

E. Y. Wimbush

THE .

BAPTIST PREACHER.

ORIGINAL.....MONTHLY.

H. KEELING EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

Vol. XII. OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER, 1853. Whole No. 143.

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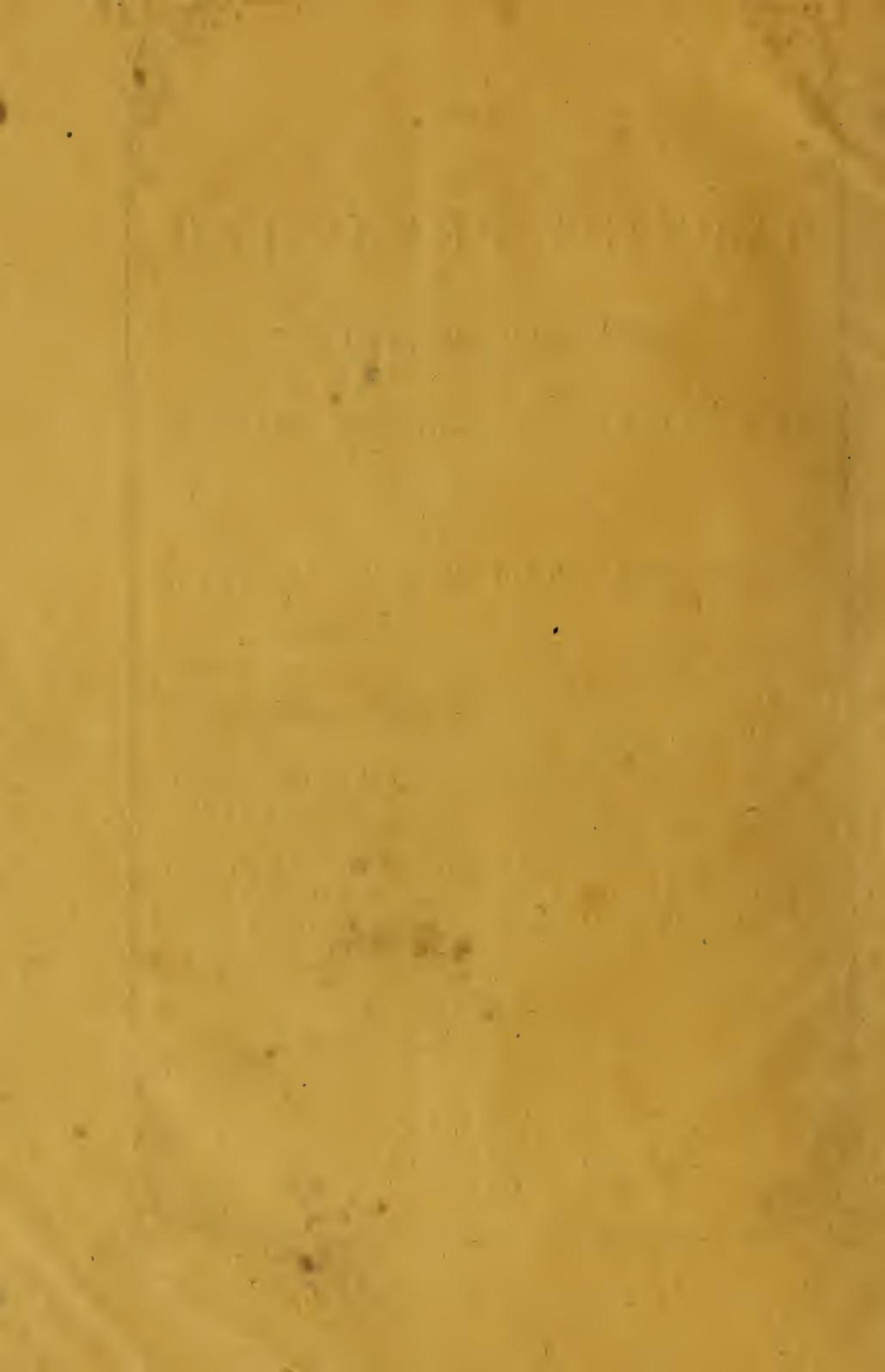
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RICHMOND:

PRINTED BY H. K. ELLYSON.

1853.

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1853
NO 143



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THE
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New Series. OCTOBER, 1853. No. 10.

THE GIFTS OF CHRIST:

A SERMON—BY REV. H. H. TUCKER, OF GEORGIA.

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“*Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.*”—John xiv, 27.
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When a dear friend has been taken from us and transferred to the world of spirits, where we shall see his face no more till the morning of the resurrection, how pleasantly do we dwell upon any remark which we may remember to have escaped his lips. There seems to be a value, a sacredness, a preciousness, about any words we may remember him to have used, even though they be common-place in themselves, and conveying no sentiment of peculiar interest. The mere fact that they were *his* words, is enough to make us dwell upon the recollection of them with tenderness and fond delight. But how much more precious are those words when they are not common-place and unmeaning, but expressive of warm affection for ourselves. How melting the remembrance of expressions of tender regard from dear departed ones. But there is another circumstance that imparts to them an additional value. Suppose them to be the expressions of the death-bed—the last evidences of affection that the parting spirit could give—struggling with the King of Terrors for a few fleeting breaths. and expending the last of them in uttering words of undying love. The memory of such words as these we always cherish with unalterable devotion, and enshrine them in the most hallowed sanctuary of our hearts. The words of our text are just such as I have described. They are the words of a friend—of a dear friend—of a friend that sticketh closer than a brother—of

the best friend we ever had or ever can have in all eternity. They are words expressive of peculiar regard for us, and they are words uttered in that last and memorable conversation which our dear Saviour had with his disciples just before he was crucified. He knew that his hour was come, but he had a few moments yet to spend with his friends before he should be led away to the scene of his sufferings, and he occupied them with the tender conversation and that ever-to-be-remembered prayer which are recorded in the 14, 15, 16, and 17th chapters of John. I have often thought that if any part of the sacred scripture is more precious than the rest, it is that part which contains the last dying conversation and prayer of the Lord Jesus. Oh! how thankful we ought to be for that providence which has preserved to us this blessed record—this most sacred memento of our Saviour's love. But our Lord has bequeathed to us a better legacy than mere words. "Peace I leave with you," says he, "my peace I give unto you—not as the world giveth, give I unto you—let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Substantial comfort has he bequeathed to us, a peace which passeth all understanding and a blessedness that the world knows not of. These gifts of Jesus' love I would commend to your consideration to-day. We value anything that is given to us by a friend, even if it be valueless in itself. We prize it on account of the source whence it came, and on account of the kind motives that prompted its bestowal. Thus even a ring or a little Bible or other book, or even a lock of hair, or other similar memorial of regard, is oftentimes invested with a value which may not be expressed. How often in our sadder and more contemplative moments we take the little keepsake from its casket, hold it in our hands, turn it over and over, examine it with tearful eyes, press it to our lips, return it to its casket, and securely locking it up, and embalming the memory of the giver once more in our hearts, go forth again to the scenes of busy life sadder but wiser and better from our contemplations. If it be right for us thus to regard the little valueless keepsakes of a friend, how much more proper is it that we should often call to mind and regard with grateful affection, the priceless gifts of our Lord Jesus Christ. We ought to examine them carefully, to scrutinize their peculiarities, and perchance in those peculiarities we might find some new ex-

hibition of the character of the giver, or some new evidence of his affection for us, and thus by obtaining fresh and cheering views of his goodness and love to us, cherish and cultivate our affection for him. Thus when we read a book that has been given us by a friend and find a passage marked by his hand, we read that passage with peculiar interest; it seems invested with the individuality of our friend, and gives us an idea of his taste and of the cast of his mind. But it is only by *reading* the book that we can find these traces of the giver's hand and evidences of his character. So it is only by examining the gifts of Jesus' love, meditating upon them, scanning their features and ascertaining all their qualities, that we can fully appreciate them, or know and admire as we ought the surpassing loveliness of Him who gave them. And it is peculiarly appropriate that we should examine them, because in his last dying words he has called our attention to their peculiarities, and thus, as it were, suggested that we ought specially to consider them. "Not as the world giveth," says he, "give I unto you."

Now, then, let us see in what respects the gifts of the gospel are different from those of the world.

1. In the first place let it be observed, that the world we live in is a very selfish one. Acts of benevolence purely disinterested do not seem to be very common, and they are not so common as they seem. And though there be happy exceptions, yet, perhaps, I should not slander the world if I were to say, that a gift bestowed with worldly motives is, for the most part, bestowed with some hope of future recompense. Not so with the gifts of the Saviour. His are bestowed without any hope of recompense, directly or indirectly. He can have nothing to gain from us. He is our Maker, and all that we have belongs to him already. We ourselves are his, and so is the world in which we dwell. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; for he hath founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods. Yea, and every other world that rolls through space is equally His. Heaven is His. The treasures of the universe and the throne of the universe are His. The ten thousand times ten thousand glorified spirits that dwell in the heaven of heavens are His, as entirely, absolutely, and unconditionally as the insects that float in the air of summer. If we had anything to give, could he be made richer by the reception of it? But we

have nothing, for what we seem to have is His already. So then if He gives us anything, it is not with any hope of future recompense. Is it as when a prince condescends to give aid to the beggar that stands starving and almost unclad at his gate? Nay, verily, for the time might come when even the beggar's influence might be of service even to his prince; or, by exhibiting such kindness to the poor, he might seek to ingratiate himself in the estimation of his subjects, and thus render his throne more secure. Is it as when a parent sustains the little one that looks up to him for protection? Not so, for the time may come when that child in turn may cherish and sustain the parent. Is it as when expecting no reward in this life, we contribute of our means to send the word of life to the heathen? Not so, for any righteous thing we do in this life will promote our own glory in the life to come, and all that we give is only invested, to be returned to us in due season, increased a hundred-fold. To what then shall we compare the love of Christ? The universe furnishes no parallel! God is, in the nature of things and necessarily, the only giver whom the bestowal of a gift cannot possibly, in any way whatever, directly or indirectly benefit.

2. But let us notice another feature. Our friends sometimes wish to give us some testimonial of their regard, but they do not know what gift would be acceptable or valuable to us. Sometimes they may give us that which we have in abundance already. So that although we enjoy the compliment of the gift, we are really not benefited by it. Or it may be, that they will give us that which will prove in the end to be an injury to us—it may lead us into temptation, or in some other way it may even lead to our ruin. But not so with our heavenly Friend. His kindness is never misjudged nor misguided. His gifts have this peculiarity, that they are always adapted exactly to our wants. Those things which of all others in the universe would suit us best and do us the most good, are the very things that he bestows on us. What an exalted privilege it would be if the God of heaven were to say to us, ask what you will and you shall have it. How would we begin to think over all the excellent riches of the universe, to see what boon above all others was most desirable. But our Saviour has done vastly more than this for us. He has not limited his gifts to our capacity

of asking or to our powers of thought, but has actually given the things which He in infinite wisdom has seen to be best for us. We are like little children, who, if they had leave from a prince to ask for what they would, with a promise that they should receive it, might ask for an apple or something else equally insignificant, knowing nothing better.

But our prince, as just observed, does not limit his gifts to what we ask, but bestows them "exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." Our Saviour in bestowing his gifts upon us, has brought to bear infinite wisdom in the selection of them. He knows our frame. He knows what is in man. He is far better acquainted with the most hidden part of our nature, than we can possibly be with anything; consequently he has an understanding absolutely perfect of all our wants and necessities, and not only of those wants that now exist, but of every want that ever did or possibly can exist in all time to come and in eternity. Not only does he know our wants, but being acquainted with everything that ever did or can exist—yea, even with everything that it would be possible for the Almighty himself in all eternity to create, he of course knows exactly what is calculated to meet our wants. And now possessing this infinite knowledge, and having the treasures of the universe at his command, and free access to every blessing that God himself has it in His power to bestow, he has selected the very things which in that infinite knowledge he has seen would of all others be best for us. I spoke in my introductory remarks of examining the features of a gift, to see if we could not therein find some indication of the character of the giver, and thus cultivate an admiration for his good qualities. May we not learn from the adaptedness of the gifts of the gospel to our wants, not only the wisdom but the kindness and consideration of the Giver.

3. But we must turn to another feature. The excellence of the gifts of the gospel is not seen at once. If a friend gives us anything here, we know exactly its value, and we know it at once. If it be of pecuniary value, we know exactly the amount; if it be some article of convenience or use, we know exactly how convenient or useful it will be. We know as much of its value at first as we ever do afterwards. Indeed, sometimes a gift appears more valuable at first than it ever does again. A piece of plate, for example,

may be a very handsome gift, and seem very splendid and very valuable, but when the eclat of its reception has passed away, it is found to be of very little more value than the same article would be if made of tin, or even baser metal. Not so with the gifts of the gospel. These never appear so small as they do at first. They do not appear *small then*; for, from the first, we know that we have found a pearl of great price; but the longer we possess them the more our conception of their value enlarges. We are not able, when we first find them, to imagine their value. But we find out more and more of it every day. As our capacity for appreciating its value increases, we appreciate it the more. I doubt not that in eternity our capacities will continue to expand; but, even in eternity, I presume we shall never be able fully to comprehend the length, and breadth, and depth of the unsearchable riches of Christ. It is delightful, in this present life, to contemplate divine truth; and it is delightful to realize how a perception of its beauty grows on us. The more we see of it, the more there is to admire. It not only never grows old, but seems to be continually becoming newer. It has been the subject of thought and profoundest scrutiny, by the most gifted minds, for thousands of years, and yet new beauties are just as frequently seen as they were at first. Let even the most humble and unlearned take it up, and he will find in it precious gems, sparkling where philosophers and divines had overlooked them. It is like a kaleidoscope. Turn it which way you will, it presents some new form of beauty; like a kaleidoscope of ten thousand sides, and ten million objects of reflection, presenting a variety inexhaustible, uncounted and incalculable. So the Christian, who enjoys the best gifts of the gospel, is all the time learning to see more excellence in them, and appreciate their value more highly.

4. But not only do we see more of the value of the gospel the longer we have embraced it; it possesses another feature equally or more worthy of notice, which is, that its blessings actually do increase in value. The true Christian is always making advances in the divine life, and new attainments in holiness. The kingdom of heaven in his heart is at first like a grain of mustard seed, very small; but the germ expands, and bursts, and its roots strike out in a thousand ramifications, and it becomes like the mustard plants of

the east, almost like a tree, so that the birds lodge in the branches. The new convert is like one who has just entered into a mine of imperishable wealth, and begins at once to enrich himself from its stores ; but the old and faithful Christian is like one who has been there for years, amassing and amassing accumulations upon accumulations of treasures ; or, to change back to scripture figure again, the new principle implanted within us is at first like a little leaven ; but the tendency of that is to spread its influence, until the whole is leavened. Thus if there was value in the change at first, how much more at the last.

Not so with earthly gifts ; they seldom do increase in value ; they are apt to become old, to wear out, or in some other way to perish in the using.

But the gospel gift never wears out, improves in the using, and the more freely we dispense it the more we have left.

5. But let us contemplate another feature. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you" The gifts of the world are liable to be lost or destroyed. If they consist of property, we all know the thousand contingencies to which earthly possessions are liable. If the gift consists of education, we may become insane, or so enfeebled in body or mind, or both, that it will be of no use to us. But the unsearchable riches of Christ the world can neither give nor take away. This gift is beyond the reach of all contingencies, in time or in eternity. When it is once ours, it is ours absolutely and forever ; moth and rust cannot corrupt it ; thieves cannot steal it. Let us but choose the good part, and it shall not be taken away. That Saviour, who was kind enough to pick us up from the dunghill ; yea, who rescued us from the bottomless pit, and who has once pressed us to his bosom, and called us his own dear children, has not done so that he may dash us down again. Neither is any able to pluck us out of his hands. He who worked the stupendous miracle of translating us out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of his dear Son, will not unwork it, and hurl us back into darkness, and he who has once invested us with the wedding garment, will not tear it from us, nor suffer it to be done. If God with his own hand has written our names on the Lamb's book of life, he will never erase it, nor suffer it to be erased ; for, if he ever fixed it there, it was done before the world began ; done in his eter-

nal and immutable counsels ; and shall they be varied, altered, amended, added to, or abridged ? Perish the thought ! What gift so abiding as that of a Saviour's love ? Well did he say, " Not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

6. Now let us examine another peculiarity. The gifts of this world may increase our possessions, but they make no alteration in ourselves. Individually, we are just the same, after receiving the gift as before. Not so with the gift of the Saviour ; for, on the reception of that, there is a change wrought in us personally. We are *not* the same afterwards that we were before. So complete is the change, that the Word of God designates it as a new birth. " If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." He occupies a new position in the scale of created intelligences : whereas before, he was among them who hate God, and, of course, obnoxious to God's eternal vengeance ; now he is numbered among the saints. His voice is mingled with the voices of saints and seraphs ; and, little as it may be thought of on earth, makes melody in heaven ! Men may give us gold, but the gospel turns us into gold ; men may open to us new springs of delight, but those springs are without us, and we must repair to them when we would drink their waters ; and " whosoever drinketh of them shall thirst again ;" but " whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be *in him* a well of water springing up into everlasting life." How truly did our Saviour say, " Not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

7. It is pleasant thus to look at the peculiar excellences of the gifts of God ; and there are many more of them than one would at first imagine. Let us now look at another of them. The gifts of Jesus' love identify us with himself. By putting his Spirit in us, he makes us, as it were, a part of himself. In that memorable prayer of our Saviour, made just before he was betrayed, these wonderful words occur : I pray, says he, " That they all may be one ; as Thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us ; and the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one ; I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be perfect in one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and *hast loved them as Thou hast loved me.*" Just think of it ! we are one with Christ, identified with him, and that God

loves us even as he loves *him*. We are adopted, as it were, into God's own immediate family, and become his children. We are his *heirs*, and joint heirs with Christ. What an inheritance! To be an heir to great wealth is considered desirable. To be heir to a prince of vast power and possessions is considered an honor. But what shall we say of being an heir to the God of heaven and earth, joint heir with the only begotten Son of Him who is Lord over all, and who rules the universe! Christ first identified himself with us by assuming our nature, and now identifies us with Him by giving us his nature. Oh! the wonders of grace!—oh! the depth of the love of Christ! It passeth knowledge. Oh! the amazing, the unmeasurable goodness of God! What a gift is this to be identified with his dear Son. Such a gift as this is beyond the power of created beings. For even supposing that they could elevate us to a rank with themselves, they could not infuse into us their spirits, so as to make us, as it were, a part of themselves. But Christ tells us that we are one with Him, even as he and the Father are one, and that God loves us as he does Him. Mystery of mysteries! How can these things be? We do not know how they can be, but we know that they are. God's ways are past finding out. The depths of his wisdom and of his love cannot be sounded. How truly his gifts are beyond our powers of asking, or of conception. They are so vast, that our minds cannot comprehend them even when they are revealed.

We can see that there is some meaning in our Saviour's words: "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

8. I might show several other characteristics of the gifts of God; I might dwell upon the fact, that they are the only gifts that can be of value to us in both worlds; in this, and in the one to which we go.

9. And I might also show and dwell with interest upon the fact, that in the possession of these gifts we need nothing else. That even if we are the subjects of poverty, and pain and sorrow, yet if we have an interest in Christ, and are joint heirs of God with Him, we can realize the truth of what the apostle said, when he declares "All things are yours." But I will not dwell on these points.

10. To one feature more only will I call your attention. We place our estimate upon gifts, not only by their intrinsic

value, but by the cost or expense they may have been to the giver. We do not thank a man so much for giving us that which costs him nothing, and which he does not miss, as we do for that which he could not give us, without some sacrifice himself. We may feel more indebted to one for giving us a piece of bread, if he deprives himself of it when he is hungry, and can get no more, than we would if he were to give us vast possessions, if he could afford to do so without feeling it, or ever knowing afterwards that he had parted with any thing. Our grateful affections are always drawn out towards the giver, just in proportion to the personal sacrifice he may have made, in order to afford us a token of his regard. Now as the world giveth, it is not often that very great sacrifices are made. But the gifts which Christ has bestowed, cost the giver his life. He has not given us that which cost him nothing. His gifts he bought for us, and the price that he paid was his blood. Not only did he endure death for our sakes, but death of the most cruel kind, and under the most humiliating circumstances. The Lord of Glory was equal with the Father, and occupied with him the throne of the universe. But he forsook his exaltation, "took on him the form of a servant, and humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree." For our sakes his sacred temples were pierced with thorns; for us his hands and feet were bruised and lacerated with nails; for us he was lifted up as an object of scorn and derision; for us he lingered in agony on the cross; for us he endured the agony in the garden, when he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. But the sacrifice was not of mere animal life and animal feeling; for the evangelical prophet assures us that his very "soul" was made an "offering for sin." Just think of the dignity of the sufferer; no less than the Son of God. It was the most stupendous sacrifice that eternity ever saw. If ten million worlds were to be saved, no greater sacrifice could be made for them than the slaughter of the Son of God. It is not possible, in the nature of things, that the Deity himself could make a

greater sacrifice than to assume the form of the meanest of his servants, subject himself to be insulted, mocked, abused, and spit upon by them, and finally barbarously murdered by them. Such a sacrifice is nothing less than commensurate with the power of the Almighty. Now if gifts are to be valued by their cost to the giver, how shall we ever value aright the gifts of Christ? What language can express it? what calculation can compute it? what figure of speech can illustrate it? The universe furnishes no figure. It is without parallel. Nothing that can be said furnishes any conception of it. All the redeemed millions of the Lamb, who shall finally be raised to seats in heaven, and all the millions of other glorified spirits, all of them together, in all eternity, can never tell all that is to be told of the love of Christ. What a stupendous expenditure of power, condescension, goodness and grace, was made for the purchase of the gifts of the gospel! What a world of meaning is couched in the words, "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." We love a friend if he bestows on us a gift of trifling value. If he gives us that which cost him some personal sacrifice, he is entitled to a still higher degree of our regard. If he gives his life for us, we regard him with feelings almost idolatrous. If he endures unspeakable humiliation and horrible agonies for us we are overcome; we feel that we are bankrupt, and never can, by any degree of devotion, make a return adequate to a thousandth part of what he has done for us. When we remember that such a sacrifice as this has been made for us, and that that sacrifice was not of a man, but of the very God that made us.—Wonder! amazement! Oh! for a thousand tongues! Gabriel, lend us thy trump! Shout ye angels! All ye millions of glorified spirits ascribe glory, and honor, and praise, and power unto God, and unto the Lamb forever! See mortal worms, for whom the sacrifice was made, refusing to join the chorus! Ungrateful! base! monstrous! And this reminds me that the picture is not complete. For,

11. The gifts of Christ are bestowed on us all undeserved. Here again he has given us not as the world giveth. We oftentimes receive gifts as a kind of return for past services. We never receive them, except from those between whom and ourselves there is a reciprocity of kind feeling. Do we ever give gifts to those who have no regard for us? How

much less do we give them to those who hate us! How much less to those who spend their whole life in trying to injure us! Suppose we hated some one, and had spent our life in trying to injure him, and he were, without waiting for us to take the first step towards reconciliation, to come to us, to bestow on us gifts of princely value, to identify himself with us, and raise us to a level with his own imperial dignity? Suppose, in order to do this, he were obliged to sacrifice his life; and suppose that all the time he had had it in his power to crush our enmity and ourselves together, and annihilate us forever? How unlike the world such a deed would be! How could we ever reproach ourselves enough for ever having hated a being capable of such magnanimity? How could we ever love, and thank, and admire, and reverence as we ought? Yet this has been done for us. It is not matter of supposition, but matter of fact. It is a part of the history of the universe, inscribed with God's own hand on the archives of eternity. Yes, "while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son;" "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Was ever love like this? It passeth knowledge. Surely this is everlasting love, without beginning and without end; beyond our conceptions; unfathomable as eternity, and worthy of God. Surely this is giving not as the world giveth.

Let us take a moment's glance at all these features of the gifts of Christ together. Let us remember that—

1. They are given without hope of recompense.
2. That they are exactly adapted to our wants.
3. That their excellence is not seen at once, i. e., they do not dazzle us at first with transient brightness and become dull afterwards.
4. That they actually increase in real value the longer we possess them.
5. That they are secured to us forever, so that we never can lose them.
6. That they are not a mere addition to our estate, but are excellencies inwrought into our character.
7. That they identify us with Christ, and make us joint heirs of God with him.
8. That they are of value to us in eternity, as well as time.
9. That in the possession of them we need nothing else.

10. That they cost the giver His life.

11. And that they are undeserved, and bestowed on us while we are his enemies. Let us remember all this, and we can appreciate the force of the expression "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

And now biethren, what shall we return to our Saviour for all that he has done for us? Are we not under supreme obligations to him? Ought we not to love him with our whole hearts? If so be our hearts are cold towards him, ought we not to be ashamed of such ingratitude, and ought we not to cultivate opposite feelings by every means in our power? Is there any sacrifice too great to be made for Christ? Are we in the practice of any one sin that puts our Saviour to shame, and opens his wounds afresh? Let us examine our hearts and lives, and if we find such a sin, forsake it. Do we engage in any amusement calculated to lead us astray from him? Let us abandon it. Are we engaged in any business derogatory to his honor, injurious to his cause, and disgraceful to our profession? Let us forsake it. No sacrifice is too great to be made for Him who gives not as the world giveth.

Let me suggest this reflection. If any should be lost by rejecting the gifts of the Saviour, as all unconverted men do, or if any should be lost by disgracing their Saviour, as some who profess to be Christians do, their damnation will be just. Surely they who can slight such a Saviour, or disgrace such a Saviour, are not worthy to be reckoned among pure angels in heaven. No, nor among the people of God on earth. Surely they who scorn the gifts of infinite love, who trample on the blood of the atonement, who insult the Redeemer that died for them, may expect the wrath of the Lamb for all eternity, and the smoke of their torment shall go up for ever and ever.

THE GIFTS OF CHRIST.—A NOTE.

One of the conditions on which, at our earnest request, we received from the hands of its gifted author the MS. of the foregoing sermon, was a promise to say to our readers, that it is published from his rapidly written notes as preached, without correction in a single particular. And we add that, in fact, this is just what we should like in every case. We want sermons, not essays—sermons warm from hearts kindled by fires from the sacred altar.

This sermon discusses only one of the subjects suggested in the paragraph of which it is a part—the *manner* of Christ's gifts, and not the *gifts* themselves. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." We now wish we had another from the same source, on the other subject mentioned, the divine bestowments. It is all comprehended in the words, "my peace."

As to the manner of this gift, and of all the gifts of Christ, the declaration before us is awfully grand. Jesus contrasts himself with the whole human race, including all its benefactors, and philanthropists, and worshipers, in every past and future age, and pronounces them all combined inferior to Himself, as indeed they really are. Moses and Paul could invoke blessings on worshipers, but Christ bestows them. And even the very word *gift*, when applied to the bestowments of Christ, differs in meaning from the same word expressive of the bestowments of men upon men. The world has nothing to give; she *promises* much but *fulfills* nothing. And what she *does* give, she is only the *means* of giving. Christ alone absolutely gives: and he gives to all, especially his own people.

When we began to study this subject (and we have been compelled to study every one of the eight different subjects, about which we lately heard the author of this sermon preach—their sentiments thrill our heart, and their tones linger on our ears) when we began to study this subject, it seemed to us that the word *peace* in this passage was intended as a counteractive of the two emotions with which the minds and

hearts of the disciples were at that moment deeply excited—*distress* and *apprehension*. It was very natural that they should be distressed and afraid, after the solemn disclosures He had just made to them. Himself dead—they scattered—brought before rulers and attacked by mobs—the great enterprise seemingly crushed—but no—“Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Why? “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.”

But we are now satisfied that the text means much more than this. This peace is only *one* of the gifts, the manner of all of which is the very opposite of all other gifts by whom else soever bestowed.

“Peace be unto you” was a customary mode of salutation on meeting, and Jesus, in his commission to his disciples, was very particular in his directions for their observance of this ceremony in every house in which they sojourned as guests. He himself, taking leave of His family, that He may prepare for them apartments in heaven, their and our future home, does not as a matter of formality or friendship say, “May peace be with you,” but “My peace I *give* unto you.” A wise and good man, in the honesty of his heart, may say to receding friends, “Adieu, I commend you to God,” or “Farewell, may it be well with you;” but with the words of Jesus comes the actual grant itself, in the highest and fullest sense of which the words are capable. The “farewell” of Jesus makes us farewell in this world and in the future, now and forever.

In the conclusion of this address, extending from the beginning of the fourteenth chapter to the end of the sixteenth, delivered probably between the institution of the loaf, and the institution of the cup, that part of the services designated by the apostles “the Lord’s supper,” and not improbably delivered in part while all were standing, Jesus resumes and closes His benediction. “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Jesus had not as yet suffered—not even in the garden. But he speaks of the future with the same certainty as of the past. “I have suffered tribulation, and I have conquered. You shall have tribulation, but you too shall conquer. Therefore be of good cheer. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” The body, men say

torture, kill, and destroy—but that is all they can do. Nor can they do even that with the divine permission. “Fear not them that killeth the body, but after that have no more that they can do: fear Him who when he hath killed, hath power to destroy both soul and body in hell,” said the glorious Redeemer to his disciples, naturally tame as lambs, but by his inspiring word made bold as lions.

Well might the apostle, when exhorting his readers, use the encouraging language, “be careful for nothing, but in everything give thanks, making known your requests by prayer and supplication to God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

By the whole world promises may be made, only to disappoint, and thereby the more to afflict: but with Jesus, the promise and the fulfillment know no distinction. Whoever reads the instruction of Jesus to his disciples will see, that although his warnings were faithful, his promises were many and great: but their literal fulfillment was no less certain than certainty itself. An apostle, not the least in labors, must begin his lessons with, “May grace, mercy, and peace be unto you,” and end them, “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and dominion forever;” but Jesus is himself the Keeper, and the utterance of the words, is only the index of the blessing bestowed.—ED.

THE
BAPTIST PREACHER.

New Series.

NOVEMBER, 1853.

No. 11.

THE HEAVENLY ALLIANCE:

A SERMON—BY REV. E. B. TEAGUE, OF ALABAMA.

“*And they called Rebecca, and said unto her, ‘Wilt thou go with this man?’*” *And she said, ‘I will go.’*”—GENESIS XXIV, 58.

To the chastened imagination, there is a beautiful analogy between the most intimate relation known on earth, and the relation of Christ and the church. St. Paul, after having spoken fully of the relations and duties of husband and wife, in the 5th chapter of Ephesians, says, “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” In the book of Revelations one of the seven angels said to John, “Come hither and I will show thee the bride—the Lamb’s wife.” In another place the worshipers in heaven say, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come.” The Saviour, more than once, spoke of himself as the bridegroom. And the ablest commentators regard this analogy as the basis idea running through the song of Solomon.

The passage under consideration may suggest an analogy scarcely less appropriate and beautiful, between the anxiety and trepidation which a daughter feels when called upon to decide upon leaving the parental roof to lean upon the arm of a stranger, and the claims of the world on one hand, of Christ on the other, with an awakened sinner; or rather, between the reluctance in the one case and the other, to be overcome by mature deliberation and counting of the cost.

I. The servant makes a simple, but most full and satisfactory representation in the case before us, of the house, character, and possessions of his Master's son. Let us particularize.

1. *The house.* "I," said the man, "am Abraham's servant." Abraham's character was well known. "He was to be the progenitor of a great nation." Now the Lord had said unto Abraham "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a place that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee."—Gen. xii: 1-3. From him the Messiah should descend; for it was said, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."—Ib. He was the special favorite of heaven. "I will bless thee," said God, "and make thy name great. * * * * * I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." He was distinguished as the intercessor of Sodom. This might tend to give him still wider fame. He was distinguished for his faith in God. "He believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness."—Gen. xv: 9; Rom. iv: 3. And that remarkable test of his faith and piety, the offering up of his only son, had doubtless been noised abroad. Everything, therefore, in the nature of dignity and excellence, and venerableness, that could be demanded, pertained to Abraham's house.

2. *He had great possessions.* "The Lord hath blessed my master," said the servant, "and he is become great, and he hath given him flocks and herds, and silver, and gold, and man-servants, and maid-servants, and camels, and asses." Here is every assurance of abundance, of affluence.

3. *The young man is the sole heir.* "And Sarah, my master's wife, bare a son to my master when he was old: and unto *him* hath he given all that he hath."

Such were the inducements offered. Time, brief indeed, but sufficient, was given to weigh them. The servant urges his suit: "If ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." The mother and brother consent; but beg a few days' delay. But the servant's reply is, "Hinder me not." "Send me away." And they called Rebecca, and said unto

her, "Wilt thou go with this man?" And she said, "I will go."

I desire, my hearers, to make a representation in relation to a more momentous proposition—to propound to you a more startling question. "I have a message," not from an earthly prince, in relation to an earthly advantage, but from God to thee. Would that I had the simple, touching eloquence of Abraham's servant—would that I could rival his success! Prepare your minds, I beseech you, while I proceed, for a decision as to what you will do. On that decision may hang momentous concerns.

II. First. *Let us consider the dignity of the house with which the alliance is proposed.* The head of the house is the "King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God; the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." Heaven is his throne, earth his footstool, the universe his empire. His kingdom is from everlasting to everlasting. Justice and judgment are the pillars of his throne. He is of "purer eyes than to behold sin, and cannot look upon iniquity." "He is long suffering and abundant in mercy." "He is love." He is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." "His thoughts are thoughts of peace and not of evil." He is "our Father who is in heaven." How great! how venerable! how good! Surely nothing should be uninviting in an alliance with such a house, illustrated by the headship of such a personage.

2. *What shall I say of the possessions of the great God?* How shall imagination grasp the subject? Where shall expressions sufficiently pregnant be found? "The cattle upon a thousand hills; the gold of Ophir; the earth, with the fullness thereof, are his." The hearts of all men are in his hands. It is as if all the faculties, nay, all the passions of men, whether good or evil, were put completely under your control, to be used as so many means and forces for promoting your pleasure and advantage. Put under *your* control did I say? It is far more. They are actually under the control of the great Head himself, for the use and benefit of the family.

But once more, angels, too, are but the executors of His pleasure, and the ministers of His grace to his children. "Are they not all," says the apostle to the Hebrews, "ministering spirits sent to minister to them who shall be heirs of

salvation?"—i: 4. "And," says the psalmist, "bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his that do his pleasure."—Ps. ciii: 20-21. And again, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."—Ps. xxxiv: 7. In one word, all things are His; whatever can fill the imagination or the heart of an intelligent being, from the fleeting earthly joy to the bliss eternal at God's right hand, from the consolation that dries a tear produced by a temporary ill below, to the profound, the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" above; all, all are his.

And here, while we contemplate the riches of our Father's house, (I bless God that he permits us to address him by a term so venerable and endearing,) let me turn aside to ask the stout-hearted, the sceptic, the scoffer, if you please, who does not sometimes feel poor and in want of all things—"destitute, afflicted?" What friend, what philosopher, besides the Christian religion, can effectually support the mind amid sickness, and bereavement, and desertion; can heal the broken heart; take away our misery and our guilt; make the cold and silent grave look like a resting place? And is not religion known and admitted to relieve these ills, and make them the occasion of blessing?

What, to pass from this contemplation, what objection to an alliance with one so rich, so venerable, so gracious? I do not ask if there be not abundant reason to *accept* of the boon, to *fly* back to a father's house? I am only arguing a negative. I only ask for an *objection* to be found in the aspect of the subject now before us.

III. *But the alliance proposes a most intimate union with the Son and heir of all things.* As to the *fact* of the heirship, He hath said to his Son, "Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." And again—"Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." "The government," it is said, "shall be on his shoulder." And the occasion of the heirship is most instructively connected with its assertion, in those remarkable words in the second chapter of Philippians: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no

reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Heaven, earth and hell, are subjected to his sway. Let us for a moment pursue a most consolatory consequence of this heirship. It may be stated thus: "*Christ* is become the immediate administrator of the resources of the universe, for the special benefit of those whom the Father hath given him." "He," says the apostle to the Ephesians, "raised him (Christ) from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power; and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, *and gave him to be the head over all things to the church*, which is the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all"—(i: 20-23.) Now, in this view of the subject, the tears of Jesus at the grave of Lazarus; His compassion for the blind, and maimed and sick; His agony in the garden and anguish on the cross, are but so many intimations of the tenderness and fidelity with which he still administers the mediatorial kingdom, and delights himself in the purchase of his blood.

But we not only derive a view of the subject hence, consolatory and attractive to the saints, but also to sinners. For Christ in the gospel proposes to take them too into a sacred nearness to himself; and the whole argument I am offering to-day, takes it for granted that the only barrier which keeps you away, unreconciled man, from Christ, is that he is to you "a root out of dry ground, without form or comeliness;" that there is no beauty in Him that you should desire him. Every other barrier was taken away on the cross, where Jesus died, that God "might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Was not tenderness manifested in Him, even towards the incorrigible, "when He was come near, and beheld the city of Jerusalem, and wept over it," saying, "If thou hadst known,

even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace ; but now they are hid from thine eyes?" Or, when he said, " O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?" Is it not a truth, worthy of all acception with *you*, that " such an One" administers the affairs of the world?

But the Son is not only the "*heir* of all things." The alliance is worthy to be sought on account of his peculiar personal attributes. For—

1. *He is the " Prince of Peace."* Our race has rebelled. Confusion, and animosity, and anarchy, and misery everywhere prevail. There is a disruption of the ties of amity between us and the eternal King. *He* is the mediator of an adjustment, reconciling the world to God, and proposing a renewal of amity and peace. His mission was announced as " peace on earth and good will to men." " Blessed," saith the scripture, " are the peacemakers ;" and no scripture is more constantly fulfilled before our eyes. He who interposes between two neighbors to prevent a collision, or quell a feud, is never unmarked. He who arrests, by a timely interposition, the collision of one community against another, deserves and receives our warmest admiration. But when party strife and sectional interests threaten to rend a *nation* in pieces ; when life-long ties are being sundered ; when brothers are becoming foes, if amid the scene some statesman of lofty purpose of soul, regardless of personal consequences, with a bosom heaving with patriotic impulses, stands forth as a pacificator, and awed by superior virtue the prejudices of inferior nature, are discarded, and differences compromised, our admiration knows no bounds. But what interposition is, without irreverence, to be compared with that of the Lord Jesus Christ ; whether we consider the magnitude of the interests involved, the greatness of the sacrifice, or the disinterestedness of the pacificator ! The salvation of a world ! The Son of God disrobed, and humanized, and dying ! With no other assignable motive than the love of sinners !

2. *The Lord Jesus is the sole friend of the sinner, capable of doing him good.* Men and angels combined cannot blot out one sin. The substitution of the arch-angel had been entirely disproportioned to the majesty of the divine law. That is a most affecting passage in the Revelations, where “no man in heaven nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book;” to solve that great central problem, around which is arranged the whole of God’s providence,—*How God may be just, and at the same time justify a sinner.* Overhead gathers the lowering cloud of Almighty wrath; beneath, all unprotected, are the tribes of humanity. Methinks I see their faces gather blackness. The infernal pit yawns at their feet; the flames thereof flash and hiss beneath them.

Well might the evangelist “weep much.” But lo! yonder, “a Lamb as it had been slain.” The problem is solved. The thunders are hushed, and strains of exultant music fill the courts of heaven again. “Behold! the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof!”

3. *He is the Bridegroom of the Church.* When Rebecca arrived at home; when she was received by a husband’s hand, and a father’s heart, and saw the provision made for her comfort, and was surrounded by evidences of affection, doubtless tears of joy ran down her face. So when God’s servants lead a soul to Christ, the heavenly hosts rejoice; the church on earth join them; the redeemed enters a circle of love unknown before; Jesus, the bridegroom of the church, is found to be the “chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely;” and overwhelmed with proofs of tenderness, the happy soul says with the Queen of Sheba, when she saw the wisdom of Solomon, “The half was not told me!”

Will you go with the man? I cannot offer a new inducement. Every thing has been offered. What else, dear friend, do you desire? And now “the Spirit and the bride say come; and let him that heareth say come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely!”

We have seen that the dignity of the house is above all comparison; that the great God is the supreme controller of the universe; that his Son is made the “heir of all things;”

and useth all things for the happiness of his saints, freely proposing like benefits to every one that will ; that, moreover, He is possessed of every personal attraction, in that he is the great peacemaker, the friend of sinners, the bridegroom of the church.

CONCLUSION.

I close with a single reflection : Suppose there were in your community an orphan ? I take the strongest case supposable. His infancy has been, by your kindness, watched over with the greatest care. You have brought him up to maturity, fed, clothed, and educated him. Besides all this, every one has shown him special respect ; afforded the most unmistakable evidence of regard. But he is ungrateful. He scorns his benefactors ; he is embittered by kindness ; he is incapable of affection. After long forbearance, your doors are closed against him ; he is proscribed from society. What other course could be pursued ? Or, suppose some outcast from society should come into your midst, and you should pity his destitution, and misery and shame, and welcome him to your firesides and your hearts ; but he should complain of his treatment, and desire to upset all the arrangements, and outrage the decorum of the family, must he not be turned out of doors ?

If then the gospel proposes the largest benefits ; if it invites you to the protection of God, the company of good men, the society of angels ; if it offers bliss without alloy ; if a thousand means, devised by affection, are exhausted in ineffectual attempts to induce you to pursue the highest happiness ; if you refuse the society of the noble, and the pure and the good, and prefer that of the sinful, and base, and polluted ; and God shall by and by withdraw his Spirit, and take away the hearts of his saints, and permit the Spirit of entreaty on your behalf to die out in the heart of good ministers ; if, in one word, He shall permit you to pursue, undisturbed, your own inclinations, that you may believe a lie and be damned, who shall be blamed ? Not God, certainly. When this whole congregation ; when this whole country ; when the whole world shall stand before God, and it shall be said to gospel rejecters, “ Depart, ye workers of iniquity, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,”

all right-minded intelligences shall respond like the voice of many waters, "Amen! amen!"

Let me appeal to the cultivated, the pure, the refined of this assembly: Are you prepared to prefer an alliance, here and hereafter, with the wicked, the profane, the impious, and the debauched, to that of the holy, the reverential, the pious, the pure? Oh! no, no! By all that is pure, and lovely, and holy, I beseech you *fly* from sin, and pollution and death! Amen!

THE EVIDENCE OF DISCIPLESHIP.

[On the sermon with this title, in our last issue, the following note was omitted for want of room.—Ed.]

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." To the world, mutual brotherly love, exhibited by its appropriate acts, among fellow Christians, is irresistible evidence of discipleship.

We are judged of God, our brethren, ourselves, and the world.

To God no evidence is necessary. He knows us *as* we are; and he knows us *certainly*, and beyond a doubt. To every true believer this is a great consolation; whereas to the hypocrite it must be a source of perpetual disquietude. What in such a case as this is to the real disciple a guardian angel, must be to the mere pretender, awake or asleep, at his daily business, or on his bended knees, in the midst of his pleasures, or in the house of God, a ghost that haunts him. To a patriarch, it was his happiness that he could say: "Thou knowest me altogether;" and to an apostle, that he could make the appeal: "Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

It often happens, that the opinions that men form of us are very different from the decisions of the great Judge. Take an example from the seventy-first Psalm: "I am," says David, "as a wonder unto many, but thou art my refuge." The antithesis requires, as does also the introduction of the Psalm, and all the context, that the word "wonder" be interpreted to mean "monster." There is no connexion between the ideas of *wonder*, in its proper meaning,

and refuge in God. But when the servant of God is pursued by his foes as a monster or beast of prey by the hunters, he finds his refuge in God. The enemies of my soul pursue me, but God is my hiding place, my high tower, the rock of my defence. In fact, the decision of the whole world, whether they know it or not, concerning the character of every Christian, whether he knows it or not, is precisely the opposite of that which is formed of him by the great Searcher of hearts. Men may hate you, while God loves you ; your very brethren may doubt you, while God approves you ; or, all men may admire, while God despises you. Happy for him, of whom it may in truth be said, in the words of inspiration : " Behold ! an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile."

Of the judgment formed of us by our brethren, or of that formed of them by ourselves, time admonishes silence. Fellowship implies confidence ; and faithfulness to Christ involves faithfulness to man ; but all the judgments of men, respecting men, are imperfect, when they are not judgments of charity.

Of discipleship, no disciple is at liberty to overlook the evidence of his own convictions. That any man make a profession of religion, on the faith of others that he is a disciple, is a stupendous blunder. No mortal can innocently thus deceive, or be deceived. Religion is a personal matter between the soul and God. It is lawful and wise to consult and inquire ; but of our own case we must ourselves judge. If the human race, assembled in judgment, should, in a voice of myriads of thunders, pronounce what my own consciousness knows to be false, my inner man, with integrity, sublimely independent of all but God, would stand erect and falsify the verdict.

To our own spirits, the source of evidence that we are what we are, and therefore disciples, if we are disciples, is such as ought, in every case, to be sufficient for our happiness and safety. Consciousness itself, in the proper meaning of the word, ought to be enough to satisfy the mind of every disciple. We are often amazed to hear this familiar word used even in prayer and sermons, as synonymous with knowledge, whereas it should always be restricted to a knowledge of what passes *within* us. I know that God exists, and that Jesus is the Messiah ; but I am not conscious of either.

'That both are truths I am well assured ; but my consciousness extends only to the assurance of the truths, not the truths themselves. But I am conscious that I believe in God, and that I believe in his Son. Of this evidence no power could deprive me, without my annihilation or my derangement. Every Christian is conscious that he loves all Christians ; and this is an evidence by which he ought to know that he is a disciple.

But the terms of the text restrict the evidence to the judgment of our discipleship, formed by the world. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This great duty, that Christians ought to love one another, and to show it by its appropriate acts ; this great fact, that they do love one another, and thus show it ; and this great truth, that this love so cherished, and so exhibited, is a convincing evidence to the world of our discipleship ; all these are too imperfectly understood, and too little appreciated, even by those of us who best understand them, and most appreciate them. This is our apology for so long an editorial note on the sermon in question.

The occasions of human alienation and estrangement are countless, and sometimes insignificant. "Lands, intersected by a narrow frith, abhor each other ; mountains interposed, make enemies of nations which had else, like kindred drops, been melted into one." But all those occasions take their rise in a single cause : the depravity of the human heart. Alienated from God, man is necessarily estranged from man.

It is instructive to see, on the contrary, the power of any one single force attaching man to his fellow man. Men, the most opposite of their race, by education, institutions, habits, and temperaments, may become indissolubly united by a single cord. How did the pulse of this whole nation beat in unison with France, Greece, Poland, South America, Italy and Hungary, because they were supposed to be inspired with the spirit of national and personal liberty.

Could some benevolent heart or inventive genius devise some one great bond of union, capable of uniting every nation, tribe and family of man in one fast bond of common brotherhood, on that heart would descend the thanksgivings and praise of a thousand generations. From the equator to the poles, all nations one, each with its own peculiarities, but every man recognizing in every man a brother and a friend.

This is precisely what the gospel of Jesus Christ proposes to do, and what it, when allowed to do its own work, actually does. In its feeling, language and manners, no man is a Jew, or a Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free—all are one in Christ Jesus; and this, not as a final object, but something incidental to objects of infinitely greater moment. While Christianity saves from hell, and exalts to heaven, it assimilates man to God, and man to man.

We are not certain whether we possess the talent and learning requisite to a definition of brotherly love. We do not know whether it is more properly a principle, or a moral feeling. We venture, however, to say, that it is *that* attachment or regard which every Christian has for every Christian as a Christian.

This definition disentangles the subject from many irrelevant questions which have been supposed to embarrass it: as, for instance, whether there are different degrees of brotherly love. Restricted by our definition, brotherly love can be more or less, only in proportion as the agent loving, or the object loved, is more or less like Christ. Ordinary friendship, for instance, founded it may be on similarity of tastes, or identity of professions, may be perfectly consistent with brotherly love, but can constitute no possible part of it. Two friends, neither a Christian, may be, on principles not religious, united as one soul. Should either become converted to Christ, he would not love the other less, but his regards for him would undergo a wonderful transformation; and if the other were afterwards to become a believer, another transformation, equally great, must be the result: first, friendship; then pity and compassion added; and, finally, brotherly love superadded to both.

We do not know whether there be anything to which this attachment may be likened, or by which it may be illustrated. An American citizen loves all his fellow-citizens as such. All feel this affection for each, and each for all. If the property of one is seized on the ocean, or his personal rights invaded by the most powerful adversary on earth, this whole nation resents it, as with the heart of one man, and will peril fortune, life and honor to defend him. But this is a faint illustration. Let us look to the scriptures. In his epistle to the Hebrew Christians, St. Paul uses these words: "Consider them that are in bonds, as bound with them;

and them that suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in (or of) the body." Christ is the head, his disciples are members of his body.

The meaning is this: "When another Christian is chained and sent to the dungeon, perhaps for his allegiance to Christ, remember He sustains to you a relation like that of your eye to your hand, or your feet to your head. Those chains are on a part of the body of which you also are a part. And when another Christian suffers *adversity*, or is thrown into the theatre to be torn to pieces by lions and wolves, remember that he and you are fellow-members of a body of which the Redeemer is the head. That flesh all gored, and those bones all mangled, are flesh and bones of one who, with yourself, is a fellow-member of the body of Christ."

The poor man in the street, upon whose wearied limbs and tattered rags your carriage wheels throw their dust, is your brother. The man in fine apparel, and the lady adorned with silver and gold in one part of the temple, and the poor man in coarse raiment in another, are both children of God and fellow-heirs of that kingdom that never can be moved.

But want of space admonishes us to pause. Perhaps we may resume the subject hereafter.—ED.

MEMORANDA,

From which sermons may be made by any who have the skill, devotion and ability to do it. With this view, they are respectfully submitted to the consideration, especially of our younger brethren.—ED.

"*He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*"—Prov. xxvii : 13.

In order to arrive at the full meaning of proverbial sentences, especially in the writings of Solomon, it is necessary, in all antithetic forms of expression, to supply the words omitted in the ellipses. They are understood by the writer, who gives to the reader a clue by which he also may understand them. Take, for example, the passage before us. To cover, is antithetic to *confessing* and *forsaking*; and *not to prosper*, has its opposite in the finding of *mercy*.

It is pertinent to remark, that to the voluntary agent the great lawgiver and judge offers only two alternatives. The one is to confess and to forsake, which are followed by mercy; the other is to *cover*; that is, *not to confess* and *forsake*, which is followed by no mercy, but its opposite wrath. To confess without forsaking, is virtually to cover; and were it possible to forsake without confessing, that would still be to cover.

From this brief exordium and exposition the following propositions, among others, are plainly deducible:

1. That the prosperity meant in the first part of the text does not appertain to the affairs of the present life. This is evident, because it consists of mercy, the ordinary lot of whose recipients has, in all ages, been poverty, affliction, oppression and persecution. In a word, there is on the one hand, no necessary connexion between worldly prosperity and the favor of God; nor on the other, between adversity in this life, and the disapprobation of God. Your children may die, or living fail to meet your expectations; your property may wing itself away, like the eagle, towards the heavens; your friends, real or pretended, on trifling or no considerations, may abandon you in the hour of trial; health, reputation, every thing worldly, may vanish into air; and yet God may be your friend.

It is in this life that the good have their evil things, and that the bad have their good things. Purple and fine linen, and sumptuous fare every day, may be followed by the want of a drop of water to cool a parched tongue; whereas beggary and rags may be followed by a place in Abraham's bosom at the right hand of God.

Either this doctrine is true, or Job, and David, and Paul were very wicked men; and the tyrants of earth, and its devotees of mammon have been the favorites of heaven.

2. The repentance which is not followed by a new life, is not the repentance of the Bible. Wherever life lasts to allow it, the fruits of repentance will always grow on the tree of repentance.

3. We observe thirdly and finally, that true prosperity—prosperity in the sense of this text—and mercy, are equivalent expressions. All earthly possessions combined, without mercy are misery, and do but augment the certainty and fearfulness of misery yet to be; whereas mercy unites in itself, or

ensures in its results all needful blessings in this life, and glory in that to come. Fallen human nature is miserable now, and unrelieved, doomed to absolutely certain and infinitely greater misery hereafter. To bring the needed relief is the great object of the gospel, and the amplification and enforcement of this idea is the great and beneficent design of the Christian ministry.

THE HEAVENLY ALLIANCE.

A NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

To the excellent author of this tasteful and pious little sermon, unknown to us personally, but known and loved in character, we are under obligations for this contribution to our columns. Its perusal has brought in review to our pensive moments, the fashions of the pulpit in this country for the last fifty years. We well remember the various transitions through which this, among other mutable things, has passed within that time. The experimental journeyings of the spiritual Israelite from moral Egypt to the true Canaan, and all similar illustrations and discussions are now forgotten in the appeals of protracted and camp meetings, and the benevolent enterprises of this progressive and stirring age. From the old fashioned experiences of grace, either constituting conversion or inseparable therefrom, we are fast getting into the simple yes, to two or three simple questions propounded by the pastor of the church preliminary to the ordinance of baptism. This is good, but not sufficient. We like to hear in addition the candidate's own statement of the Lord's dealings with his soul.

The metaphor, the "Bride," the "Lamb's wife," justifies the institution of a comparison, and though on the one hand, we may not, perhaps, extend the comparison into an allegory, yet, on the other, we do not see why theological fastidiousness should lead us to throw away as texts, those passages of exalted grandeur and inexpressible beauty, from which our forefathers educed discourses, the tones of which will linger on our ears for ages to come. As a mere specimen, in addition to that of the text, we submit a few, the mention of which will revive recollections of the past in the mind of many an old disciple.

THE SOCIETY OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

“ And Ruth said to Naomi, entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee ; for whither thou goest I will go ; and where thou lodgest I will lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God ; where thou diest I will die ; and there will I be buried : the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.”—Ruth i : 16.

MUTUAL GOOD WILL AND CONCESSION AMONG BRETHREN.

“ And Abram said unto Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If you wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right ; or if thou depart the right hand, then I will go to the left.”—Gen. xiii : 7.

ENTRANCE UPON A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

“ Now the Lord had said unto Abram, ‘ Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee.’ ”—Gen. xii : 1.

THE INVITATION OF THE CHURCH TO THE WORLD.

“ And Moses said unto Hobab, ‘ We are journeying unto the place, of which the Lord said, ‘ I will give it you.’ Come thou with us, and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.’ ”—Num. ix : 29.

GOSPEL INVITATION TO SINNERS.

“ And the Lord said unto Noah, ‘ Come thou and all thy house unto the ark.’ ”—Gen. vii : 1.

WIDE FIELDS OPEN TO CHRISTIAN EXERTION.

“ And the Lord said to Joshua, ‘ There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.’ ”—Joshua xii : 1.

TRUST IN CHRIST AS THE LAST AND ONLY SAFE RESORT.

“ And Esther said : ‘ And so will I go in unto the King, which is not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish.’ ”—Esther iv : 16.



THE BAPTIST PREACHER,

Published in Richmond, Virginia, at \$1 per annum, payable in advance; in monthly numbers, (to be issued punctually at the beginning of each month,) varying in size, from 16 to 32 octavo pages, forming, at the end of the year, a neatly executed Volume.

Names of subscribers, and remittances of money by mail, at the risk of the Editor, made to him in Richmond, will receive prompt attention. H. KEELING.

 We are greatly obliged to those of our subscribers who have so promptly responded to our call for payments; some of whom will see they have paid several years ahead. Those of our North Carolina subscribers, who subscribed through brother McAlpine, will see that the mistake in their bills is corrected. Subscribing in '51, and paying for '52, created a blunder in our accounts.

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