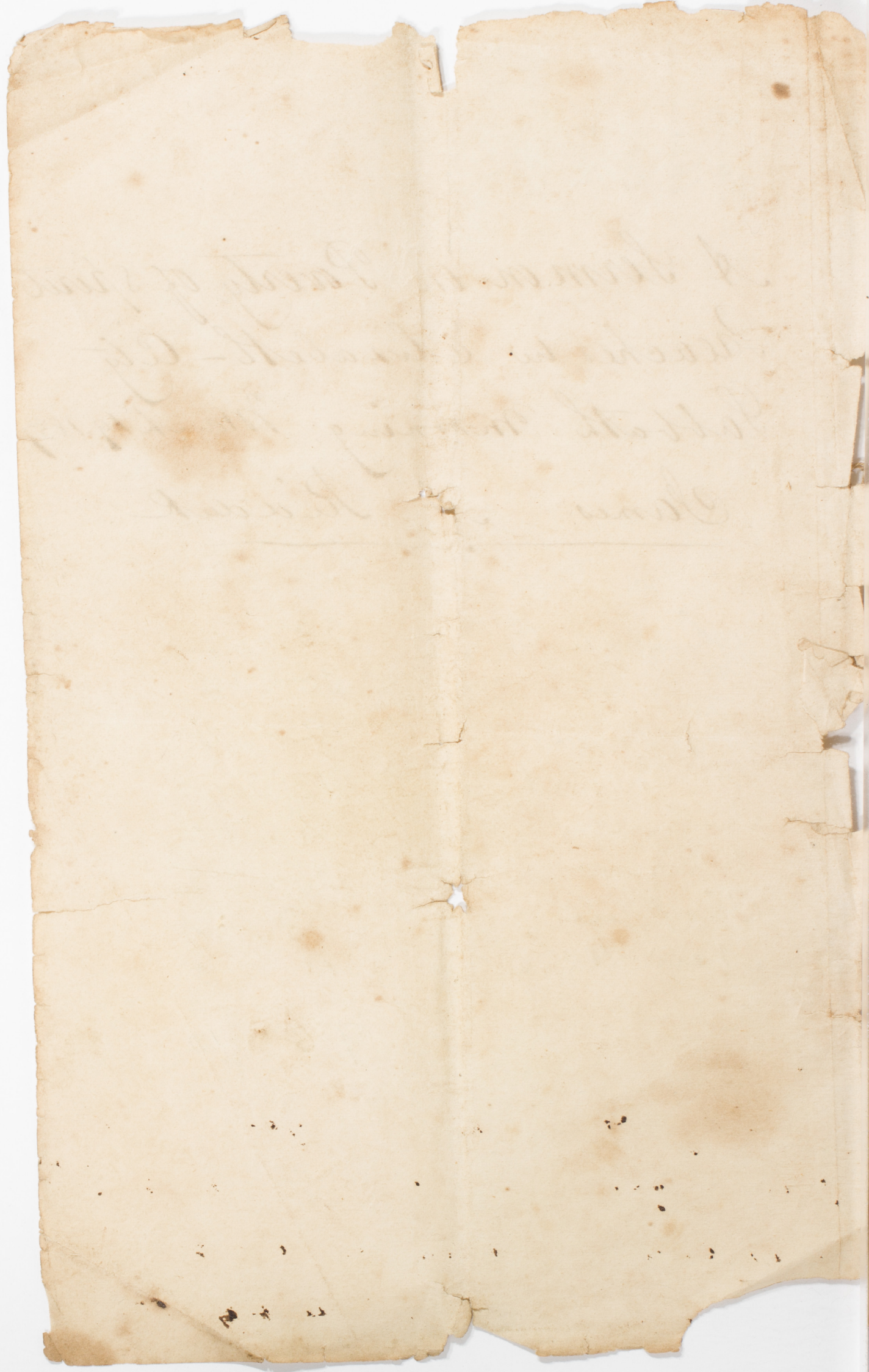
A Sermon on Poverty of spirit  
Preached in Elizabeth - City  
Sabbath morning, March 19. 1837.

James A. Riddick.

Shuttle Creek	23.	2
Prayer House	36	6
St. James	2	0
St. Carmel	12	00
St. John	4	00
St. Mary		2
Chappells	8	0
New Hope	11	0
	<hr/>	
	96	10

from







Matthew V. 3. Blessed are the poor  
in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom  
of heaven.

The circumstances under which  
our Lord exercised his ministry were  
calculated to excite great astonish-  
ment among the people, for he  
taught them as one having authority  
and not as the scribes - He pro-  
fessed the promised Messiah, the Son  
of God, the Saviour of the world, who  
had come from heaven to teach man-  
kind true religion. These high pre-  
tensions were accompanied by the  
most stupendous miracles which he  
brought in confirmation of his divine  
authority. The miracles which he  
brought, drew out vast crowds  
both to hear him speak and to  
witness his performances. The  
Saviour seeing the vast crowd  
which had gathered around him  
from all parts of the country, felt



inclined to embrace the opportunity  
to open his Commission more fully  
in unfolding the truths of that re-  
ligion which he came into the world  
to establish. And that he might  
do so with more convenience to him-  
self and advantage to his hearers,  
he went up into a neighboring Moun-  
tain; and after he had obtained  
a commanding spot from which he  
could be seen and heard at a con-  
siderable distance, he sat down, after  
the manner of the Jewish doctors,  
who to show their superiority were  
accustomed to sit when they taught.  
After the Saviour had thus seated  
himself, he opened his mouth and  
taught them, saying, "Blessed are  
the poor in spirit, for theirs is  
the Kingdom of heaven". This is the  
commencement of our Lord's memo-  
rable discourse on the Mount



In The prosecution of his sermon  
he sums up The whole of experimen-  
tal & practical religion in a few  
general particulars, which he af-  
terwards guards and defends against  
The false glosses of men.

Some have supposed, That he designed  
by These particulars to point out  
The several grades in Christian ex-  
perience - The successive steps which  
The good man takes in the di-  
vine life - Others are of opinion,  
That all The graces here mentioned  
are found at all times in a greater  
or less degree in every sincere Chris-  
tian. We are persuaded however  
That these two opinions are not  
contradictory, but equally correct.  
For it is undoubtedly true, That  
both poverty spirit, and every other  
temper here mentioned, are found



at all times in a greater or less degree  
in every Christian believer; and it  
is equally true, That Christianity  
begins with poverty of Spirit, and  
proceeds in The order laid down in  
This Chapter until The individual  
is made perfect in love.

The doctrine contained in our text  
seems to be this, — Those who are  
truly poor in Spirit, shall be hap-  
py in The present world, and in The  
world to come obtain The rewards  
of heaven — In The treatment of  
This subject we shall notice,

I What is meant by poverty of Spirit  
II The happiness of Those who possess it.  
I. We are to enquire what is meant  
by poverty of Spirit — We should cer-  
tainly endeavor to obtain a cor-  
rect view of This subject; for if we  
make a mistake here, we blunder  
at The very foundation of exper-



imental godliness, and at one <sup>time</sup> ~~corner~~  
terfeit our hope of salvation.

Some have supposed, That poverty  
of Spirit was a disposition of soul  
peculiar to Those who <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ destitute  
of riches - Who are poor and indige-  
nent in Their Temporal Circumstances  
This opinion They have endeavored to  
Support by The literal meaning of  
the term used in our text, without  
any regard to The manner in which  
our hearts are affected by it - And  
in farther Confirmation of This  
opinion, They invariably quote  
The wisely expressive of S. Paul  
"The love of money is the root of  
all evil". From These premises ma-  
ny have drawn The Conclusion, That  
to be poor in Spirit, we should im-  
pose upon ourselves, absolute and  
voluntary poverty. And many



have diverted themselves not only of riches, but of the comforts and blessings of life. And from this view of the Subject, The vows of voluntary poverty seem to have arisen in The Romish Church.

But such persons ought to consider that The expression of Saint Paul must be understood with some degree of qualification; otherwise it will prove to be false; for The love of money is not The root of all evil. There are ten thousand evils, as daily observation will testify with which money has no connection whatever. When St. Paul used this expression, he had just innumrated a number of evils which abound in The world, - and perhaps the reading should be, The love of money is The root of all these evils which he had just mentioned -



Moreover if poverty of Spirit signify only freedom from Covetousness— from the love of money, or the desire of riches it would make our Lord guilty of tautology, for with this view of the subject it w<sup>d</sup> coincide with another particular which he lays down, & would only be a branch of purity of heart —

From what we have said then, it is obvious, that poverty of Spirit, does not depend upon our conditional in life — upon our temporal circumstances — It is not restricted to the rich or to the poor. A man may live in abject poverty all his days, and yet never know what it is to be poor in Spirit. The Saviour no doubt intended to convince his hearers of this fact when he used the words of our text. For it must be recollected



That the most of his hearers were the poor of this world; and to show them that their condition in life w<sup>d</sup> not prepare them for the Kingdom of heaven, he declares to them that this Poverty of Spirit, must extend to the inward man — that it must affect the heart; for blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven —

A man may live in abject poverty all his days — he may be poor & destitute in his temporal circumstances, and yet have his heart fixed upon the wealth of the world; and where this is the case, he will find just as much difficulty in the exercise of this gracious disposition of soul, as though he possessed the whole world; for "they that will be rich fall into temptation &c"



On the other hand, a man may have his Thousands at Command, & yet so demand himself - So live in the exercise of Charity and benevolence, as to live in the exercise of poverty of spirit, and finally get safely home to heaven -

But we would observe however, that the poor of this world, whose possessions are small, whose support depends upon their daily labor, are placed in much more favorable circumstances to become poor in spirit - If then providence has not favored you with a large estate, recollect with a grateful heart, that God has removed many impediments out of your way to the Kingdom of heaven - If you should murmur at your allotment, you may frustrate the designs of Providence, and the good of the world, may yet prove



more ~~thy~~ your final and eternal  
view - But if Providence has favored  
you with great prosperity in tem-  
poral pursuits, God has committed  
to you an important trust - Recol-  
lect that the Silver and the gold are  
his, and you are his Steward - If  
riches increase set not your af-  
fections upon them, lest the dis-  
pleasure of God fall upon as de-  
linquent Steward

The question now arises, what is  
Poverty of Spirit? Seeing that a man  
may be poor, and yet without it,  
and seeing a man may be rich,  
and yet Capable of becoming poor  
in Spirit - The best definition  
that we can give of this Subject  
in so many words, is this; - It is a  
gracious disposition of soul, by which



We are emptied of self. and self-sufficiency, in order to our being filled with Christ and the gifts of the Holy Spirit—

It is produced by a proper sense of inward & outward sin. The individual, who is convinced of sin, discovers, that instead of being rich and increased in goods, and having need of nothing, he is wretched, and poor and miserable and blue & naked.

In the anguish of his soul he cries out, in me dwelleth no good thing, but whatsoever is evil and abominable. He has a deep sense of the loathsome leprosy of sin which he brought with him into the world, & which overspread his whole soul, and totally corrupts every power and faculty thereof. He feels and deeply feels the corruptions of his heart, from



which proceed pride and vanity, and  
malice, and envy, and hatred, and  
every evil and unholy temper -

His guilt also presses him down  
like an incubus - He feels that he  
deserves everlasting banishment from  
the presence of God - And he is ready  
to cry out, "how shall I escape, who  
have neglected so great salvation?"

But how can he find relief from  
his dreadful condition? How shall  
he atone for the sins that are past?  
were he to lead a spotless life to the  
day of his death, this w<sup>d</sup> make no  
amends for a single act of past dis-  
obedience - This w<sup>d</sup> only be what God  
requires of him at every moment of  
his life - This could never atone for  
a single act of past disobedience.

But if God were to forgive all that  
is past on condition that he should



sin no more - That he should thereafter  
entirely and constantly obey all his com-  
mands, he is confident that this w<sup>d</sup>  
profit him nothing, being a condition  
which he could never perform - From  
the corruptions of his heart he is confident  
he could never exhibit in his life the  
fruits of the Holy Spirit - In such a  
condition, he is utterly at a loss, how  
to begin to walk in the path of God's  
commandments - He knows not how  
to take one step towards heaven - En-  
compassed with sin and sorrow, and  
finding no way of escape, he only  
cry out, "Lord save or I perish" -  
When he is thus emptied of his own  
sufficiency, and finds that he has  
not one rag of righteousness to re-  
commend him to the notice of God,  
he throws himself upon the Lord Je-  
sus Christ in all the poverty of his  
soul - He is then made rich in



in the blessings of salvation. He can  
then witness from blis<sup>t</sup> experience,  
"blessed are the poor in Spirit; for this  
is the Kingdom of heaven"

Consider we,

II. The happiness of those who possess  
this poverty of Spirit - theirs is the  
Kingdom of heaven - This phrase has a  
two-fold signification - it refers to the  
present and the future - In its present  
signification, it is not meat and  
drink, but "righteousness and peace &  
joy in the Holy Ghost." This Kingdom is  
set up in the heart of the Christian  
believer which constitutes his happi-  
ness in the present world.

1. He is righteous before God - pardoned,  
and justified - The image of God is stamped  
upon the soul, whereby it is created  
in the image of God. He now loves God  
because he first loved him, and he  
loves all mankind for his sake



2. He is also the subject of peace - Previous to his reception of this kingdom, he had no peace - all was trouble and anguish of soul; but now that he has received this inward kingdom, his peace flows as a river, and his righteousness as the waves of the sea. He has a heavenly Calvary, a sweet repose in the blood of Jesus Christ.

3. In this kingdom he enjoys "is enabled to rejoice, with joy in The Holy Ghost, which arises from a sense of the forgiveness of our sins, from a lively hope of the glory of God, from the testimony of a good conscience, from communion with God, and from an earnest of his future inheritance - In the possession of such an inheritance - of such an experience, the individual can break out in the language of the Prophet, O Lord I will praise Thee, tho' Thou wast angry with me; Thine anger



is turned away - He feels that those rivers of pleasure, which flow at God's right hand are springing up within him - This is heaven on earth begun - meat that endureth to everlasting life.

But this Poverty of Spirit must be perpetuated after we receive this Kingdom, but upon different principles - It arises from a continual sense of our total dependence upon God for every good thought and word and work - of our utter inability to do good, unless he water us every moment by his grace - With this is joined a loving shame, a tender humiliation before God, even for the sins which he know he hath forgiven us, altho' they are not impletes to our condemnation - And the more we grow in grace, the more shall we discover of the corruption of our hearts; and the more shall we become humbled in the sight of God -



And the great reason why many  
grow cold and languid in religion,  
is attributable to the fact, that  
they have lost their poverty of spirit,  
and have become proud and high-  
minded, & forgotten the depths of mis-  
ery from which they have been raised.

O let me exhort you, to cultivate re-  
ligion in the valley of humility, if  
you hope to be exalted to the king-  
dom of heaven hereafter -

2 At the end of their pilgrimage, those  
who possess this gracious disposition  
of soul, shall be put in possession  
of the rich rewards of heaven.

By the kingdom of heaven in its fu-  
ture signification, we mean the  
place of the more immediate pres-  
-ence of God, where his glory is more  
fully displayed - This kingdom is some-  
times called a house in which there  
are many mansions - a city that



hath foundations whose maker and  
builder is God - There we are told, shall  
be no night, no sorrow, nor crying,  
nor pain nor death - But a time  
of increasing delight - Happiness without  
alloy - pleasure undisturbed - joy with-  
out a mixture - New beauties shall in-  
creasing, like the flowers of an ever-  
blooming spring forever putting forth  
to charm the eyes - All this, and more  
than this, will be the future inheri-  
tance of that man or of that wo-  
man, who cultivates this gracious dis-  
position of soul - this poverty of spirit

1.

Religion stands opposed to pride.  
For God resisteth the proud, and giveth  
grace to the humble - Humble your-  
selves therefore under the mighty hand  
of God, that he may exalt you in  
due time.

2.

The humble man is the hap-  
py man -