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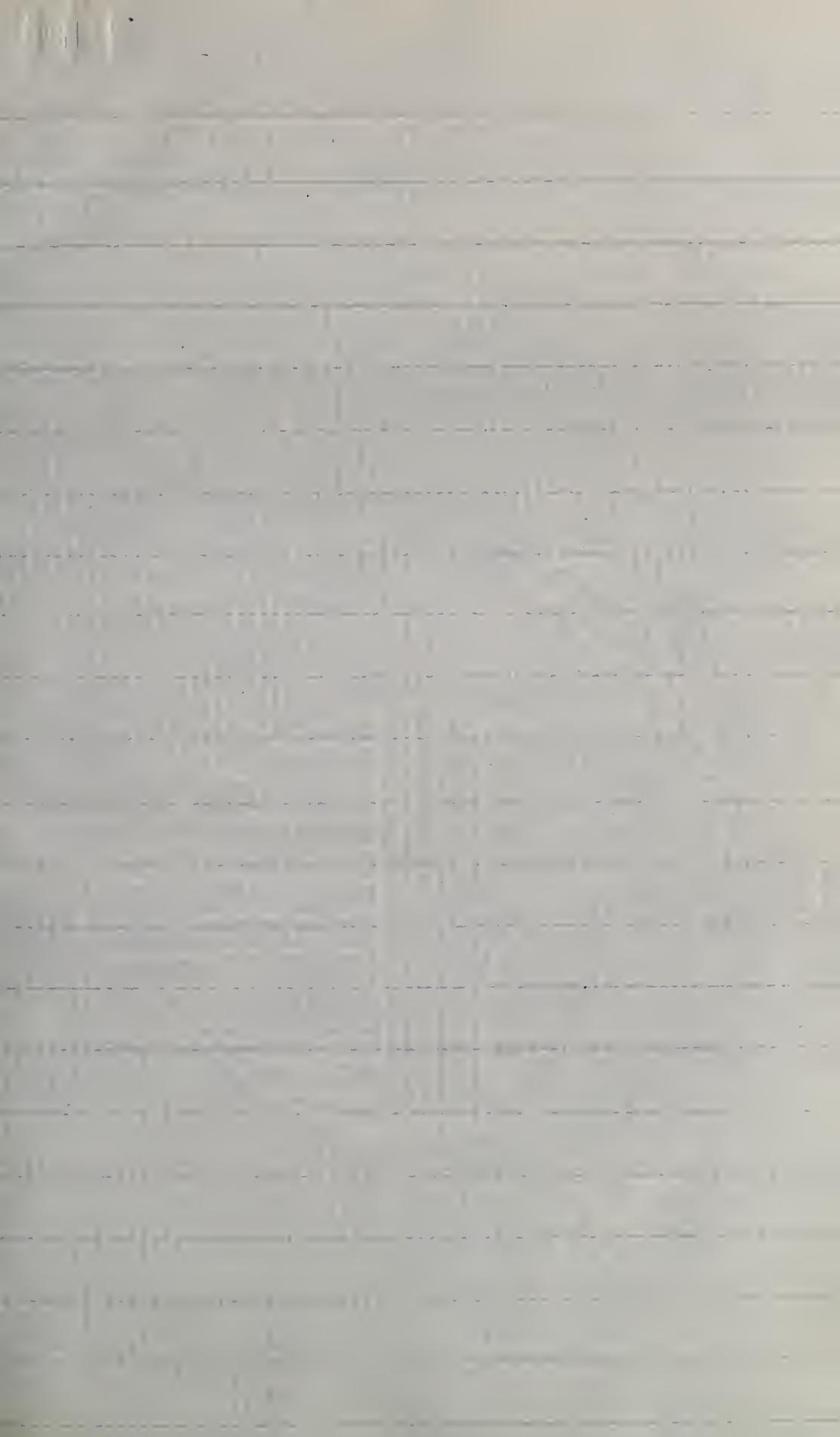


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PLAIN
ARGUMENTATIVE SERMON,
ON
THE DOCTRINE OF
THE HOLY TRINITY.

By GEORGE BURDER.

MILTON, N. C.

PRINTED BY BENJAMIN GORY.

1823.

PREFACE.

As ideas subversive of the doctrine of the Trinity are not unfrequently advanced in the pulpit; and as this doctrine constitutes a prominent article in "the faith once delivered to the saints," for which we are exhorted "earnestly to contend;" it has appeared to me, that I may do a service to the Church of Christ, by publishing and disseminating the following very plain and instructive discourse on that doctrine.

Many plain Christians, who have scarcely any book but their Bibles, are much bewildered and distressed by the objections which they sometimes hear raised against this "Great mystery of Godliness." To such this Sermon will supply an easy and effectual solution of their difficulties. Under the hope, therefore, that it may meet the smiles of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it is humbly dedicated to the Church.

A. W. CLOPTON.

A SERMON
ON THE DOCTRINE OF
THE HOLY TRINITY.

1 John v. 7. For there are Three that bear record in Heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are One.

ALL religion supposes the worship of a God; and therefore, in all worship, the first thing to be considered is, *who* that God is; or what sort of a being is to be worshipped. The Heathens worshipped a great many gods; as many as thirty thousand have been mentioned: But all Christians admit that there is but ONE only, the living and true God. Now all the knowledge we have of God is from the Scriptures. If God had not been pleased to give us the Bible, we should to this day have been worshipping idols, as the former inhabitants of this country did, and as many millions of Pagans now do. Reason, alone, never yet led any people to the right knowledge of God, nor ever will. The learned Greeks and wise Romans knew no more of God than the savage Indians. The knowledge of God which Noah and his sons had was gradually lost and corrupted. But God made himself known in a particular manner to Abraham, and to his posterity the Jews: among whom the knowledge of the true God was preserved till the time of Christ, and now, by his Gospel, this knowledge is given to us, and to all who receive the Scriptures as the word of God.

Now, the same Scriptures which assure us there is but *one* God, speak of him under three names of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; and our text plainly declares that *these three are one*. This doctrine is generally called the doctrine of the *Trinity*, which signifies *Tri-Unity*, or three in one. This doctrine has been thought, by most Christians, to be very plainly revealed in the word of God; nevertheless, there were

some persons of old, and there are some now, who dispute, or deny it; and these people are called *Arians*, or *Socinians*; and some of them now call themselves *Unitarians*. We ought to be much on our guard against those who would rob us of “the faith once delivered to the saints,” and of which this is an eminent part. For you will please to observe, that those who deny the doctrine of the Trinity seldom stop there; they generally deny also the atonement of Jesus Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart, so leave us very little of the Gospel to believe. Indeed, many who begin their apostacy in the denial of the Trinity, complete it in becoming downright Infidels and Atheists. As a right notion of God is connected with all true faith and holy practice, it is of great consequence for us to be well established in this doctrine. It shall, therefore, be our present business to prove, that,

In the Unity of the Godhead there are three divine Persons.

It may be proper to remark, that, with respect to this doctrine, it is not necessary that we should be able fully to *explain* it, or show how the three divine persons subsist. This is, and must be, a *mystery*. There are many people, in this age of reason, as they call it, who dislike and reject every thing mysterious; but this arises entirely from their pride. There are many mysteries in nature; we are mysteries to ourselves. We know little of the nature of our own bodies, and still less of our souls. Is it any wonder then that we should know little of God, or that the divine nature should be mysterious to us? Let us beware of pride, especially the pride of our understandings. This pride ruined the angels who fell. It ruined our first parents; and it will ruin us eternally, if it be suffered to prevail. As we should never have known any thing of God but by the Bible, let us be content to take the Bible account of God, which is, indeed, his own account of himself. And let us remember what our Saviour said to his disciples, when he discovered the workings of pride among them, Matt. xviii. 3. Having set a child in the midst of them, he said, “Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” A little child is obliged to take upon trust what his infant capacity cannot yet comprehend; and it is the office of Christian faith to take God at his word.

I would also remark, that in our reception of this Scripture doctrine, we are not bound to adopt the mode of expression used or enforced by any particular divines or churches. Some good men, in their attempts to explain the doctrine, have rather perplexed it. Some good men have said, that “the Father is the fountain of Deity,”—that “he communicated his whole essence to the Son,”—that “the Son is entirely begotten of the Father,” and that he is “very God of very God.” As these expressions are only private interpretations of a Bible truth, we are at liberty to admit or reject them, as they appear to be scriptural or not.

Now let us proceed to a brief proof of the doctrine advanced, viz. *In the Unity of the Godhead there are three divine persons.* By *Godhead* we mean the divine nature. We maintain the *Unity* of the Godhead; that there is but one God; yet we assert, as our text does, that there are *three* in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that these three are one.* There is but one God. It is impossible there should be more. Reason itself shews that there cannot be more than one being, who is *first*. God is the *first cause* of all being, and we cannot conceive of two or more *first causes*. God is also a self-sufficient being; he existed alone; he can do every thing of himself; he needs not the help of other beings. “Now, if there were two such beings, they could do no more than one could do; if they could, then one could not be *self-sufficient* and *all-sufficient*; each of them could not be God, if they could want or receive any help from one another. There cannot, therefore, be two Gods; for if one is *all-sufficient*, the other would be needless and useless.” It is the great doctrine of Scripture, that there is one God. Isa. xlv. 5, “I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside me.” Deut. vi. 4. “Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord.” Mark xii. 32. “There is one God; and there is none other but he.” Jer. xxiii. 24. “Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord.” 1 Kings viii. 39. “For thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of Men.” This is the God alone

* Perhaps you will be told that this verse is not found in some ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, but has been added by the Trinitarians. But we are assured by men of the first learning and credibility, that it is found in the most ancient copies: and whoever examines will find that the sense of the chapter is not complete without it. But the truth of the doctrine does not depend on a sense, as we shall plainly prove.

who ought to be worshipped. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

The adversaries of this doctrine call themselves *Unitarians*, by which they mean to intimate their belief of only one God, and insinuate that we, who believe the Trinity, admit of more than one God. But we deny the charge. We maintain, as strongly as they, that there is only one God; and we think it perfectly consistent with this belief to acknowledge three Persons in the Godhead. We allow that the word *persons* is not found in Scripture, and may convey an idea somewhat too gross. But this is owing to the poverty of our language, which does not furnish us with a better term. And we think it justifiable, because *personal properties* and *personal acts* are ascribed to each of the divine three. But we contend not for the word, but the thing. It is enough for us to say, with the text, "there are THREE that bear record in heaven, the FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST."

That there is a *plurality* in the Deity is evident from the Old Testament. This, you know, was written in *Hebrew*; and, the name which is generally translated by the English word *God*, is in the Hebrew *plural*, and signifies more than one. It is *Elohim*, which is in the plural number, as *Gods* would be in English: and this word is often joined with the Hebrew word *JEHOVAH*, which is translated *LORD*; and whenever you find the word *Lord* in capital letters thus (*LORD*) it means *Jehovah*, a name which signifies the essence of God, "He who was, and is, and is to come." Now there is a passage in *Deut. vi. 4*, where you have both these names, and which fully proves the doctrine of the Trinity. "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our GOD is one LORD." If the word *Lord* and the word *God* signified just the same, the passage would be nonsense; it would be only saying, the Lord is Lord, or one is one: But the meaning is, *JEHOVAH*, our *Elohim*, our covenant God, Father, Son, and Spirit, is one *Jehovah*. He is one in Essence, though three in person. The Jews are unwilling to own that this is the meaning of the names of God in Hebrew, but it is entirely owing to their hatred to Jesus Christ. If any are converted to Christianity, as some have been, they own it immediately.* Thus *John Xeres*, a con-

*See an excellent treatise, entitled the Catholic Doctrine of a Trinity, proved by above an hundred short and clear Arguments in the Words of Scripture, by Mr. Jones, Rector of Pluckly, &c. printed for Rivington.

verted Jew, about 70 years ago, when he published his reasons for becoming a Christian, says, "The Christians confess Jesus to be God; and it is this that makes us look upon the Gospels as books that overturn the very principles of religion, the truth of which is built upon this article, the *Unity of God*. In this argument lies the strength of what you object against in the Christian religion." There he undertakes to prove, that the unity of God is not such as he once understood it to be, in unity of *Person*, but of *Essence*, under which more persons than one are comprehended; and the first proof he offers, is that of the name of *Elohim*. Why else, says he, is that frequent mention of *God* by means of the plural number; as in Gen. i. 1, where the word *Elohim*, which is rendered *God*, is of the plural number, though annexed to a verb of the singular number; which demonstrates that there are several persons partaking of the same divine nature and essence."

This *plurality* is restricted to a *Trinity* of persons, namely three, whose names we have in the text. And here observe, that the names, *Father*, *Word*, or *Son*, and *Spirit*, are not intended to describe the manner in which the three divine persons *subsist*, but the manner in which they *act*: but what they are *in themselves* (that is not revealed) not what they are *to us*, according to the respective offices which they have been pleased to assume in the redemption of man. And therefore, though one of the names of offices may seem greater than the rest; yet this does not denote that the person who bears the name is greater than the other. The name of the *Father* may seem greater than that of the *Son*, or of the *Spirit*: and Christ speaks of the Father as greater than he; and the Spirit as well as the Son is "sent;" but as these are names of *office*, and not of *essence*, they only describe the nature of the office assumed, which may be greater or less; but as to the essence there is no difference nor inequality; but as it is expressed in the Athanasian Creed—"In this Trinity, none is before nor after other; none is greater or less than another; but the whole three persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal. The Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal."

Our further proof of the Trinity shall be from the history of man's creation—the application of the name of the Deity

to each Divine Person distinctly—the institution of baptism; and the apostolical blessing.

In the history of man's creation we find these words, Gen. i. 20, "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Surely this expression denotes that there is a plurality of persons in the divine nature, or why should it be used: Some tell us it is only an accommodation to the mode of speaking used by kings, who in their public acts say *we* and *us*. But this is ridiculous; for kings had no existence before the creation of man. Besides, kings use this phrase out of modesty, or to signify the concurrence of their council; but who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?" Rom. xi. 34. In like manner we find the Lord God saying, after man had fallen, Gen. iii. 22, "Behold the man is become like ONE OF US." Some think this was spoken *ironically*, in allusion to Satan's promise, when he tempted our first parents to eat of the forbidden tree. "Ye shall be as gods," &c. Others think it refers to the covenant, in which *one* of the divine persons had engaged to become *man*, in order to redeem man. Be this as it may, the expression plainly proves a plurality, such as is more plainly expressed, John i. 1. "In the beginning was the WORD," (the very name used for Christ in the text) "*and the Word was with God, and the WORD was GOD.*" But again,

The name of God is applied to each of the divine persons distinctly. That the *Father* is called *God* need not be proved. *Jesus Christ* is also called *God* in many places of Scripture. Thomas said to him, John xx. 28, "My LORD, and my GOD." St. Paul says, Rom. ix. 5, "He is GOD over all, blessed for ever." St. John says, 1 John v. 20, "Jesus Christ is the TRUE GOD, and eternal life." The Psalmist says, that the Israelites in the wilderness "tempted and provoked THE MOST HIGH GOD;" and St. Paul, speaking of the same thing, says, "they tempted Christ;" consequently, he is "the most high God," Psalm lxxviii. 56, and 1 Cor. x. 9, Isaiah had a vision, concerning which, he says, "Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts;" Isaiah vi. 6. St. John, speaking of that vision, says, "these things said Isaiah, when he saw his (CHRIST'S) glory, and spake of him," John xii. 41; from whence it follows, that Jesus is the LORD of Hosts. And let it be carefully observed, that the name LORD, or JEHOVAH, which signifies the essence of God, is

never, upon any occasion given to a creature. Yet this name is given to Jesus Christ, as in the text last mentioned, and also in the following, Jer. xxiii. 6. "This is the name whereby he shall be called, the LORD, (that is JEHOVAH) our righteousness." Now, who is the righteousness of believers? Every Christian knows, that "Christ is made unto us—righteousness." And in Isaiah xliii. "I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour." But we know who alone is the Saviour of the world, even "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But unless he were God as well as man he could be no Saviour; for Jehovah says there is no Saviour besides himself.* Passing by many more texts for want of room, we shall mention but one more in proof of our Lord's divinity. Our Saviour has graciously promised his presence with all his people whenever they assemble together. See Matt. xviii. 20. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." Now how is it possible for Christ to be present in all the thousands of places where Christians are assembled, unless he be the true God?

In like manner we might shew, that the peculiar names of the Deity are given to the *Holy Spirit*, and that, therefore, he also is a Person, and a divine person. One, out of many, may be sufficient. St. Peter, reproving Ananias for the lie he had told respecting his substance, saith, Acts. v. 3, "*Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the HOLY GHOST?*" and in the next verse, he adds,—"*Thou hast not lied unto men but unto GOD.*" This is a most plain and undeniable proof that the Holy Ghost is God.†

The ordinance of *Christian baptism* affords another proof of the Trinity. In the baptism of our Lord himself, a voice from heaven said—"This is my beloved Son;" also "The Holy Spirit descended visibly" in the manner and form of

* If the reader wishes to see more proofs of this kind, let him consult the following places, Isaiah viii. 13, 14, with 1 Peter ii. 7, 8. Is. xlv. 6. with Rev. xxii. 13. Luke i. 76. with Matt. xi, 10. 2 Cor. v. 19. John 14. 11. Isaiah ix. 6. Rev. i. 8. 1 Kings viii. 39. with Rev. ii. 23. And as to those places in which Christ saith, The Father is greater than I, &c. they are understood as his human nature and office, or, as the creed expresses it, "inferior to the Father as touching his manhood."

† Other proofs may be found in Acts xiii, 2, 4, 2 Tim iii, 16 compared with 2 Pet. i. 21. 1 Cor. iii, 16, with 1 Cor. vi, 19, 1 Cor. ii. 11, 14. Psalms cxxxix. 7,

a dove, "lighting upon him," Matt. iii. 16. Here was the Trinity. The FATHER testifieth to the SON, and the SPIRIT descended upon him. Hence, the primitive Christians used the saying, to any who doubted the truth of this doctrine, "Go to Jordan, and you will see the Trinity." Plainer still is this truth from the form of words appointed to be used in Christian baptism—Baptise them in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST. This is an ordinance of initiation; it stands as it were at the threshold of Christianity; so that in taking upon us this distinguished badge of the Christian profession, we avow this great doctrine. We are baptized into the *name* of each divine Person, that is, by the *authority* of each, and into the *faith, worship, and profession* of each equally and alike, as the One God of the Christian religion. Hereby we profess the Trinity, that is, one God in three Persons, in opposition to all false gods and false worship, and thereby dedicate ourselves to them, according to their personal relations; to the *Father*, as our Creator, and as reconciled in Christ; to *Christ* as our redeemer, to deliver us from the guilt and power of sin; and to the *Holy Spirit*, to teach, comfort, and sanctify us. This is a kind of proof of the doctrine suited to the weakest capacity. Each of the sacred Three is mentioned distinctly, and by name, which certainly implies a distinction of persons; yet they are all united in the same ordinance of baptism, which shews their equality and unity. So that all who would not renounce that sacred ordinance, may see in it a full, clear and satisfactory proof of the Trinity.

Much the same may be said of the Apostolical benediction, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen." In these words St. Paul prayed for the Corinthians, and in the same words almost all Christian ministers pray for their people at the close of every public service. It is a kind of prayer to each divine person singly, expressing a desire that the people may partake of the grace of Christ, who is "full of grace," through whose mediation we are reconciled to God—that they may also enjoy the love of God, namely, of God the Father, which is the source of our whole salvation, manifested in the gift of his Son, his Spirit, and his Word—and, finally, that they may partake of the Holy Ghost, as all real Christians do in

his application to their souls of all the blessings of salvation, proceeding from the Father, and flowing to us through the Son. And thus are we continually reminded of this great truth, and led also to make a practical use of it, in seeking from each of the divine persons the peculiar blessings that each, in the economy of the covenant, has undertaken to bestow.

APPLICATION.—From what has been said, however briefly, it is sufficiently evident, that the Doctrine of the Trinity is a *scriptural* doctrine; and as such we are bound to receive it, unless we renounce our Bibles. It is true, that it is a sublime and mysterious doctrine; yet there is nothing at all in it contrary to reason. Some men make a great outcry against it. They tell us it is absolutely impossible *that there should be but one*, and that the Trinitarians must believe there are *three Gods*. In answer to this we say, we do not affirm that the *three are one*, in the same sense that they are *three*. They are *three* in one respect, *one* in another. We say they are *three in person; one in essence*. We affirm that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are not three Gods, but one God. We have abundantly proved from Scripture, that there are Three to whom divine names are given, divine attributes ascribed, and divine offices assigned; and we affirm, with our text, and according to the whole tenor of Scripture, and the voice of reason too, that they are three in one. And what is there in all this absurd or contradictory? Were we to affirm that they are one, in the same respect as they are three, it would, no doubt, be a contradiction in terms; we say not that three persons are one person, or three Gods are one God; but we say that the three persons are one God. This is revealed, therefore we believe it; and though we cannot fully comprehend it, we think it becomes such weak and fallible creatures as ourselves humbly to receive it, with other truths, as the word of God, and not of man.

But it is by no means enough merely to assent to the doctrine; we ought to make a practical use of it. It is far from being a matter of speculation; it is a branch of our “most holy faith.” We should be concerned not to hold this, or any other truth, in unrighteousness: and no doctrine, however true and important, will avail us, without an experience of its sanctifying power on our hearts.

Let us be concerned then, as perishing sinners, to apply to each of the divine persons: to the Father, for the pardon of our sins through his infinite love and free mercy; to the Son, for an interest in his blood, righteousness and intercession; and to the Holy Spirit, for his illuminating, sanctifying, quickening, and comforting influences.

Let us adore and praise the eternal Three; the Father for his electing love, and the unspeakable gift of that love, the Lord Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son. Let us adore and praise the dear Redeemer, ascribing blessing, and honour, and glory, and praise, to him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Let us adore and praise the Holy Spirit for his gracious influences, accompanying the word of truth, whereby we knew ourselves, and felt the power of the Gospel to our salvation. Thus shall we resemble the blessed angels, who are incessantly praising the glorious Trinity, and crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

We shall close the whole with that excellent Collect used by the Church of England on Trinity Sunday.

"Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us, thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith; to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the divine Majesty to worship the Unity; we beseech thee that thou wouldst keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversaries; who livest and reignest One God, world without end. Amen."

C. W. Justice

A DISCOURSE,

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DELIVERED IN THE

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BAPTIST CHURCH AT RALEIGH,

DURING THE SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE,

ON MONDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 30, 1829,

Raleigh

In explanation of the Views, and in defence of
the Principles of the Associated Methodists,

BY THE REV. WILLIAM W. HILL,

*Published by the request of many who heard it, and dedicated to all those
friendly to the right of suffrage and to civil and religious freedom.*



RALEIGH:

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1830

PREFACE.

To the civil community in general, and the people called Methodists in particular.

That which is good fears nothing from investigation, but has every thing to hope for from it, invites it, and cheerfully awaits the result; while that which is evil fears it, because it must suffer thereby.

The subject proposed for investigation in the following pages, is important to human happiness, as a reference to the history of our race, through past ages, will shew: we mean ecclesiastical government. Let no intelligent citizen or statesman then hastily turn away from it, without a patient reading, from a belief that it belongs to the unimportant jargon of sectarians. Do not let intelligent Methodists spurn it, either from hasty resentment against the author, or the subject of investigation. As virtuous intelligencies, our attachment to objects becomes more permanent and pleasing in proportion as the light of truth shines, and shews the excellence of those objects. The subject of investigation in these pages is the genius of the Methodist Episcopal Church Government, (which is purely an affair of human regulation) There is no difference among us, as Methodists, on any other point. If, then, our church government will bear the test of scrutiny and the sanction of truth, it will more highly merit our adherence and our love; if not, it is a duty we owe to ourselves and our posterity, as Americans, as Methodists and Christians, to model it anew, and give it a character strictly in accordance with intelligence, brotherly equality, and the liberality of our own civil government. The ecclesiastical governments in the United States must inevitably exert an immense influence over the civil destinies of this country. It is highly important, then, to the happiness of these United States, that the genius and character of all ecclesiastical governments should inspire in their adherents a love for the liberal character of our civil government. It seems difficult to imagine how an enemy to the right of suffrage in church, can consistently admire it in State, and it is reasonable to suppose that he who claims the right of dictation over us as Christians, would exercise the same right over us as citizens, if his power would allow it.

It is not enough for those opposed to free suffrage to tell us, that, as priests, they are divinely authorised to legislate and expound. A priesthood was necessary to the crucifixion of the the son of God, and it ever opposed most bitterly any attempt to curtail its power and influence. To reduce to proper limits such power and influence, by introducing the right of suffrage among the Methodist people, is the object of this essay, and of the reformation now attempted in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

DISCOURSE.



FELLOW-CITIZENS AND GENTLEMEN.—I hope you do not consider me so weak, as to suppose that I could involve a congregation possessing your intelligence in a sectarian controversy if I would; and I humbly trust you do not think me so inconsistent with my own claims to the right of free unfettered investigation of all points pertaining to the civil and ecclesiastical policy of this country, as to imagine I would involve you in such a controversy, if I could: for the spirit of sectarianism is alike at variance with good sense and good feeling. But whatever your aversion to sectarianism may be, (and I am persuaded it cannot be greater than my own,) nothing that is important to the moral energies of this country, and of course to the civil quiet, and permanent prosperity of these happy States, can be uninteresting to you, as citizens and patriots; and if, upon examination, it shall appear that any principle or system clad in ecclesiastical habiliments, exists in this country, which is formidable to the moral energies of the community, and of course to the civil quiet, and permanent prosperity of these States; for that very reason such a principle or system becomes a hundred fold more frightful to every sagacious friend of the commonwealth; because our Constitution disclaims the right of interference in all ecclesiastical matters, at least in their incipient stages. Hence it is that such systems must remain secure in this country, until their formidable characters shall be felt by overt acts upon the quiet and prosperity of the country. And although the artifice of aspiring ecclesiastics disclaims any resemblance between church and State governments; yet it is well known to you that in all ages and countries they have exerted a powerful influence over each other; and, when they have conflicted, the sword has often decided the strife. We are of opinion that they are both of similar origin; and their object should be, the happiness of society, which essentially depends on securing the equal rights of all its members: we are persuaded that the same reasoning which will prove a civil despotism wrong will also apply to an ecclesiastical despotism. If the former tends to the arrogance and tyranny of men in power, so does the latter; if a civil vassalage is debasing, an ecclesiastical vassalage is still more so. The slave of civil power, however debased by oppression, is still accessible; you may address his understanding about his country, or the good or bad qualities of his government, or its rulers; but not so with an ecclesiastical vassal of the same intellectual grade: blindly believing in the infallibility of his own religion, his judgment is closed against all investigation; his religious teachers have taught him that his church is the only right one in the world; its government is of divine authority; therefore no reasoning is admissible; and his masters, under the name of ministers, however rash, arrogant or ignorant, are the infallible favorites of Heaven. You may scrutinize the talents and character of any, or all of his civil officers; you may abuse his Governor or President, even in the public prints; all this is admissible, because his civil officers can do wrong; but one whisper against his ecclesiastical masters, (under the name of ministers,) or any scrutiny into their motives or government is unpardonable sacrilege. We do not say that all who are in the pale of churches, having a government despotical in its nature, are thus debased; for those, who move under the direction of their own understandings, and make their feelings subservient to their reasons, do not easily

power in this way; but those who are wielded by their feelings and prejudices alone, may be thus debased by an arrogant ministry, and rendered formidable to every species of opposition.

If then we disclose to your view a powerful ecclesiastical government existing in this country, of a highly despotical character, it is not to excite your displeasure against those who wield it at present, or against those who are within the scope of its powers; but that we may obtain your aid and good wishes in its modification and control in a constitutional way, by the sovereign force of public sentiment and influence.

We do sincerely believe that dangerous powers are exercised by the rulers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and that the spirit of their discipline, and genius of their government, have an anti republican tendency. To effect a reformation of their church government, and impart to it liberal features is the cause of the vast excitement now prevailing among almost half a million of people in the United States called Methodists. Then to the law and the testimony. There are among the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church three great departments, 1st, the laity or people, comprising more than four hundred thousand persons; 2nd, the local preachers, in number between five and seven thousand; 3rd, the itinerant preachers, so called, in number some more than fourteen hundred. In these last are concentrated, unquestionably, all the legislative powers of the whole church; and we think, upon examination, it will be found they possess all the judicial and executive power also. The General Conference, which is a Congress of itinerant Methodist preachers exclusively, is the only legislative assembly belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church. The following extract is taken literally from their discipline for 1824, commencing with the 19th page:

“ Question 2nd. Who shall compose the General Conference, and what are the powers and regulations belonging to it?

“ Answer 1st. The General Conference shall be composed of one member for every seven members of the Annual Conference, to be appointed by seniority or choice, at the discretion of each Annual Conference; yet so that such representatives shall have *travelled* at least four full calendar years, from the time that they were received on trial by the Annual Conference, and are in full connexion at the time of holding the Conference.

“ Sec. 5th. The General Conference shall have full power to make rules and regulations for our church, under the following limitations and restrictions, viz. Restriction 1st. The General Conference shall not revoke, alter or change our Articles of Religion nor establish any new standards or rules of doctrine, contrary to our present existing or established standards of doctrine. 4th Restriction. They shall not revoke or change the General Rules of our United Societies. 5th Restriction. They shall not do away the privileges of our ministers or preachers of trial by a committee, and of an appeal; neither shall they do away the privileges of our members of trial before the Society, or by a committee, and of an appeal.” 6th Restriction. After some reference to the book concern, the whole is wound up with the following: “ nevertheless, that upon the joint recommendation of all the Annual Conferences, then a majority of the General Conference succeeding, shall suffice to alter *any* of the *above* restrictions.” It shall suffice to alter or change our Articles of Religion, and to establish any new standards or Rules of Doctrine; it shall suffice to revoke or change the

General Rules of our United Societies; it shall suffice to do away the right of trial as above specified; and the right of appeal. In a word, a majority of two thirds of the General Conference, although there is not one single lay member or local preacher there represented, can blot out every thing that constitutes the visible existence of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Every fourth year an election to the General Conference of the fifth, sixth or seventh travelling preacher, is made by traveling preachers only, and instead of the delegates legislating for those who elect them only, they legislate for the local ministry and lay members, not one of whom is represented in that Conference; and not content to change our rules or laws, which are simply of human devising, they must change our Articles of Religion, and establish new standards of doctrine if they think proper. Read those Articles of religion, commencing with the 7th, and including the 18th page of the Discipline. Article the 5th maintains the sufficiency of the scriptures for the purposes of salvation, &c. This they may also deny without the aid of their expoundings. They may also increase or diminish the number of Canonical Books, or deny them *en masse*. Article 7th maintains original sin. This they may deny, and introduce the immaculate state of infants. Article the 8th maintains the doctrine of free will. This they may also change, and introduce the doctrine of fate, and totally do away man's accountability. Article the 24th maintains that christian men's goods are not common. They claim the right to change this also, and to proclaim a community of goods of course. Is not here an open field for havock? Here are legislative claims indeed! Who in his senses can read them, and know that hundreds of itinerant Methodist preachers are now employed in every influential way within their power, to reconcile many millions of Americans to these dogmas and have actually succeeded in reconciling so many hundreds of thousands to those high claims, that many men of the first standing in society have suffered all the ecclesiastical pains and penalties that the civil law would allow, merely for questioning these claims? Who that knows any thing of human nature can know this, and recollect the bloody tragedies which have originated from the same causes in past ages, without soul shivering apprehensions? Should any one deny the accuracy of these comments, let him read the third section of the Discipline, commencing on the 19th page; he will there see that the General Conference is composed exclusively of travelling preachers; and although they seem to limit themselves (which in its own nature is absurd) by six articles, they became weary of those limitations before they were done writing them, and wound up with a sweeping *nevertheless*.

The next point that comes in review, is the judicial power, which is also claimed and exercised by the travelling preachers, as will appear by reference to the original paragraph contained in the report of the last General Conference in answer to the petition sent up from the first Baltimore Convention, praying a redress of grievances and a modification of their government, which will be found at large, if my memory serves me, in the Christian Advocate of June 20th. 1828, and is as follows: After denying the right of the local ministry and lay membership to representation in the law making department of the Church, they add: "of these also, to wit: of Gospel doctrines, ordinances and moral discipline, we do believe that the divinely instituted ministry are the divinely authorised expounders; and that the

duty of maintaining in its purity, and of not permitting our ministrations in these respects to be authoritatively controlled by others, does rest upon us with the power of a moral obligation, in the due discharge of which our consciences are involved."

Here, in answer to the prayer of the Convention for a redress of grievances, and a modification of their government, they, as the "divinely instituted ministry," profess to be "the divinely authorized expounders of Gospel doctrines," &c. and say in behalf of themselves, then in Conference, that it "rests upon *them*, with the power of moral obligation," not to suffer their "ministrations to be authoritatively controlled"—by whom? By you petitioners, you local preachers and laymen. If we are to believe them, they have a right to judge, not only of laws, but of doctrines, and that by divine authority. Do these claims befit the 19th century? Are they in accordance with any thing like government, civil or ecclesiastical, on this continent? I must have additional faith before I can believe that an appointment from a Methodist bishop, and a circuit assigned, and the title Itinerant Preacher, make a man a divine expounder of Gospel doctrines, whether he can read a chapter gracefully, or parse a sentence grammatically or not; and what heaps mountains on my faith is, that he should lose those expounding powers so soon as he finds a fair partner and takes a location; but, should he forsooth be left alone, he has only to get another appointment from a Methodist bishop, and his expounding powers return again. Oh! what a magic working, convenient, pleasant, painful thing this Methodist Episcopal itineracy is! But, after all, like the incredulous attorney, who undertook to procure an exemption from service on a jury for a sort of volunteer irregular forest preacher, the court demanded his credentials. He replied he did not know what credentials were. The attorney, a little piqued, said, Sir, poh! poh! your license: who gave you authority to preach? He answered, Jesus Christ. Ah! well, well, you could not have better authority. Shew his hand writing, and the court will exempt you. I would say, in like manner, to those expounders, something more than their *ipse dixit* must challenge my faith before I can believe. After so many proofs from their own documents, who will pretend to deny that they claim and exercise the legislative and judicial powers of the Methodist Episcopal Church? and by the following references it is equally clear they wield the executive also: See section the 7th, page 89: Question. How shall an accused member be brought to trial? Answer. Before the society of which he is a member, or a select number of them, in the presence of a bishop, elder, deacon or preacher. Here you at once perceive discretionary powers. He is brought before all the society or a select number. The travelling preachers, as we have seen, claim the right of expounding, and in this case, I have never yet known them fail to exercise it; and they so explain this law as to give themselves the right to pack a jury if they prefer it. But this power does not stop here. If the whole society or the packed jury of the preacher in charge, acquit the accused, and pronounce him innocent, a reference to the 4th note, section the 7th, page 91, allows said preacher a power not possessed by any judge in this country against a pick pocket. The preacher in charge, perhaps an entire stranger to all, can take an appeal against the decision of the society, or his packed jury, and order the accused to appear before his next Quarterly Meeting Conference; and in a large circuit he may place that one hundred miles from the residence of the accused.—

Suppose the accused be a poor man, or a woman in delicate health: they cannot attend. The Quarterly Conference is composed mostly of the creatures of the preacher in charge, or his associates in oppression. See section 5th, note the 5th, page 28th. The Quarterly Conference consists of the travelling and local preachers, exhorters, stewards and leaders of the Church.— Section 19th, note the 4th, page 38. The same preacher who has taken the appeal, appoints all the leaders and changes them when he thinks proper.— His leaders and himself, according to note 13th, same section, page 43, make the exhorters. Here, then, is the Quarterly Conference Court, composed mostly of his own creatures, before whom he may draw a victim from the bosom of any society to almost certain expulsion. But it may be said there is a right of appeal from this tribunal. Where next? To the Annual Conference, the makers of the law, now in the last resort the expounders and executors of it. What remains but strength to make this the most finished despotism ever known? And it grows fearfully fast. It may be said this right of appeal will not lie against a local preacher. This is doubtful. Unamenable power will never lack schemes nor instruments. Take the following case:* When it was determined to arrest Dr. Jennings and some ten or a dozen of his brethren for publishing a religious periodical, called the MUTUAL RIGHTS, they were brought before a committee of their political opponents, and suspended until the ensuing District Conference. On the first day of the District Conference, a debate ensued respecting the right of the suspended preachers to vote on the business of the Conference; it was determined in the affirmative. The presiding elder, notwithstanding the decision, determined on the next morning that they should not vote. The order of the day being called for, an ally of the elder moved a dissolution of the Conference, evidently for the purpose of throwing the suspended men back upon the Quarterly Conference of the City of Baltimore; for such are the directions of the Discipline in the event of the District Conference not doing the business assigned them. The motion was opposed, I think, by 15 friendly to the suspended, who had reached the house. The nineteen opposed to them were punctually on the floor. Before they left the room, the absentees arrived, making 21 white men against 19. The forlorn hope, or reserve, consisting of eight or ten colored men, was brought forward; their votes were opposed of course. It was alleged that Maryland was a slave holding State; that the precedent was dangerous, and should not be suffered. All was overruled; the Conference was dissolved; the colored men's votes were counted. Those for the dissolution contend that it was dissolved without the votes of the colored men; those against it, that it was not. By the following literal quotation from the Narrative and Defence, a pamphlet published by the committee who suspended or expelled Doctor Jennings and others, the further facts are to be learned, and for the literal correctness of which I stand pledged: (Page 113.)

“ With reference to the right of colored men to vote, there is nothing in the rules constituting and regulating the District Conference, which prohibits the colored members of the Conference from a common right of voting in all cases. It is true that though well aware of their privileges, they have, from prudential motives, refrained from voting in the Conference generally in cases in which the characters of white members were directly concerned. Some of us recollect, however, that on the trial of a white member of a

* On the authority of Mr. M'Kane, one of the suspended.

former session, (which member is now one of the suspended,) a colored preacher *claimed* and was *allowed* his vote in favor of the accused. In all other cases, they have exercised their right of voting, when they thought proper. On a motion to dissolve the Conference, there was an evident propriety in their claiming a right to vote; because it involved a question of privilege, in which they had a common interest, and felt a common concern." With these there were twenty-nine in favor of the motion for dissolving the Conference.

"With respect to the ability of our colored preachers to vote intelligently, we may refer to the opinion given of them by the Conference in the Minutes of 1820. The Conference was much gratified in the examination of the colored preachers; they were found to be men of good report, genuine piety, and several of them possessed of respectable talents."

Here the right of colored men to vote in matters highly important to the characters of white men, is broadly asserted; and by this document it is clear that this alleged right they have exercised. The white men were thrown back on the Quarterly Conference, and all expelled.

We repeat that unamenable power never wants for means or instruments. We are of opinion that it is what we denominated it in the commencement, an ecclesiastical despotism of the most absolute kind. We are naturally led to seek for its origin. Was it ever derived from the people through their delegates? Not so. It was, in our estimation, assumed in the infancy and inexperience of the American Methodists; and many still strive for its preservation and exercise. Secessions and divisions commenced with its origin in this country, and they must continue with the oppression. Many different orders of Methodists now exist in this country and in Europe; and we are of opinion that the numerous secessions which have occurred, are the result of this unnatural and oppressive government. The reasons (if reasons they may be called) assigned in justification of themselves, by those who cling to this power with pertinacious grasp, are, that the recommendation from the society to the Quarterly Conference, given to young men for license to preach, and the recommendation from the Quarterly to the Annual Conferences, make those young men representatives for life; notwithstanding the Annual Conferences, in the exercise of sovereign power, reject such recommendation if they think proper, and send these new preachers, or rather, representatives of the people, home. Surely this pretext is sufficiently farcical without farther comment. The next reason or pretext is founded on society obligation. This obligation is learned by a reference to the 3d note Discipline, page 77, which is as follows: "There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into those societies, viz a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." The usual form of admission is as follows: "Do you desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved by grace?" "I do." "Will you evince this desire, by a holy and blameless life, God being your helper?" "I will." Here, then, is the contract between the candidate for membership and the officiating minister. Is there a mind, unwarped by party predilection, that can find any thing here to justify, on the part of the ministers, the right of unqualified dictation, and, on the part of the members, the duty of unqualified submission? yet if these relations are to be sustained, it must be by this article. If it contended their system must be right, because of their success on the ratio of numbers. This argument is surely

exceptionable in moral matters; because by this rule the Christian religion must be nugatory, and paganism must be triumphant. If success in the moral reformation of men has attended the labors of Methodist preachers, and we admit it has, have not local ministers and lay members had an ample share in the labors that have been thus blest? Does that success prove that the local preachers and laymen are less capable of legislating for themselves than the travelling preachers are for them? We presume not. Suppose instead of preaching Christ, the divine right of the itinerant preachers to legislate had been urged, what would have been the success? We presume very inconsiderable in a country like ours, accustomed to the right of suffrage. Why should not the Methodist, as well as other churches, prove to the world that religious freedom is the handmaid of moral improvement? The fact is, our success, such as it is, is before the world, and all must see it; and our doctrines, about which we all agree, are generally understood, even by those of the most ordinary capacity; but how few of our four hundred thousand even dream of the real character of the Methodist Episcopal Government! If our people were generally as well versed in our government as they are in our doctrines and successes, those aristocratical barriers that sever us now, would soon be swallowed in a sea of love. Their claim to divine right was briefly canvassed in a former part of these reflections. We deem it therefore unnecessary to say any thing more on that head. Proscription, we are sorry to say it, is oft times hurled against us. Our characters are assailed; we are generally denominated backsliders. Suppose we are; how does this affect the right of suffrage? If every man in the United States was to turn horse thief, the right of suffrage would still be right; and if every Methodist in the United States was to backslide, the right of suffrage would still be right in church as well as State. But if by back and forward sliding is meant retrogading to Hell, or travelling to Heaven, and the proofs of these are to be determined by the sober sense of those who have observed us for many years, tested by the various ordeals of useful life, and not merely by a flying passport, called a license, upon such evidence we invite a comparison with our assailants, of weight of character and moral worth, before any impartial tribunal on earth. We have no disposition to return railing for railing; but we must suffer until society shall learn our claims, (and then they will love them,) or sympathise with us under our wrongs.

Our opposition to the system we have delineated, flows from our religion and our patriotism. The religion of Christ is a bond of love, uniting men to each other, and all to God. It is a brotherhood, in its very nature opposed to invidious grades. The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that would be mighty, exercise power upon them; but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great, let him be your minister; and whosoever would be mighty, let him be your slave. We are told, however, that this is not oppression, because all who are so disposed, may withdraw from the church. Is there any thing in our civil government which takes away the right of expatriation? Should a man voluntarily abandon his residence, and remove to some other State, or take up his abode in the western wilderness, he has no one to blame; but should some volunteer law makers pass through this State, and summon the good citizens to abide by their dicta: it would be a poor palliation to proclaim that they might evade submission, by abandoning their homes; but, in the event of

their refusing to do either, they must be turned out of doors. In like manner, we cannot perceive any rational relief in the remedy suggested by our law making brethren. They tell many of us, who were felling the forests, and planting the vines of Methodism before they were heard of, that we must either submit to their laws or abandon our church; should we refuse to do either, we must be spurned from society, or thrust out of doors. We cannot perceive either reason, mercy, or justice in this.

Our opposition flows from our patriotism. The system we oppose we believe inimical to the peace and prosperity of this country. This may excite a smile from the incredulous and unthinking; but those who are profound in the science of nature, government and history, will act differently. Our religious prejudices are invincible. Generals, statesmen and sages have ever studied this peculiarity in human nature, and profited by it. The history of France, England and Germany is awfully eloquent on this subject. Kings have been beheaded and sovereigns dethroned by the influence of the priesthood. Within a few reigns, a million of brave men fell in the religious wars of France; in the course of ages past, England and Germany paid their full tribute of religious blood. Indeed, the four quarters of the globe have been glutted with sectarian victims. The framers of our Constitution hoped to thwart similar tragedies in this country by the counteracting influence of the different sects. Should they succeed, they will merit the gratitude of generations unborn. The United States, in that respect, are still in the infancy of experiment, having much to hope and fear. The other churches within the North American Republic generally allow of lay delegation. Within the Charleston Diocese, lay delegates from the Roman Catholic Church were lately invited to a participation of privileges by Bishop England. This right is also enjoyed by the Protestant Episcopalian laity. It is unnecessary to advert to the Baptist and Pre-byterian congregations; their policy has ever been liberal. "Episcopal Methodism" professes to know no such rights, and to comprehend no such privileges, on the part of her laity and local ministry. Her other schemes are in accordance. Her Discipline acknowledges no congregation as a church, nor do they admit that the congregations of any one State make a church. But all the Methodist Episcopal congregations in the United States, in the language of their Discipline, make one church. Over this whole they have some half dozen bishops, forming one head, each having equal powers in any and every place of this United States' Diocese, without any re-election during life. These bishops make the presiding elders; the presiding elders have superintendence of all the preachers in their district, and can change those on the circuits at pleasure. The preacher said to be in charge on the circuit, makes or changes class leaders, and with his class leaders makes exhorters; these, with the local and travelling preachers, make the Quarterly Conference; and, as we have seen, the preacher in charge can take an appeal from the decision of any society or committee, against any member, to said Quarterly Conference, almost of his own making.

Here, then, is an immense national power, wielded by a few bishops, who are so for life, and who have almost an absolute control of the prejudices and ecclesiastical destinies of almost half a million of people in the United States. This power wields a printing establishment of tremendous magnitude; it issues something like thirty thousand copies weekly of one paper, and that paper, for catch-penny projects, surely is a master-piece. A Companion, now on your floor, if I understood him correctly, informed me that

a Mr. Capers, a travelling preacher, informed him that the existing fund of the Methodist Episcopal church was between five and seven hundred thousand dollars. Take this in connexion with the church property of our cities; the whole amount is immense. The ecclesiastical power has been in existence about forty odd years; should it increase in the same ratio for the next fifty; what could be its counterpoise?

Other ecclesiastical powers are divided among numerous churches, having certain independent rights; but this is a moving mammoth, which can tread all over this Union at a few strides. Will it not be courted by political demagogues? Has it not already been caressed? Should that befall us which we have lately so much feared, some great sectional division, what a mountain could this power heave in either scale! Look at page 189 & 190 of Discipline for 1824, and see with what careless hands they finger a political magazine, which, in the event of an explosion, would burst the members of our political body, hither and thither, in bloody confusion, perhaps never again to unite and live. Under the question, "What shall be done for the extirpation of the evil of slavery?" the following things are attempted:—"The preachers are to enforce prudently upon our members the necessity of learning their slaves to read, and to allow them time to attend public worship on all our regular days of divine worship." "Coloured preachers and official members are to have all the rights and privileges which are usual to others, (that is white men,) in the District and Quarterly Conferences, where the usages of the country do not forbid it; and the presiding elder may hold for them a separate District Conference." "The Annual Conference may employ coloured preachers to travel and preach, where their services are necessary," &c. &c. The preachers are prudently to enforce.— Do they enforce any thing, in any other way than prudently? They will say not. Why not turn their members out, then, for not learning their slaves to read, and for not carrying them up to all our meetings? They think it prudent to turn them out for other things. Because the civil authority is yet too strong. Why do they keep the law in their Discipline, and not enforce it? To feel the public pulse and familiarize the public mind to it, and to gain strength and influence all the while. "Where the usages of the country do not forbid it." What was their own exposition of this law, (for they have their divine right to expound,) in the case of Dr. Jennings and others? Why, that the black men had sense enough to vote: they had a right to vote, and they so over-ruled the Conference, that some eight or ten did vote, one being a slave, in a case highly important to white men. See their own narrative and defence, published in their own vindication.— How long will it be before they will have slaves sitting in Conference on the character of their masters? how long before we shall have coloured preachers on Circuits? and how much longer before they will presume to gallant our daughters? Why do they keep these laws in their Discipline, and not enforce them? I must reply again, for I cannot conjecture otherwise, but to familiarize their people to them, to feel the public pulse, and gather strength. Thus, friends and fellow citizens, you have the subject before you. Should some sagacious hearer inquire whether we would, under similar circumstances, demean ourselves more properly? we answer no. We trust that as yet we are not so intoxicated with the notions of infallibility as to think that nature in us, under the same circumstances, would act differently from the same nature in our opponents: Men who feel power are too

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apt to forget right. We claim the right of suffrage in behalf of the whole Church; that we may wipe away those obnoxious features, and balance a system of religious union for the people called Methodists, upon the plan of our civil government, which shall preserve permanent harmony among all the members of our association. We claim a representative government.— For this offence, and this alone, our names are cast out as evil. For this we have suffered, and expect to suffer; but while God shall lend us breath, we never intend to desist until our Church, like our country, shall be free. And should our object not be accomplished until our lives ebb away, we will sweetly expire in cheerful devotedness to our God, our Church, and our country. Though persecuted, we are not forsaken; though cast down, we are not destroyed. Though the ground which we recover is disputed by inches, and every door, whether public or private, which can be shut against us by the opposition, is closed; though, to terrify the weak, they have barred us from the hospitalities of charity itself, actually excluding us from the table of the Lord; yet since the epoch of our union, which is now about twelve months, our cause has extended from the great lakes to Florida, and from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. In this State we have about forty ministers and some hundreds of members. Many, in the course of the year, have professed religion among us. Our cause is strictly American, and it ought— it must prevail among Americans; and although we may suffer for a time— perhaps for life; yet it must be dear to generations to come, and posterity will appreciate our toils, and do justice to our memories.

Pralough

Pralough

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THE FORCE OF HABIT:

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE STUDENTS

OF THE

University of North Carolina,

AT CHAPEL HILL, MARCH 31ST, 1833.

BY WILLIAM HOOPER,

THEN PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT LANGUAGES IN THE UNIVERSITY.

Nemo repente turpissimus fuit.—JUV.

No man e'er reached the heights of vice at first—
By just degrees we mount from crime to crime,
And perfect villain is the work of time:
Never let man be bold enough to say:
“*Thus and no farther shall my passion stray;*”
The first crime past, compels us on to more,
And guilt proves fate, which was but choice before.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

SECOND EDITION.

RALEIGH:

A. M. GORMAN, PRINTER.—SPIRIT OF THE AGE OFFICE.

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1851.



P R E F A C E .

Young Gentlemen of the University :

I dedicate this Discourse to your service. At your request I have submitted it to the press. As a literary effort I am sensible it presents no claims to such partiality; but as containing important truths, worthy of being often held up before your minds and reflected upon again and again, I have thought it might not be entirely undeserving to pass into a form that should give it a chance of more durable utility than mere evanescent utterance can ever effect. God grant that the considerations here urged upon you, may frequently recur to you in the hour of need. I have labored many years in endeavoring to communicate classical learning to the youth of North Carolina; but all that I have done in that way affords me less comfort in the retrospect, than the possibility that something I may have said in the sacred desk, has had a share in forming a youthful heart to virtue, and leading it to seek acquaintance with God.— If in the course of my connexion with the young men of this State, I have met with any success of this kind, I must esteem it as my most precious earthly reward, and the most valuable fame I could inherit.

April, 1833.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

It is with gratitude to God and to the distinguished head of our University that I hear, that this Discourse has been read annually, for a number of years, to the Senior Class, in that important Institution; and that a second Edition has been now ordered. To be thus encouraged to cherish the hope that one's written words are wielding even a small secret control over the conduct of a large body of influential youth, and helping to fashion their moral characters for good rather than for evil, may well warrant an inward joy that falls not to the lot of those splendid but vicious minds whose baleful fires dazzle but to betray, and blast the roses of youthful genius which they have developed and expanded. Far from me and from my youthful readers be the accursed ambition of Phæton,

which would burn up the world for the sake of one glorious day in the chariot of the sun. Rather let ours be the prayer of the poet :

“ Oh give me *honest* fame, or give me none.”

Since this address was delivered to the Students, the University, under wise and steady regulation and sound instruction, has so increased its numbers and its attractions, as to make the writer realize still more deeply the honor and the responsibility of being admitted to share in the moral influences that are brought to bear upon it. It must stir the pride of an old Alumnus to revisit Chapel Hill after an absence of many years. He will find that the Genius of improvement which has been bestriding the world with giant steps, has left a foot-print there; that the hand of time which has blanched his temples and wrinkled his checks has only brought out into fuller luxuriance the beauties of his Alma Mater : that her gravelled walks, her grassy terraces, her architectural improvements, her ample halls, her expanded libraries, her increased academical corps, and her cultivated society, make it a higher privilege now than it was in his days, to tread these classic shades, and perhaps, he will find a sigh escaping him that he was born thirty years too soon.

Raleigh, Nov. 6th, 1851.

A DISCOURSE, &C.

JER. xiii. 23. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."

I shall take occasion from these striking words of Scripture to address you, my hearers, on The force of Habit. You all know that a habit is formed by the repetition of any act, until, by frequency and long familiarity, it becomes easy and natural. Hence it has grown into a proverb that "habit is a second nature." Of how much moment then must it be, to mark with especial vigilance, and to guard with especial care, that season of life, when the habits begin to be formed, and the character is beginning to assume that shape which it will carry through the whole of our earthly sojourn, and which will affect our destiny for eternity! It is because most of my audience are at this critical period of their lives, that I think no subject on which I could possibly address them, is more appropriate to their condition; no one, which could more justly claim their deep and serious reflection. It is not merely to fulfil a customary round of duty; it is not merely to occupy you the usual time with the expected pulpit performance, and then to let you go away, our minds being well satisfied if the end be gained of having kept up for another Sabbath the decent observance of our religion, and of having thrown out some thoughts acceptable to your present hearing. No, my friends. We aim at something more than this barren discharge of a periodical duty, or this half-hour's occupation of your minds. It is with the cherished hope and the fervent prayer that something may be dropped at this time, which may occur to your meditations at many a future day, and have some operation in regulating those habits which are now fixing themselves upon you, that I have chosen the words of the text, as the subject of my present address. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" exclaims God by the mouth of the prophet to his people, now become obstinate and inveterate in their wickedness: "Can the

Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Here the doctrine is taught, that when habits of evil are formed, they cleave to us with as close and inseparable a tenacity as the complexion of our skin; and that you might as well expect the African, by an act of his will, to become white, or the leopard to change his spotty hide, as to expect those addicted to sinful courses to renounce them, and become good. The comparison is certainly a most striking and forcible one, and conveys little less than the absolute impossibility and hopelessness of a recovery from vicious habits. I will not go so far as to say, that by likening moral reformation to two natural impossibilities, the divine word means to pronounce moral reformation to be utterly impossible. But this I may safely say, that by the comparison, God evidently intends to teach us that a return from evil habits is extremely difficult and improbable, and would be almost as miraculous a departure from the usual laws of the moral world, as the voluntary assumption of a new skin by the Ethiopian or the leopard, would be from the laws of the physical world. So our Saviour declared the salvation of a rich man to be more difficult than the passage of a camel through a needle's eye—a natural impossibility; but at the same time brought the case within the reach of divine omnipotence and mercy, saying that "with men such a thing was impossible, but not with God." Most certain is it, then, that the Maker of our frame here calls upon us to mark and take notice of an important and most inflexible law of our moral constitution, to wit, that WHAT WE ARE MADE BY LONG HABIT, THAT WE SHALL CONTINUE TO BE THROUGH LIFE. I say further, that our observation of human nature abundantly confirms the doctrine, and proves that men are carried onward by old habits with a certainty and fatality almost as rigid as that which propels the rivers onward to the ocean. Let none complain of this law of our nature. Let none say, why was man made so much the creature and slave of habit, that when once entangled, he loses all power to extricate himself. We might as well quarrel with the law of gravitation which destroys the life of a man who flings himself from the top of a precipice. The same law of physical nature which makes the fall from a precipice fatal, and which brings down heavy bodies with destructive force upon thousands of human beings, that same law holds the earth in its orbit, binds all its millions of inhabitants to their homes upon its surface, makes the showers descend to gladden the fields, and rolls the waters

that would otherwise stagnate and poison us, with healthful currents to their mighty reservoir.

Nor is this *moral* law, whose stubborn strength is so much complained of, less a proof of the wisdom of the author of nature than the other, nor is it less remarkable for its salutary effects when legitimately used than for its pernicious effects when abused. It is by habit that all the most necessary acts of life are rendered easy and pleasant. By habit we learn to walk, to speak, to read and write, to perform all manual operations with facility and despatch. By the power of habit are all those acts carried on which minister to the wants and conveniences of life. By the power of habit is the printer enabled to combine his types into words, with a rapidity astonishing to the eye and surpassing all previous belief, and to prepare for us those thousands of volumes which are continually filling the world with intelligence and delight.

This same principle of our constitution, is no less subservient to the passive, than to the active powers of man. It enables us to endure with ease, hardships that were at first intolerable. It enables man to breathe with impuuity the pestiferous atmosphere of crowded manufactories, to reside in every climate, and after spending half his life among northern snows, to go and spend the remainder in the torrid zone.

Now let us mark the influence of this powerful law of nature upon our moral conduct. We find from personal experience, and we know from observations on our fellow-men, that our natural appetites acquire strength from every indulgence; that at first it is comparatively easy to restrain them within lawful barriers; but that habits of excess render them imperious and uncontrollable, so that we are dragged on after them, as by an invisible chain, whose strength bids defiance to all our resistance. This is the case with respect to our natural appetites. And it holds equally in relation to our artificial appetites. A man may contract such an appetite for tobacco, opium, or ardent spirits, as to crave these naturally distasteful articles with a rage of desire, equal to natural hunger and thirst. It is mercifully provided, however, by the constitution of our nature, that habit may be made as powerful an auxiliary to virtue as to vice. By means of it not only sensual appetites and evil passions become dominant and irresistible, but the numerous train of virtues, to which our nature is less inclined, and the incipient practice of which requires so much heroic resolution and self-denial, all these feel the benign force of habit, and become in time, not only easier of performance, but as fixed and cer-

tain in their operation on our conduct,* as are any of our natural instincts. We are, then, creatures of habit. Whatever becomes habitual becomes easy, whether it be virtue or vice. Whenever we have formed a habit, we seem to act almost mechanically in obedience to the habit without an effort of the will. Indeed, so prone are we to repeat habitual actions, and so little reflection and virtuous resolution are we conscious of in obeying good habits, that it seems as if they were

*The reader will thank me for enriching my page with the following profound observations. "Experience," says Mr. Stewart, "diminishes the influence of passive impressions on the mind, but strengthens our active principles. A course of debauchery deadens the sense of pleasure, but increases the desire of gratification. An immoderate use of strong liquors destroys the sensibility of the palate, but strengthens the habit of intemperance. The enjoyments we derive from any favorite pursuit, gradually decay as we advance in years; and yet we continue to prosecute our favorite pursuits with increasing steadiness and vigor. On these two laws of nature, is founded our capacity of moral improvement. In proportion as we are accustomed to obey our sense of duty, the influence of the temptations to vice is diminished, while at the same time our habit of virtuous conduct is confirmed. It is thus that the character of the beneficent man is formed. The passive impressions which he felt originally and which counteracted his sense of duty, have lost their influence, and a habit of beneficence is become a part of his nature. We might naturally be led to suspect that the young and unpracticed would be more disposed to perform beneficent actions, than those who are advanced in life, and who have been familiar with scenes of misery. And, in truth, the fact would be so, were it not that the effect of custom on this passive impression is counteracted by its effects on others; and above all by its influence in strengthening the active habits of beneficence. An old and experienced physician is less affected by the sight of bodily pain than a younger practitioner; but he has acquired a more confirmed habit of assisting the sick and helpless, and would offer greater violence to his nature, if he should withhold from them any relief that he has in his power to bestow. In this case we see a beautiful provision made for our moral improvement, as the effects of experience on one part of our nature are made to counteract its effects on another."—*Philos. of the Mind*, vol. 1, p. 386.

These remarks of Stewart were suggested by the following passage in Butler's Analogy. "From these two observations together, that practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts, and that passive impressions grow weaker by being repeated upon us, it must follow that active habits may be gradually forming and strengthening, by a course of acting upon such and such motives and excitements, whilst these motives and excitements themselves are, by proportionable degrees, growing less sensible, i. e. are continually less and less sensibly felt, even as the active habits strengthen. And experience confirms this: for active principles at the very time they are less lively in perception than they were, are found to be, somehow, wrought more thoroughly into the temper and character, and become more effectual in influencing our practice. Let a man set himself to attend to, inquire out, and relieve distressed persons, and he cannot but grow less and less sensibly affected with the various miseries of life, with which he must become acquainted; when yet, at the same time, benevolence, considered not as a passion, but as a practical principle of action, will strengthen, and whilst he passively compassionates the distressed less, he will acquire a greater aptitude actively to assist and befriend them," &c.

These remarks of both these profound and sagacious writers, I have been very willing to transfer to this place, at once to give a more durable value to this pamphlet than it would otherwise possess, and to tempt my young friends to dive for other pearls in the same deeps.

hardly entitled to a moral character ; so nearly do they approach to being involuntary, like the play of our lungs and the beating of our heart. The time and sphere, then, for virtuous choice and virtuous determination, is in the outset of life. It consists in oft repeating those acts which lead to good and valuable habits, and in denying again and again, as often as they solicit us, those acts which lead to vicious habits. Here then my young friends take your stand. Resist the beginnings of evil ; yes, the beginnings : that is the important juncture. Yield to the beginnings of evil, and you are undone.*

Your ruin can be predicted with almost as much certainty, as that of the bark which is floating towards the cataract of Niagara. Are you now free, unfettered by the toils of vice ? Give not up I beseech you, that glorious, that blessed freedom. Let not the persuasion of the miserable victims of vice involve you in their degradation. What ! Would you let a slave persuade you for the sake of companionship, to share his chains and his stripes ? Would you let a man, who was fool and madman enough to set fire to his own house, persuade you to set fire to yours also, that you might both be in the same condition ? How would you feel towards the man, who should seize your hand, run with you to the verge of a precipice, and then throwing himself over endeavor to pull you along with him ? Would you not wrench your hand from his detested grasp, and recoil from him with horror and indignation ? Yet you can smile with complacency upon the companion, who, himself the slave of vice, would have you to forsake the paths of innocence, and join him in his wicked courses, merely that he may have countenance and society in vice ! You can put yourself under the guidance and conduct of such a veteran in profligacy, if he will but take hold of your arm, say " come along," and laugh at your timorous scruples ! Oh ! there are no words adequate to express the abhorrence due to those, who, not satisfied with being ruined themselves, practice their accursed arts in seducing young and thoughtless minds from the paths of rectitude, and glory in the propagation of vice. If those who turn many to righteousness shall receive an extraordinary reward, surely

—————There is some chosen curse,
Some hidden thunder in the stores of heav'n,
Red with uncommon wrath, to blast the man—

that finds an alleviation to his own misery in undoing others, or can

* Principiis obsta ; sero medicina paratur,
Cum mala per longas invaluere moras.—OVID.

look around with a devilish joy at the desolation he has spread. Yet it is to be feared that this enormity is often committed within Collegiate walls, erected for the nursery and culture of all noble and generous sentiments. Yes; we are obliged to believe that here, even in this very place, are simple-hearted, unsuspecting, moral young men, year after year, gradually contaminated by those who are older than themselves, and who instead of being their guides to virtue, use the influence of superior age to decoy them into sin. Ye unfeeling seducers of youthful innocence! Is it not enough that you feel, yourselves, the miseries of remorse? Have you so much malignity within you, as to find a solace to your pains in making others as wretched as yourselves? Is it not sufficient to stab the peace and wreck the hopes of your own parents, must you also stab the peace and wreck the hopes of other parents? Ah, if you have any pity or generosity left in your souls, if you would not, like Satan, enter paradise, and blast, out of sheer envy, the purity and happiness you cannot partake, leave uncorrupted those who yet walk in their uprightness; who promise to be the joy of their friends, and the hope of their country. If you must have companions of your guilty pleasures, take those who are already corrupted. Let those who take hands, and rush together into the vortex, and find a mad delight in riding round and round in the inebriate whirl of waters, which are just yawning to engulf them, let these, I say, be all equally ruined, equally bereft of conscience, equally lost to hope, with scowling despair written on their foreheads. Surely it ought to melt with sorrow the heart of a young man, not lost to all sensations of humanity, to lead astray another younger than himself. Should we not suppose that honor and every kindly feeling of the soul would rise up in his bosom in behalf of yet untarnished virtue, and induce him to thrust back from his company, the young proselyte who was ready to yield himself up to his ruinous example? How much more worthy would it be of every generous emotion, for those who have contracted any unhappy propensity, when they see others beginning to go the same way, rather to put them back, and say: "as for ourselves we cannot help indulging in these things, but you who are yet safe, and not fatally bent towards these destructive courses, you we advise to keep yourselves far from them." This is no more than that common charity which we all show to each other, when we have unfortunately taken a disease. We tell how we contracted it, and caution others against the same imprudence.

There are various evil habits to which your circumstances expose

you, some of which I will mention, and leave it to your good sense and to your consciences to apply the same reasoning and expostulations against those which I may not mention, but which you know threaten to ensnare you. With respect to them all I beg you to carry along with you, ever fresh in your memory this admonition, that “habit is a second nature,” and that you may as soon expect any animal to act in a manner contrary to its nature, the lion to eat straw like the ox, and the wolf and the lamb to lie down in amity together, as for those to learn to do good who have been long accustomed to evil. Beware then, how you fall into the habit of what is wrong, and beware of the first act, lest that be the foundation of a habit—lest that give the soul an impulse from which it never, never shall recover.—If you are enticed by your own desires or by the arts of others, RESIST, as you would resist an attack upon your life, fly from the temptation—fight against the insidious passion, trample it under your feet and grind it to powder. When you are sailing by the rocks of the Sirens, trust not your ears to the soul-subduing song; but like Ulysses and his crew, stop fast your ears and let yourself be bound to the mast until you have passed the danger. Or, to quote you a better example, like the young and virtuous Joseph, snatch yourself forcibly away and flee far from the tempter and the temptation. Listen to the affectionate counsel of Solomon, the wisest of men: “My son, attend to my words: incline thine ear unto my sayings: Enter not into the path of the wicked and go not in the way of evil men.—Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away. Hear then, my son, and be wise. Be not among wine bibbers, among riotous eaters of flesh: for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty.—Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup; at last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder.” Oh how exactly true have miserable thousands found this to be, to their eternal cost!

I mentioned that there were some habits to which your circumstances render you peculiarly obnoxious, and against which therefore, every one among you ought to case himself in triple armour. Here I cannot do better than copy a passage from Dr. Paley’s moral philosophy, a book which, along with some doctrines of dangerous tendency, contains many valuable rules for the conduct of life. “Man,” says this celebrated author, “is a bundle of habits. There are habits not only of drinking, swearing, and lying, and of some other things which are commonly acknowledged to be habits, but of every modifi-

cation of action, speech and thought. There are habits of attention, vigilance, advertency, of a prompt obedience to the judgment occurring, or of yielding to the first impulse of passion, of extending our views to the future, or of resting upon the present, of indolence and dilatoriness, of vanity, of fretfulness, suspicion, captiousness, of covetousness, of overreaching, intriguing, projecting. In a word, there is not a quality or function either of body or mind, which does not feel the influence of this great law of animated..... A rule of life of considerable importance is, that many things ought to be done and abstained from solely for the sake of habit. We will explain ourselves by an example : A man has been brought up from infancy with a dread of lying. An occasion presents itself, where at the expense of a little veracity, he may divert his company, set off his own wit with advantage, attract the notice and engage the partiality of all around him. This is not a small temptation. And when he looks at the other side of the question he sees no mischief that can ensue from this liberty, no slander of any man's reputation, no prejudice likely to arise to any man's interest. Were there nothing further to be considered, it would be difficult to show why a man under such circumstances might not indulge his humor. But when he reflects that his scruples about lying have hitherto preserved him free from this vice; that occasions like the present will return, where the inducement will be equally strong but the indulgence much less innocent, that his scruples will wear away by a few transgressions and leave him subject to one of the meanest and most pernicious of all bad habits—a habit of lying whenever it will serve his turn : when all this, I say, is considered, a wise man will forego the present, or a much greater pleasure, rather than lay the foundation of a character so vicious and contemptible.”

I quote this passage, not with entire approbation, because I think, whenever we are tempted to a deviation from truth, even in trifles, that a regard for the sacredness of truth, an abhorrence for falsehood, a reverence for conscience and a fear of God, ought at once to rebuke away the plausible deceit independently of the consideration that it will lay the foundation for a bad habit. But the reflections suggested by Dr. Paley, may well come in as powerful auxiliaries, to back the instant and spontaneous refusal of an honest mind. They are reflections too, which might probably operate with considerable force on many who think very lightly of occasional falsehood in trifles.—Such persons should weigh well the danger of trifling with a tender

conscious—of diminishing that awful veneration for truth which we ought to cultivate—of gradually breaking down the barrier in our moral feelings between right and wrong, and at length of violating truth with as little scruple in the most important matters as at first we did in the smallest. Let these reflections, I beseech you, have the weight they ought to have in checking that levity with which an excuse is fabricated for neglect of duty. It is fashionable to think and speak of such fabrications as not at all criminal or dishonorable—as quite pardonable. “It is only baffling the Faculty by presenting an excuse which they cannot refuse—they cannot have the face to dispute our word, though we can have the face to make our word unworthy of their confidence—we are not bound to observe faith with the Faculty.” What a shocking doctrine is this, that you should not be obliged to observe faith with any and with every one! Is this the casuistry of Colleges? I hope not. I hope that not many among us have adopted principles so loose. For depend upon it, my young friends, that the person who can consent to violate truth whenever it suits his convenience to make up an excuse from collegiate duty, cannot have a very delicate sense of moral obligation on the score of truth, and it will not be surprising if he soon lose credit for veracity with his companions. In all communities there will be some who will fall in with every vicious habit that happens to be fashionable, and will carry it just as far as they dare carry it, without forfeiting their character. They have no fixed principles, no firm integrity of purpose, no independent rule of action, no settled habit of doing what is right at once, without waiting to see if public opinion will not countenance an aberration. Such persons are mere moral chameleons;* they take their complexion from surrounding objects. Let them be at Rome, they will be like those at Rome; or if at Botany Bay, their plastic character can easily be moulded into an assimilation with the manners and morals of that famed colony of convicts. Let it be the fashion to swear, to drink, to seduce, to fight duels, to spend their money in gaming and have none to pay honest debts with, to *break*, and live in the same style after their bankruptcy as before, these obsequious apes of *the mode*, without a moment’s hesitation give into follies and vices that chance to prevail and are glad when the laxity of public morals will prevent such practices from rendering

* As the chameleon which is known
 To have no colours of his own;
 But borrows from his neighbor’s hue,
 His white or black, his green or blue.—PRIOR.

them infamous. Now these persons are withheld from the worst actions only by the fear of disgrace. They are not ashamed to commit the acts themselves, but only ashamed of the detection of them. If a person has contracted such principles in a college, wonder not if in subsequent life you find him careless of veracity.*

I might enter upon the same course of reasoning with regard to many other bad habits, such as swearing, idleness, encroachment upon your neighbor's time, making a joke of taking any article of a fellow student's property, &c. These things are done thoughtlessly, but must injure the delicacy of moral principle; they must gradually impair virtuous sensibility; or, as Mr. Burke beautifully expresses it, "that chastity of honor which dreads a stain like a wound." Let me advise you, whenever wrong practices prevail in college, not slavishly to fall in with them; and say: "Why, nothing is more common among us; nothing is thought of such things." Rather oppose the weight of your influence and example against such practices, and if you should be singular, dare to be singular in a good cause;

Rather stand up assured, with conscious pride
Alone, than err with millions on your side.

But I pass over all other habits as of minor importance, that I may occupy the remainder of my time in speaking of one more dangerous and fatal than all the rest. You cannot be ignorant that I allude to the appetite for spirituous liquors. That the most powerful arguments and expostulations, against this propensity are much needed in every college is unhappily too well known. It is wonderful that when the whole country is covered with monuments of ruin produced by intemperance—of intellectual and moral worth once high in dignity, now abject and prostrate—of families once happy and prosperous, now helpless, broken-hearted and struggling for subsistence—it is wonderful that young men, seeing so many of these monitory spectacles before them, will venture to taste the liquid poison which

* During the last war, I happened to travel, in one of our public conveyances, with a young officer of the army. Having occasion to stop in one of the cities, I accompanied him into a shop where he enquired the price of a sword. He declined purchasing then, but told the shop-keeper he would "step in to-morrow and look at them again," when he knew that we were to depart in a few hours! I blushed for him, that a soldier, whose glory it is to scorn whatever is false and disingenuous, should value truth so little. Will you say, this was a trifle? Well, so was the temptation a trifle, and I am not sure that the same man, upon the occurrence of a great temptation with the hope of concealment, would not have lied in the most important matter. Yet if a person had offered to doubt this man's word on any occasion, he would have been ready to run him through the body.

has spread around them this desolation. Yet strange to tell, they will rush upon the peril without even the temptation of appetite.— Yes, many a youth, it is feared, has here* begun to drink when he had a positive dislike to the taste of spirits, merely for the sake of appearing sociable and manly. But soon he pays dearly for his temerity and vain-glory. Soon the insidious passion fastens itself upon him—he contracts a liking for stimulating drink, which perhaps shows its immediate effects in slackening his exertions in his class, creating an aversion to labor, a distaste for his studies, and a fondness for idle company. No wonder now at the oft alleged excuse of sickness, for absence from duty. For what else can be expected after such indulgences, but lassitude, and drowsiness, and nausea? No wonder if, presently, college restraints and requisitions become intolerable, and an application is made to his parent, requesting that he may be permitted to return home, in the midst of his collegiate course. Then may we predict his impending ruin with mournful certainty, and resign him up with despair to the despotism of a habit which overleaps all the barriers that parents and trustees and preceptors could throw in its way! May I not be speaking to some now, who are conscious that this habit has obtained an almost complete ascendancy over them? Do they not feel its despotism over the will? Do they not find themselves totally unable to resist the cravings of appetite, although they know the danger of the habit that is growing upon them? They know it, but alas! it is too late; the pleasure of present gratification is all they care for, and they purposely shut their eyes to the probable issue of these things. But others can see it, if they will not. Yes; we can calculate upon the premature ruin and early death of such a young man with almost as much confidence, as if the deep, hollow cough, the hectic flush and the wasted form marked him out as the victim of consumption: I say with almost as much certainty; because the very same experience that teaches us the laws of the natural world, teaches us the laws of the moral world. The very same observation that makes us know the cough, the hectic flush, the wasted form, the hemorrhage from the lungs to be alarming

*The writer would not be understood to intimate that the habits of the students whom he addressed were worse, or their temptations greater than those of members of colleges generally. He feels it as due to them to say on the contrary, that a Temperance Society embracing a considerable number of the students belongs to the college, and that he believes parents encounter no greater risk in venturing their sons at this than at any other similar institution. So far as he has had an opportunity of discovering, an appetite for drink is as little indulged in this college as in any other.

prognostics of dissolution, enables us also to know that the morning dram, the evening carousal, the secreted bottle, the tainted breath, the flushed or the pale face, the ill-gotten lesson, are alarming presages of a habit of incurable intemperance. And we anticipate the speedy and mournful issue of the one, with as little danger of mistake as the issue of the other.

Will then any one who is sensible of being in the very jeopardy I describe, say, "What must I do to be saved?" I reply: even symptoms of consumption have been removed by an early resort to the proper means. And it is with this very hope of your taking a timely alarm, and adopting the proper means of recovery that I ring these admonitions in your ears. I would depict with all my powers the terrible danger of an *incipient habit*; that those yet free may keep free; may come not nigh the slippery verge. And I would sound a still louder alarm of the awful issue of *confirmed habit*, to those who are just beginning to feel its force. I would say to them: feel and act as if you were sliding with smooth and pleasant motion down a mountain's icy breast, that overhung a yawning abyss. You are beginning to descend; but the declivity is yet gradual, the way is smooth, and your motion is not rapid enough to alarm you, but only sufficiently so to animate your spirits, and to excite a glorying of mind at the bravery of your enterprise. Your older and more experienced friends stand on the neighboring heights, and watch with considerable anxiety your thoughtless career. They cry out to you, and tell you of the precipice ahead. Be advised; let not their warning voice be neglected; throw yourself from the flying vehicle that is hurrying you to destruction; grasp at every twig that will arrest your progress, and strain every muscle and sinew to regain the summit from which you so heedlessly set out. But if you refuse; if you laugh at the idle fears of your friends; if you flatter yourself that you can stop long before you reach the precipice; all they can do is to look on with silent agony at the approaching catastrophe. They could tell you if you would hear them, that the declivity is every moment becoming steeper; that the velocity of a falling body is every moment accelerated; that the twigs along your path which once might have arrested you, will now snap in an instant before the violence of your motion, and onward, onward, onward you must go until you reach the verge, then take the awful leap and disappear forever! And if such a fate as I have described were to befall you, in the literal sense of the description, it would be less mournful than that it should befall you in the allegorical sense intended. For then you might die compara-

tively innocent and respectable. Your friends might not see your mangled corpse, nor feel disgraced by your death. But who can do justice to the feelings of those parents whose son, just ripening into manhood, is dying before their eyes, the loathsome victim of his guilty excesses ! How shall they escape from the hideous spectacle ? Their own house, the only place they have to lay their head, the birth place of their children, the spot where are clustered all their comforts, the peaceful sanctuary of their old age, becomes the hospital of their reprobate son, worn out with intemperance. He occupies one of the chambers. There, while they lie on their sleepless beds in a neighboring room, (I have witnessed something of what I describe) they hear his calls for drink, his disgusting belches, his horrid execrations against himself, and ever and anon a groan, bespeaking misery too big for words to tell ! And is this the return you make, degraded young man, for all the loving-kindness of your parents ? Is this the way you requite the father that dandled your infancy on his knee, and from that time till the present has been toiling to provide for your happiness ! Is this your gratitude to the mother that brought you into the world, that cherished you at her breast, that tended your cradle with throbbing temples and an aching heart, that watched you all along your playful boyhood with ceaseless tenderness, and that at length let you go from under her eye to a place of education, only from the confidence (a confidence alas too much misplaced) that the principles and the gratitude with which she had imbued you, would forever forbid you to distress her by a vicious life ? Surely this, if any thing in the world, realizes the fable of the frozen viper, that, as soon as it was thawed into life, struck its evenomed fangs into the bosom that warmed it.

But I would not stop at the exhibition of the temporal, the earthly consequences of this worst of habits. Could I do it, I would disturb the slumbers of the dead—I would evoke from their tombs the myriads that have gone down thither before their time, the victims of drunkenness. I would array their ghastly spectres in a long line before you, sire by the side of son, and brother at the right hand of brother. I would call upon them to tell you of the first steps that led to their undoing ; how they first trifled with their enemy—how they in thoughtless boyhood mixed with idle company ; made drunkenness a subject of jesting ; took a glass among their jovial friends, merely to appear social and manly when the liquor was not pleasant to their taste—how the appetite grew with every indulgence until it was im-

possible to deny it—until they themselves became the very beastly spectacles of intemperance they had been accustomed to look upon with loathing and contempt ; how they lingered upon earth, becoming more and more the sorrow and shame of their friends, and at last sunk unregretted to the grave. I would extort from them “the secrets of their prison house.” I would make them appear before you surrounded with their atmosphere of tempestuous fire—open before you their tortured breasts and disclose within the never-dying worm gnawing on their hearts—tell you with their burning tongues the horrors of their doom, and peal in your trembling ears the declaration of the Almighty, that drunkards shall lie down in the “lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever and ever.” I should hope that such a vision would make you shun for life, the sight, smell and taste of inebriating liquors. Oh ! in the contemplation of the manifold and direful miseries that flow from this bane of the human race, one might be tempted to curse the memory of the man that first invented the art of distillation ; of extracting *death* from God’s good creatures, intended to be the nourishers of *life*. One might be tempted to wish that every distiller of spirits, and every vender of spirits, and every drinker of spirits, could have their midnight slumbers haunted by the apparitions of pale widows and orphans in their robes of mourning, and by the horrible skeletons of their poisoned husbands sons and brothers, until, their goaded consciences should drive them with unanimous movement, to seize every vessel containing the liquid poison and throw it into a funeral pile, to make one general pious burnt-offering to Heaven, while the art of manufacturing the accursed pest should forever be blotted from the memory of man. But why wish for terrifying visions of the dead to benefit the living ? They will never be granted. Nor are we sure that they would prove the means of reformation. For what says Christ, that divine anatomist of the human heart ? “If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rose from the dead.” Bowing with unquestioning credence to the divine decision, and feeling deeply the utter impotency of man to help himself when sunk in evil habits, let us rather urge the poor slave of sin to look with imploring eye to the Heavens, and let us join our supplications to his that the Almighty’s arm may be stretched down to “lift him out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay,” and to put into his mouth the song of deliverance.

Before I conclude, I must take notice of a doctrine held by many,

sometimes even urged from the pulpit, which seems to lie as an objection to the argument we have been endeavoring to enforce. It is said that God can as easily convert a hardened profligate as the most correct moralist ; nay, that the former will much more probably be awakened from his security than the latter, because the very enormity of his sins serves as an alarm-bell to shake his sleepy conscience, or as the sting of scorpions to rack him with fierce pains of intolerable remorse ; and hence we hear it sometimes incautiously asserted that the man of sober, respectable character is in more danger of final perdition than the abandoned, confirmed libertine. What is the direct tendency of such a belief ? Why to establish the dangerous paradox, that the more a man sins the better for himself—it will quicken his conscience and arm it with mighty energy to drive him from his evil courses ; and thus his chance of salvation will be increased the deeper and deeper he plunges into iniquity. What an awful license such a belief must give to vicious propensities, what an additional impulse it must lend to the already imperious rage of appetite may easily be conceived. And yet nothing is more certain, if we are to believe our text and the facts occurring to our daily observation, than that the more a man sins the harder he grows, that every new sin stupefies and indurates the conscience, renders a man's retreat more difficult and improbable, and his final ruin more fatally certain. We may illustrate the two cases thus. Heaping sin after sin upon the conscience, may be compared to heaping green wood upon a few coals. The more you throw on, the more you crush the coals, and the greater danger of putting out the fire altogether. If however, the feeble heat should not expire under this incumbent weight, but should by great good fortune once ignite the wood contiguous to it, then all the oppressive heap serves as so much aliment to feed the flame, and to increase the greatness and heat of the fire. So a profligate's conscience has the almost certain prospect of being seared in final obduracy. But if by one of those astonishing acts of God's special mercy which it pleases him sometimes to work for the display of his power and goodness, that profligate's conscience is awakened, it will be apt to operate more powerfully upon him—apt to produce more awful agonies of fear, more convulsive struggles to effect an escape, deeper humiliation, and if he obtains pardon, more ecstatic gratitude, that such an enormous transgressor has been spared and purified and blessed. He has had much forgiven, he will therefore

love much.* But let every man beware how he tries the dreadful experiment of sinning in order to furnish himself with materials for repentance. Enough of these the most blameless will find who study the holy law of God, and compare it with the evil that is in their hearts. That delicacy of conscience which is the fruit and the reward of a moral life, will by the aid of God's Spirit, enable you to have a quicker and livelier feeling of what is evil, and to find as copious a source of godly sorrow and humiliation in the secret sins of your heart, as the gross transgressor finds in the recollection of his scarlet and crimson sins. Never have I heard from the lips, never have I read in the secret diary of any penitent prodigal, such deep, heart-touching confessions of inward depravity and self-loathing, as appears in the journals of Edwards and Brainerd and Martyn and Payson, men who were preserved comparatively pure and free of vicious habits from their tender years. The profligate *may* escape; but he will have reason to remember all his life time, that he has escaped as by fire. Like one of Milton's infernal potentates, he bears on his marred visage the signals of his unrighteous battle with Heaven.

———His face
Deep scars of thunder have intrenched.

—He will have cause to bemoan while he lives his career of profligacy. He will be "made to possess the iniquities of his youth" † in bodily diseases, a shattered constitution, shame for past dishonor, past injuries to others—injuries alas! irreparable; injuries to those who are dead, and therefore out of the reach of his tardy retribution—injuries to those who are living, but irremediably blasted in fortune and reputation, or unconquerably fortified in vice and infidelity.‡ He will find himself reaping the bitter fruits of early crimes, perhaps in the rebellion or lewd lives of his children, vitiated by his bad example and his cruel neglect—in a soiled and polluted imagination, and the

* For edifying examples of such wonderful transformations of character by the power of religion, I would refer the young man to the lives of Lord Rochester, Col. Gardiner, Capt. Wilson, Wm. Howard and Jno. Newton.

† Job xiii, 26.

‡ Mr. Newton, in the narrative of his early life, which has all the fascination of a novel, makes the mournful confession, that, after his conversion he tried to reclaim those whose faith he had overthrown—but in vain.—They laughed him to scorn! So much easier did he find it to poison than to cure—to demolish than rebuild. The extinction of the spark of virtue is like the extinction of the precious spark of life:

"* * * once put out—

I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume."

pestilent and contaminating recollection of past abominations. These may make him go mourning all his days. To cleanse this heart, this Augean stable where foul lusts have held their abode for many years, will furnish him with Herculean labor to the end of his life. Oh! what untimely, unwelcome intrusions will the visions of former riot make upon his soul, perhaps in his most hallowed moments, perhaps in the very attitude of devotion! How much work will he have to do in keeping out these vile thoughts? How will they with impudent freedom rush unbidden into the breast that once harbored, but would now fain exclude them, and with their harpy touch defile the sanctuary of the soul, and the very offering that is there burning on the altar of God!

*Diripiuntque dapes, contactuque omnia fœdant
Immundo.*

Oh then will the reclaimed profligate bemoan himself that he ever laid up within him such materials for shame and sorrow, and will envy those whose youth unstained by vice, has never entailed upon them such an inheritance of guilty recollections. You may say that these things serve to humble him. Yes they do, but they often keep him mourning and prostrate, ashamed to lift up his head or exert his hands, when he ought to be up and doing, rejoicing and praising, and acting for his God.

But supposing the hardened sinner's conscience to awake, is he sure that it will awake to repentance? Is he sure that it will not awake to horror and desperation? Is he sure that it will not, like Cain's, drive him out from the presence of God? That he will not quickly draw down again over his eyes, the vail which had been for a moment drawn up, but disclosed prospects too horrible for contemplation? Is he sure that an insulted, aggrieved and outraged conscience will not like the ill-boding owl, scream in his ears the shrill note of despair, of sin beyond the reach of God's mercy, sin inexpiable even by the blood of Christ, until it urges him like Judas over the precipice of self-murder!







PASTORAL LETTER 4

OF

THE MOST REVEREND,

THE

ARCHBISHOP OF BALTIMORE,

AND

THE RIGHT REVEREND,

THE BISHOPS

OF THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH,

IN THE

United States of America;

ASSEMBLED IN PROVINCIAL COUNCIL, IN THE CITY OF BALTIMORE, IN
THE MONTH OF APRIL 1837,

TO THE

CLERGY AND LAITY OF THEIR CHARGE.

For which cause I also suffer these things; but I am not ashamed. For I know whom I have believed, and I am certain that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day. II. Tim. i. 12.

For of these sort are they who creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, who are led away with divers desires.

* * * * *

But they shall proceed no farther: for their folly shall be manifest to all men. * * *
But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long suffering, love, patience, persecutions, afflictions, * * * and out of them all the Lord delivered me. II. Tim. iii. 6, 9, 10, 11.

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THE PRELATES

WHO COMPOSED THE COUNCIL, WERE :

The Most Rev. SAMUEL ECCLESTON, Archbishop of Baltimore.

The Right Rev. JOHN ENGLAND, Bishop of Charleston.

The Right Rev. JOSEPH ROSATI, Bishop of St. Louis.

The Right Rev. BENEDICT JOSEPH FENWICK, Bishop of Boston.

The Right Rev. FRANCIS PATRICK KENRICK, Bishop of Arath, in partibus, Coadjutor to the *Right Rev.* HENRY CONWELL, Bishop of Philadelphia; and Administrator of that Diocess.

The Right Rev. JOHN B. PURCELL, Bishop of Cincinnati.

The Right Rev. GUY IGNATIUS CHABRAT, Bishop of Bolina, in partibus, and Coadjutor to the *Right Rev.* BENEDICT JOSEPH FLAGET, Bishop of Bardstown.

The Right Rev. SIMON GABRIEL BRUTÉ, Bishop of Vincennes.

The Right Rev. WILLIAM CLANCY, Bishop of Orio, in partibus, and Coadjutor to the *Right Rev.* JOHN ENGLAND, Bishop of Charleston.

The Right Rev. ANTHONY BLANC, Bishop of New Orleans.

THE ABSENT PRELATES WERE

* *The Right Rev.* BENEDICT JOSEPH FLAGET, Bishop of Bardstown.

† *The Right Rev.* JOHN B. M. DAVID, Bishop of Mauricastro, in partibus.

‡ *The Right Rev.* HENRY CONWELL, Bishop of Philadelphia.

§ *The Right Rev.* JOHN DUBOIS, Bishop of New-York.

|| *The Right Rev.* MICHAEL PORTIER, Bishop of Mobile.

¶ *The Right Rev.* FREDERICK REZE, Bishop of Detroit.

* Absent in Rome, with permission,

† Formerly coadjutor to the Bishop of Bardstown, which coadjutorship he resigned on account of age and infirmity.

‡ Retired from active duty, having lost his sight.

§ Sent a proctor with a letter stating the cause of his absence.

|| Detained on his journey by disappointment of conveyance.

¶ Arrived in Baltimore, but was obliged to leave the city on urgent business, with the permission of the council.

OFFICERS.

PROMOTERS. { *The Right Rev.* B. J. FENWICK, Bishop of Boston.
 { *The Very Rev.* LEWIS DELUOL, D. D. and V. G.

SECRETARY. *The Rev.* EDWARD DAMPHOUX, D. D. St. Peters Balto.

ASSISTANT DO. *The Rev.* CHARLES WHITE, Cathedral, Baltimore.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES. *The Rev.* FRANCIS L'HOMME, St. Mary's Baltimore.

CHANTERS. { *The Rev.* JOHN RANDANNE, and
 { *The Rev.* PETER FREDET.

CONSULTORS

Invited by the prelates, to aid by their advice in the congregations, where the several questions were discussed previous to their decision by the council.

* *The very Reverend* FELIX VARELA, V. G. of the Diocess of New York.

The very Reverend LEWIS DELUOL, D. D. Superior of the Sulpicians, Baltimore.

The very Reverend Father WILLIAM M'SHERRY, Provincial of the Society of Jesus in Maryland:

The very Reverend Father P. VERHÆGEN, Provincial of the Society of Jesus in Missouri.

The Reverend JOHN HICKEY, Superior of the Sisters of Charity.

The Reverend THOMAS BUTLER, Superior of the College of St. Mary near Emmitsburg.

<i>The Reverend</i> JOHN J. CHANCHE, President of St. Mary's College, Baltimore.	}	Theologians to the Archbishop of Baltimore.
<i>The Reverend</i> PETER S. SCHREIBER of the Cathedral.		

† to the Bishop of Charleston.

The Reverend REGIS LOISEL; to the Bishop of St. Louis.

The Reverend THOMAS MULLEDY, S. J. Rector of Georgetown College, to the Bishop of Boston.

The very Reverend LEWIS DEBARTH, St. John's, Baltimore, to the Bishop of Arath.

The Reverend STEPHEN THEODORE BADIN, to the Bishop of Cincinnati.

The Reverend IGNATIUS A. REYNOLDS, of Louisville, to the Bishop of Bolina.

The very Reverend PETER R. KENRICK, St. Mary's, Philadelphia, to the Bishop of Vincennes.

The very Reverend JOHN HUGHES, St. John's Philadelphia, to the Bishop of Orio.

The Reverend AUGUSTIN VAROT, to the Bishop of New Orleans.

* Sent as his Proctor by the Bishop of New York, with such powers as the Council might see proper to accord to him; admitted, as proctor with a consultive voice.

† The Bishop of Charleston not meeting upon his arrival in Baltimore, from Hayti, where he had been on special duty, *the Reverend* RICHARD S. BAKER of Charleston whom he had designated as his Theologian, invited *the very Reverend* JOHN POWER, D. D. and V. G. of New York, who was unable to accept the invitation.

The Reverend JOHN BARRY, Pastor of the church of the Holy Trinity in Augusta, Geo. was designated by the Bishop of Mobile as his Theologian.

PASTORAL LETTER.

REVEREND BRETHERN OF THE CLERGY,
AND BELOVED OF THE LAITY:

Peace be to you, and faith with charity from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, with the consolations of the Holy Ghost.

Assembled to consult for the welfare of that portion of the church entrusted to our care, we cannot separate for the purpose of renewing our labours amongst you, without yielding to an impulse that we feel of addressing to you our joint exhortation.—We are daily more and more consoled in witnessing the progress of religion amongst you, though this joy is mingled with affliction at finding how much remains to be done, more than we are yet able to perform; as also at beholding the various obstacles which the enemy of souls creates, for the purpose of retarding the work of the Lord, amongst us.

Amongst these obstacles we are painfully constrained to notice the misrepresentation and persecution to which you and we have been exposed since our last council. We advert to this topic with deep regret: but any effort on our part to conceal from the world this melancholy fact, to which its perpetrators have given such blazing notoriety would be equally useless, as the attempt to disguise those feelings with which we are affected, and which we may, by God's aid, in a great degree restrain, but which it is not in our power utterly to destroy.

We are filled with regret because no sacrifices or exertions that we could make would be sufficient to prevent the baleful consequences which must necessarily flow from the conduct of our gainsayers, and which we see it has already extensively and unhappily produced in our republics. The affection of fellow-citizens is destroyed, the offices of charity are neglected the kindly intercourse of neighbours has been interrupted, suspicion, jealousy and hatred have succeeded

to confidence, mutual respect and affection; the demon of discord has usurped that station where the angel of peace abode: and that day has gone by, when every American citizen could truly say, that whatever may be the religious opinion which he entertained, or whatever the form of worship which he followed, he enjoyed in full freedom the opportunity of securing for himself what he vindicated for others, the communion with his God in that way which his conviction or his taste might prefer. It has even been loudly proclaimed that our religion should not enjoy toleration in fact, whilst, in theory, the constitution of our several states, proclaim to the world, that as catholics, we have the same rights respecting religion that are fully and peaceably enjoyed by our fellow-citizens of every other denomination, by whatever style they may be described whether Christian, Hebrew, or Unbeliever; and whilst the constitution of our federal Government in addition declares, that "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Yes, beloved brethren: our religious rights are secured to us by those same instruments which secure to our fellow-citizens and to ourselves, all those other valuable possessions which have been acquired for them and for us, by the lives, by the fortunes, and the sacred honour of that devoted assembly who though widely differing in religion, yet were in love of country, a band of brothers. And he who would rashly pluck our franchise from the frame of the constitution would loosen the entire mass and facilitate the confusion and abstraction of the remainder. Whatever may be the dispositions or efforts of those whose misconduct we bewail they cannot despoil us without insuring the general ruin. Our regret does not however arise from any apprehension of civil disfranchisement of ourselves, but we lament that a bad spirit has been evoked, and that its pestilential blasts have contaminated our atmosphere, that the peace of society is endangered, the domestic circle is disturbed, and that charity has departed from amongst us.

But when we look abroad and observe the nations in which the name of America was symbolic of brotherhood, and where the contemplation of our peace and

of our prosperity induced statesmen to seek their cause, and when the conviction had been nearly produced, that these blessings were the result of our wise abstinence from persecution for the sake of creed; when the admiration and the respect which had taken possession of men's minds, were leading them to imitate our policy! How are matters changed?—Gratified at the exhibition of our weakness they exult in our shame and they predict our confusion and our fall. They avow indeed that, blinded by prejudice and infuriated by the spirit of party which was miscalled religious zeal, other men in other days, made upon our predecessors in the faith, assaults similar to those now made upon us; and that, when under its influence having with the gall of bitterness indited upon their statute books laws of acrimony, of plunder and of affliction, they strove by new misrepresentations to palliate their unjustifiable proceedings, and by the aid of falsehood they sought to give to persecution the appearance of self protection. Time, investigation and reflection have however proved to the children the injustice of their fathers and caused them to purge away from their records, not only in this country but in England, the foul enactments and to bear honourable testimony to the innocence of those who had been oppressed: yet it is at such a moment as this, when Britain, blushing at her former folly and injustice and imitating what America had done fifty years before, abandons her false position and takes an honourable rank amongst the nations, that it is sought to drive our states from the lofty station which they have hitherto held, to that place of degradation from which she has just removed: and we are filled with regret at the humiliation to which a land that we love is exposed, when they who once admired it, point thereto, asking with amazement; how it can be possible for men of reading and of sagacity to be duped at this side of the Atlantic by charges refuted in Europe more than a century since; abandoned even by the party which originally invented them, disbelieved by every one who has the most moderate pretensions to information; charges to advance which even in an exceedingly modified shape, requires at present, the most desperate effort of the boldest and most interested

partizans of a body now making its mightiest struggle for existence. The people of other nations are astonished at beholding those charges renewed here, in language far more vulgar and obscene than ever disgraced their worst exhibition in Europe. We avow that we witness this with shame and with regret, and the pain which we feel is caused not by any apprehension that the falsehood could be ultimately received as truth, amongst a people, who however they may be led astray for a moment, will always return to examine maturely that in which they are interested, but we are mortified, that because of this unseemly effort, the American name may be exposed to reproach when it had been hitherto respected.

We regret this spirit of misrepresentation upon other accounts; though we foresee that it will ultimately produce effects beneficial to ourselves. The love of truth exists amongst our fellow-citizens, and it becomes a more fervid attachment when the effect of misrepresentation has been discovered: yet until that discovery is made, many who are disposed to enter upon enquiry hesitate, and even those who are convinced have some reluctance and vacillation. Misrepresentation spreads a thick mist around the vestibule of truth; it there exhibits appalling though shadowy forms to terrify those who would approach. And we regret to add from our positive knowledge that it is not by phantoms only that the approach is guarded; for though the laws of the land do not arm the persecutor with the sword, yet have the contrivances and exertions of individuals and of associations, in many instances, supplied this deficiency by their own acts of persecution.

Yet brethren in the midst of those trials we have received much comfort from the God of all consolation. This very misrepresentation of our tenets of our principles and of our practices exhibits the best proof that the doctrine which we believe and teach cannot be successfully assailed by fair argument nor our principles rendered odious by honest exposition. It is therefore that forms of belief which we reject as absurd are imputed to us, so that our assailants by refuting them may obtain the semblance of a victory over us: it is for that reason that practices which we

abhor are charged upon us, so that covered with a mantle of iniquity which we detest, we may be held up to the execration of a people desirous of paying its just tribute to virtue: and since our own conduct as citizens was not liable to reproach, it was deemed requisite to libel the governments of Europe which profess our faith, and to feign imaginary conspiracies in order to excite amongst our fellow-citizens the prejudice of the thoughtless and the fears of the patriotic. Even men who assumed the garb of religion and who affected extraordinary zeal and extravagant piety sent forth to the public as solemn truths, statements whose falsehood they could have easily detected, and of which it is scarcely possible to imagine them ignorant. If they who, through prejudice, persuaded themselves that they would do a service to God and to society by our extermination, and who most laboriously sought to accomplish this purpose, had convincing proof of our being involved in error or engaged in crime, they would have unhesitatingly produced it; and this proof, when manifested, would have made its due impression upon the public mind. Our assailants wanted neither the will nor the ability, and we are consoled at the evidence which their failure must ultimately give to the world, of the truth of our doctrines and the correctness of our principles.

We are indeed comparatively few amongst the millions of our fellow-citizens; the greater portion of our flocks are in the humble, laborious, but useful occupations of life: we do not aspire to power, we do not calculate by what process we should be able, at some future day, to control the councils of the republic, neither do we combine, to raise the members of our society to places of trust, of honor, or of profit: we seek not to make friends for our church by exhibiting the ability of our party to reward and to sustain its benefactors; but, relying upon the protection of our God, we endeavour to live in peace with our brethren whilst we are occupied in our several appropriate duties. And we have been consoled by the manifestation of his fatherly care; especially when our assailants opened their mouth and would seem ready to destroy us: the number of our friends has increased,

the good and the wise and the reflecting crowded around us for our defence: though they dissented from our creed, in many instances they have generously vindicated our rights: and the advantages that we have gained from the sympathy and the affection of one portion of our fellow-citizens, has more than compensated for what we have endured from the hatred of the other. Nor will this be the term of those beneficial results. Such events cannot occur in the midst of a people free, educated and desirous of information, without creating enquiry. Calm and unprejudiced investigation is all that we believe to be necessary, with that grace which Heaven is always ready to bestow, for attaining the discovery of truth. Many have already been roused to enquiry; several misconceptions have been destroyed, various early and long standing prejudices have been laid aside, numberless mistakes have been corrected, a spirit of examination is abroad; we have rejoiced at its excitement, because we have felt its beneficial effects, and we anticipate still happier consequences from its continuation, its activity and its increase. Thus, always, beloved brethren, our kind and providential father, blends some consolations with his chastisements.

And this view leads us to the consideration of our duty under the circumstances in which we are placed.

“Take up your yoke,” said our blessed Lord, “and learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls.”* “Shall not my soul be subject to God? for from him is my salvation:”† Asks the royal prophet, and he answers, “Be thou O my soul subject to God, for from him is my patience.”‡ And when in another place he prays “Deliver me, O my God out of the hand of the sinner and of the unjust,” § he exhibits his own duty; “for thou art my patience, O Lord: my hope, O Lord, from my youth.”|| It is by the injustice of others, that the Lord proves and makes perfect those whom he brings to his service; and therefore the wise man exhorts us: “Incline thine ear and receive the words of understanding, and make not haste in the time of clouds. Wait on God with patience: join thyself to God and endure,

* Matt. xi. 29. † Ps. lxi. 1. ‡ Ps. lxi. 6. § Ps. lxx. 4. || Ps. lxx. 5.

that thy life may be increased in the latter end. Take all that shall be brought upon thee: and in thy sorrow endure, and in thy humiliation, keep patience. For gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation.”* The merciful father whom we serve, requires from us this proof of our attachment, and he so orders every thing in his providence as to produce lasting benefit for those who, resigned to his dispensation, observe his injunction. Hence, the apostle Peter tells us to be “merciful, modest, humble, not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing, for unto this we are called that we may inherit a blessing.”† And in answer to an objection natural to most men, he adds, “And who is he that can hurt you if you be zealous of good? But if also you suffer any thing for justice sake; blessed are you, and be not afraid of their fear, and be not troubled, but sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts, * * * that whereas they speak evil of you, they may be ashamed who falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, doing well (if such be the will of God,) to suffer, than doing ill, because Christ also died once for our sins, the just for the unjust.”‡ Upon the same principle St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians, “See that none render evil for evil to any man: but ever follow that which is good towards each other, and towards all men.”§ These injunctions are in conformity with that of our blessed Lord, “Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust.”|| The best refutation which we can oppose to the slanders with which we are assailed will be the exhibition of the christian virtues in our conduct. Let your lives be the answer to those who vituperate us. “Be you then perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect;”¶ and “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father who is in heaven.”** Thus will you insure blessings for yourselves, and, perhaps, convert your opponents.—This, beloved brethren, is the vengeance of christianity.

* Eccli. ii. 2, 3, 4, 5. † I. Pet. iii. 8, 9. ‡ I. Pet. iii. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. § I. Thess. v. 15. || Matt. v. 44, 45. ¶ Matt. v. 4. ** Matt. v. 16.

It may not however be amiss for us here to record some instances of the misrepresentation and persecution which have called forth these remarks.—We shall select but two out of many—The first is the destruction of the Ursuline Convent on Mount Benedict, near Boston, on the night of the 11th of August, 1834. The ruins of this establishment yet blacken the vicinity of Bunkers's Hill, and cast a dark shade upon the soil of Massachusetts. You need not our recital of the dastardly assault, the extensive robbery, the deliberate arson, the wanton insolence, the cold cruelty and the horrid sacrilege of that awful night.

We shall quote the words of one of the few members of the legislature of that State, who exhibited themselves an honorable exception to the body in which they were found. This gentleman told them upon their floor. "You may go from Maine to the Gulph of Mexico, and you cannot find an act similar to this—the destruction of an institution for instruction, inhabited by females, mostly children; religion was trampled upon; the Bible was destroyed; the tomb was broken open; the ashes of the dead were insulted; the females were driven from their beds at midnight, half naked; whilst the mob was exulting, shouting, dancing and triumphing amongst the warm ashes of the ruin which they had made, amidst a community, the most enlightened in the United States; ten thousand persons were looking on, and not one arm was raised to protect these females and their property. If, sir, the stain of blood is not upon the land, the stain of cruelty is there."

It was planned in the vicinity, and executed within view of the capital of the New England States; a city which aspired to the character of liberality, and had an ambition to be ranked amongst the seats of literature, of science, and of taste. The most unfounded calumnies had been previously circulated, in order to furnish a pretext to achieve what had been plotted, but even this pretext had been removed, for the local magistracy had examined into the alleged grounds, and declared themselves fully convinced of their falsehood.

In this case therefore there was a blending of misrepresentation and of persecution of the worst description.—Would to God that we could rest here! But

of what use would it be for us to endeavour to hide that which has astonished distant nations, and which a thousand public journals have spread in such a variety of languages, before the eyes of the civilized world?—

The declaration of a most respectable committee appointed at a public meeting of the citizens of Boston, to investigate the case, after the destruction had been perpetrated; having refuted the calumnies and described the outrage, add the following expression of their sentiments:

“ The fact that the dwelling of inoffensive females and children, guiltless of wrong to the persons, property or reputation of others, and reposing in fancied security, under the protection of the law, has been thus assaulted by a riotous mob, and ransacked, plundered and burnt to the ground, and its terrified inmates, in the dead hour of the night driven from their beds into the fields; and that this should be done within the limits of one of the most populous towns in the commonwealth, and in the midst of an assembled multitude of spectators; that the perpetrators should have been engaged for *seven* hours or more in the work of destruction, with hardly an effort to prevent or arrest them; that many of them should afterwards be so far sheltered by public sympathy or opinion, as to render the ordinary means of detection ineffectual; and that the sufferers are entitled to no legal redress from the public, for this outrage against their persons and destruction of their property, is an event of fearful import, as well as of the profoundest shame and humiliation.”

And this declaration was followed by solemn and repeated judicial enquiries and trials, in the process of which, however, full license was afforded to insult the feelings and the religion of that community whose property was destroyed and some of whose members died soon after the hardships which they suffered on the occasion; whilst miscreants who boasted of their activity and who were identified by most respectable witnesses, as being leaders in the transaction, were not only judicially absolved, but were rewarded by the spontaneous contributions of that public which thronged round the court of justice, to rejoice with them upon their deliverance. For our own part, we had no desire for their

punishment; but we feel the justice of an opinion, that has been frequently expressed, that it would have been infinitely more creditable to the State of Massachusetts, if they had never been brought to trial.

It is equally notorious that notwithstanding every effort to obstruct the expression of what it could not deny, viz. the innocence of our religion and guilt of the aggressors, the legislature of that State was fully convinced of the falsehood of the pretences and the atrocity of the outrage, and it declared that the convent was destroyed by a *lawless* and *ferocious* mob; and declared that it “felt itself bound in support of the constitution, and in *vindication* of the honor of the commonwealth to declare its deliberate and indignant condemnation of such an atrocious infraction of the laws.” And yet we must avow that upon reading the list of the enormous majority which decided against affording any redress or compensation, we lament to find that it contains names which we did not expect to see upon it. And if the continuation of the same conduct be evidence of the existence of the same disposition, our opinion respecting that State and its legislature must continue unchanged.

In a committee of the legislature, appointed to consider the petition, for compensation, presented by the sufferers, a majority reported that though the injured persons could not claim indemnity for their losses from the government as a matter of right, yet, to enforce respect for religious freedom, and the security of life, liberty, property, “as also to do what yet may be done, to soften the reproach which rests upon the character of the state, by reason of the aforesaid outrage,” a gratuity should be given.—A minority of the committee reported against granting this relief; sustaining its recommendation, amongst other grounds, upon the following:—viz. “*That Catholics acknowledging, as they do, the supremacy of a foreign potentate or power, could not claim under our government the protection as citizens of the commonwealth, but were entitled only to our countenance and aid so far as the rites of national hospitality might serve to dictate.*”

We scarcely need observe to you, that this passage opens with what is notoriously untrue, viz. “*That we acknowledge the supremacy of a foreign potentate or power,*” in that sense which can interfere with our duty

as citizens. We owe no religious allegiance to any State in this Union, nor to its general government. No one of them claims any supremacy or dominion over us in our spiritual or ecclesiastical concerns: nor does it claim any such right or power over any of our fellow citizens, of what soever religion they may be: and if such a claim was made, neither would our fellow citizens, nor would we submit thereto. They and we, by our constitutional principles, are free to give this ecclesiastical supremacy to whom we please, or to refuse it to every one, if we so think proper: but, they and we owe civil and political allegiance to the several States in which we reside, and also, to our general government. When, therefore, using our undoubted right, we acknowledge the spiritual and ecclesiastical supremacy of the chief bishop of our universal church, the Pope or bishop of Rome, we do not thereby forfeit our claim to the civil and political protection of the commonwealth; for, we do not detract from the allegiance to which the temporal governments are plainly entitled, and which we cheerfully give; nor do we acknowledge any civil or political supremacy, or power over us in any foreign potentate or power, though that potentate might be the chief pastor of our church.

Moreover, it is a notorious fact, that upon preparing to be admitted to citizenship, every Catholic emigrant distinctly renounces upon oath, all allegiance in civil and political concerns to any foreign prince, power, state, or potentate.

The passage also contains another manifest falsehood and absurdity, viz., that Catholics cannot claim protection under our government as citizens.—Now, it is notorious that they who are born in the country are citizens by the fact of their birth, and respecting Catholic emigrants, the government fully aware of their spiritual and ecclesiastical relations to the head of their church, has deliberately admitted them to become citizens; and therefore it is manifestly absurd to assert, that citizens can not, under our government, claim protection in that character in which they have been admitted by the government itself.

This attempt to proclaim the members of our church actually deprived of their rights of citizenship, was adding new and more extensive and more odious persecution to

the atrocity of the cruel sacrilege for which they refused redress, and although the majority of the legislature repudiated this outrageous and absurd passage; yet, by an overwhelming vote, they acceded to the sentiments of its compilers, in withholding compensation and to the present day, the Catholics of the diocese of Boston are left without redress, notwithstanding the valueless declaration of the legislature, "in vindication of the commonwealth, of its deliberate and indignant condemnation of such an atrocious violation of the laws."

The other instance which we would specify is one which though exceedingly to be lamented, is not of a novel character. It is the developement in this country of a spirit which has during ages frequently manifested itself in other regions. It has been exhibited in New-York, principally in the patronage afforded by the religious teachers of highly respectable bodies of our fellow citizens, to degraded beings of the most profligate class, who calumniated the most pure and useful institutions. Did not the history of other places exhibit to us similar revolting instances, we should indeed question the possibility of what we have there witnessed. Men reputed to have understanding and considered to be of good character, vouching to the world for the correctness of charges of the most atrocious nature, made against the most respectable clergymen and religious communities, whose members have during more than a century, by their personal virtue, by their public charities and by their self devotion, won the esteem and applause not only of the members of their own church but of those who were opposed thereto; charges which, if true, involved the condemnation of the city which tolerated the existence of the criminals against whom those charges were made; charges, which necessarily implicated the public authorities of Canada and the whole British government, as abettors of the grossest crimes; charges whose falsehood was exposed by American Protestants, the impossibility of whose truth was attested by Canadian Protestants, and whose imputation was indignantly rejected by both. Yet has the world witnessed those charges again brought forward with unblushing front, by obscure impostors of the most vile description,

whose notorious profligacy has been testified by the voice of the city which they polluted and slandered; beings in whom it was hard to say whether vice, or recklessness, or insanity predominated; and those charges sustained, perhaps suggested, and pertinaciously adhered to after the demonstration of their absurdity, by men whose station supposes intelligence and integrity.

In making the effort to persuade ourselves that men of this class were imposed upon and continued to be the dupes of such wretched beings, what a picture of human weakness do we contemplate? Yet assenting to this supposition, we may, perhaps, be able to account for the general exertions made by the pulpit and the press, to exhibit us as what we are not, and to excite against us unmerited hostility and persecution. We should, moreover, in this extraordinary supposition, cease to be astonished at the credulity and delusion of many of our fellow citizens, and we could imagine some cause for that want of charity in our regard, whose prevalence we witness and deplore.

Yet, whatever allowances we may feel disposed to make in favor of those who persecute and calumniate us and who speak all manner of evil falsely concerning us, we must point out two exceedingly bad consequences of this misrepresentation. The first is the extensive corruption of morality; the other is the encouragement of unbelief.

Nothing is more surely calculated for the destruction of that purity which is the soul of virtue, than the perusal of lascivious tales; and never did the most unprincipled author compile any work more foul in this respect, than the productions of our assailants, and never was there exhibited a more voracious appetite for mischievous aliment than that which they have unfortunately excited. With what avidity have not the numerous and heavy editions of those immodest fictions been taken up, disseminated through the country, purchased and introduced in the name of religion amongst the aged and the young of both sexes, in every state and territory of our Union? "The father waketh for the daughter when no man knoweth," says the wise man, in the book of inspiration, and the care for

her taketh away his sleep * * in her virginity, lest she should be corrupted, and having a husband, lest she should misbehave herself."* And yet he places these obscene libels in her hands as books of religious instruction! "Hedge in thine ears with thorns; hear not a wicked tongue,"† was one of his admonitions. "On a daughter that turneth not away herself, set a strict watch: lest finding an opportunity she abuse herself: take heed of the impudence of her eyes and wonder not if she slight thee."‡ Here we perceive the consequence of allowing the imagination to be contaminated by familiarity with dangerous reading. And we are persuaded that the cause of pure morality and the security of domestic happiness have seldom been more grievously injured, than by the contrivers and the abettors of those indecent falsehoods, which in the name of religion are promulgated against our institutions. Affecting the guardianship of virtue, they undermine its foundations.

The effort for our destruction is a charge against five-sixths of the christian world. It is not a charge made exclusively upon those of our church, who in the various parts of the globe form a body of fully two-thirds of the whole number that profess the religion of the Saviour; but it is an accusation against all those who, though separated from our communion, believe in those doctrines and adhere to those practices which the compilers of those libels proclaim to be antichristian; and when their numbers are added to ours, the aggregate is at least the amount that we have stated. What an encouragement is it then, to the opponents of Christianity when our revilers proclaim that five-sixths of the christian world are immoral hypocrites or the dupes of such monsters of iniquity? Yet such is the accusation seriously made! We have then, since the production of those charges, and we believe, encouraged by their promulgation, beheld organized bands of unbelievers, systematically arrayed, occupying the ground thus yielded to them by those who affect such zeal for christianity; we have seen them celebrating with anticipated but indeed premature triumph the destruction of the christian name. How will our ac-

* Eccli. xlii. 9, 10. † Eccli. xxviii. 2, 8. ‡ Eccli. xxvi. 13, 14.

users dislodge them from their position, when they exultingly proclaim that the principles and practice of five-sixths of the christian world during three centuries; and of entire Christendom, during the preceding ages, have been grossly corrupt, necessarily demoralizing, and in direct opposition to what they call the spirit of christianity?

We shall dwell no longer upon this painful subject. We have before us the admonition of the Saviour, "if the world hate you, know ye that it hated me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember my word that I said to you: the servant is not greater than his master, if they have persecuted me they will also persecute you; if they have kept my word they will keep yours also. But these things will they do to you for my name's sake, because they know not him who sent me."* "These things I have spoken to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you shall have distress: but have confidence, I have overcome the world."† We claim protection from the laws of our country; we have the sympathy of a large portion of our fellow-citizens; our trials will have an end, and like our divine Saviour we too shall overcome the world; but our victory is to be achieved not by the arm of the flesh but by the sword of the spirit and the might of the Lord of Hosts. "In our patience we must possess our souls."‡ Our forefathers in the faith, the immediate disciples of the Saviour, the apostles themselves, were vilified, misrepresented and suffered patiently for sake of him who for their sake was made willingly a victim upon the cross. The apostle of nations says "we are fools for Christ's sake, * * even unto this hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and we are buffeted, and have no fixed abode, and we labour working with our own hands: we are reviled and we bless, we are persecuted and we suffer it, we are blasphemed and we entreat; we are made as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all even until now."§ In his second epistle to his beloved Timothy he assures him that

* John xv. 18, 19, 20, 21. † John xvii. 33. ‡ Luke xxi. 19. § 1. Cor. iv. 10, 11, 12, 13.

“all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”* Whence the prince of the apostles, Peter, admonishes his flock. “Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a railer, or a coveter of other men’s things: but if as a christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name,”† and therefore we read of this apostle and his associate, in the Acts: that when they were scourged “they indeed went from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.”‡ Thus in every age, from that period to the present, we find that in some region or other does the Lord call upon some of his followers to endure mockery and reproof and even death for his sake, but every where we find that not only is the blood of the martyr the enrichment of the soil of christianity, but the imitation of the meekness of the Saviour by the professor of his law, is the edification of the world and the triumph of religion. Let the models here proposed be then examples for our imitation. Let the maxims here inculcated be the rules of our conduct, and we shall walk worthy of the vocation in which we are called, and of the saints with whom we are, by our doctrine, associated.

Far be it from us, beloved brethren, even were it in our power, to seek the injury of those persons by whom we are assailed. They who belong not to the household of the faith are daily called from the east and from the west, to be seated at the tables from which not only were they estranged but to which they had declared hostility. How many such glorious conversions have we not witnessed? And has it not been so from the beginning? “Saul as yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues that if he found any men or women of this way he might bring them to Jerusalem.”§ Yet the Lord declared to Ananias “this man is to me a vessel of election to carry my name before kings and gentiles and the children of Israel, for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.”¶ And how nobly did he fulfil his glorious commission? Yet when “the witnesses laid down their gar-

*I. Tim. iii. 12. †I. Peter iv. 15, 16. ‡Acts v. 41. §Acts ix. 1, 2. ¶Acts ix. 15, 16.

ments at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul and who was consenting to the death of Stephen"* whilst they stoned him; did not this Saul stand forth as the prominent persecutor of our holy religion? How was God glorified and the church aided by his conversion? How noble, how becoming was the demeanor of the first martyr of the church, when imitating the example of his master, whilst he was overwhelmed by the missiles of his foes, he besought his Saviour, saying, "O Lord lay not this sin to their charge?"† And the prayer of Stephen gave a Paul to christianity. Beloved brethren, his conduct is the exhibition of our duty.

We now, brethren, address you with affectionate interest upon another topic. We are gratified by the spiritual progress of numbers, but deeply affected by the negligence of too many who, however sound may be their faith, yet do not reduce their principles to practice. We are aware of the many difficulties which exist, because of the fewness of the clergy, the remoteness of churches, the sparseness of the flocks, and a variety of other causes. Yet, brethren, we are constrained to say, that there exists much room for some reproof because of negligence even where those obstacles are not found. Attend, we entreat you, to the admonition of St. James: "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man be a hearer of the word and not a doer he shall be compared to a man beholding his own countenance in a glass. For he beheld himself and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was. But he that hath looked into the perfect law of liberty, and hath continued therein, not becoming a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work; this man shall be blessed indeed."‡ And again, "For even as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead."§ We have noticed with regret that even where the belief of doctrine was in full vigour, the duties of religion were not always regularly fulfilled, but yielding to the tempter or corrupted by evil communication; even they who professed the word of truth rejected wisdom and discipline, and wearied themselves in the way of iniquity and destruction. And whilst we are consoled and edified by the visible increase of piety with which our regions have been blessed, we would

* Acts vii. 57. † Acts vii. 59, . ‡ James i. 22, 23, 24, 25. § James ii. 26.

call earnestly upon those who as yet seem insensible. We would lay before them the assurance of the Lord by this prophet: "But if the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed, and keep all my commandments, and do judgment and justice living, he shall live and he shall not die. I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done: in his justice which he hath wrought he shall live. It is not my will that a sinner shall die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should be converted from his ways and live?"* Well may we address such of you as have been unwise, in this tender strain of invitation used by the Lord himself: "Be converted and do penance for all your iniquities and iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, by which you have transgressed, and make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit, and why will you die, O house of Israel? For I desire not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; return ye and live."† To those who feel that they have "wearied themselves in the way of iniquity and destruction and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord they have not known."‡ The Saviour specially addresses those affectionate words: "Come to me all you that labour and are heavy burdened, and I will refresh you."§

We should all exert ourselves to establish the dominion of religion in our souls. The end thereof is, by serving God in the manner that he desires, to eradicate vice and purify ourselves from sin. Born children of wrath, dead in our offences and sins, we can be raised up and quickened only through the exceeding charity wherewith he loves us and gives us the abundant riches of his grace in his bounty towards us in Christ Jesus.

Religion is not satisfied with the mere rooting out of vice, there must be efforts to do positive good. It is therefore that the Lord says, by the prophet Isaias, "Wash yourselves, be clear, take away the evil of your devices from my eyes: cease to do perversely: learn to do well,"¶ and to the same effect the apostle St. Peter tells him that will love life and see good days, "Let him decline from evil, and do good, let him seek

* Ezech. xviii. 21, 22, 23. † Ezech. xviii. 30, 31, 32. ‡ Wisd. v. 7. § Mat. xi. 28. ¶ Isaias, i. 16, 17.

after peace and pursue it. Because the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and his ears unto their prayers: but the countenance of the Lord is upon them that do evil things.”* Upon the same principle it is declared by Ezekiel,† that besides doing penance for all his sins which he hath committed, the wicked man should “Keep all good commandments and do judgment and justice,” if he would obtain life, and again,‡ and when the wicked turneth himself from his wickedness which he hath wrought, and doeth judgment and justice: he shall save his soul alive.” The beloved disciple St. John, assures us,§ that “he that doth the will of God abideth for ever;” and again,|| “Know ye that every one also, who doth justice is born of God;”¶ “Little children, let no man deceive you. He that doth justice is just, even as God is just:” farther,** “And whatsoever we shall ask we shall receive of him: because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight.”†† “For this is the charity of God, that we keep his commandments.

The religious man then not only refrains from evil but he does good; he not only offends no man, but endeavours, as far as he is able, to do service to every one: he not only purifies himself and his dwelling from the filth of iniquity, but he enriches his abode and decorates his soul with ornaments of virtue. In his relation to society, he endeavours to do unto others as he would be done by, not only is he strictly just, but he is kind, merciful, compassionate, and charitable. To the state he is loyal, faithful, obedient and attached, using those rights which he possesses, not for the purpose of party, nor for the private emolument of himself or of his friends, but for the general welfare and advantage; discharging the duties of any office in which he may be placed, not capriciously, nor negligently, nor influenced by prejudice, or by partiality; but honestly without fear or favour, or affection, for the welfare of the people, the credit of the state and the approbation of his God. To his neighbours he is attentive, conciliating, respectful and useful: for his family industrious, affectionate and devoted, he feels the responsibility

* I. Pet. iii. 11, 12. † xviii. 21. ‡ xviii. 28. § I. John, ii. 16. || I. John, ii. 29. ¶ I. John, iii. 7. ** I. John, iii. 22. †† I. John, v. 3.

under which he is placed of guarding their health, of providing for their wants, of promoting their interest, of securing their prosperity, of watching over their education of superintending their discipline, of cultivating their minds, of regulating their morals, of winning their hearts to the love of virtue, and of leading them by his example in the path to heaven. These, beloved brethren are the important objects to which your earliest and most assiduous care should be devoted. And doing these things, you shall through the merits of your blessed Saviour obtain that glorious inheritance which he has purchased for you at the price of his blood, and the attainment of which is the chief object of religion.

But to secure this desirable end, we must use the proper means: and first, beloved brethren, we would remind you, that "our confidence must be through Christ towards God,"* for "we are not sufficient to think any thing of ourselves, as of ourselves; but, our sufficiency is from God."† Who hath delivered us from the powers of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of the son of his love; in whom we have redemption through his blood for the remission of sins. * * * † "and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace through the blood of his cross, both as to things in earth, and things in heaven." It is therefore that we can have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."§ "For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son: much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life and not only so, but we also glory in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received reconciliation." || For it is impossible, that with the blood of oxen and goats, sins should be taken away, wherefore; when he cometh into the world he saith, "sacrifice and oblation thou wouldest not: but, a body thou hast fitted to me: holocausts for sindid not please thee: then, said I, behold I come, in the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will O God * * * * In the which will we are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once."¶ But how once at the end of

* II. Cor. iii. 5. † Coloss. i. 13, 14. ‡ i. 20. § Rom. v. 10, 11. || Heb. x. 4, 5, 6, 7, 10. ¶ Heb. ix. 26.

ages he hath appeared for the destruction of sin by the sacrifice of himself. Therefore did the apostle St. Peter testify.* “This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders: which is become the head of the corner: neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to man whereby we must be saved.” Thus it is through the redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ, that we must have access to God for the remission of sins, and the grace to advance in virtue.

And this must be done by the belief of those doctrines which he has revealed, for the apostle assures us that “without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder to them that seek him.”† This was but publishing what the Saviour himself had declared, in that beautiful prayer which he addressed to his father at the termination of the discourse which he made to his disciples when, about to be taken from them, his affection was exhibited in extraordinary tenderness of expressions.‡ “Now this is eternal life, that they may know thee the only and true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” And to this end he besought,§ “Sanctify them in truth: thy word is truth.” || “And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me:¶ that they may all be one as thou, father in me, and I in thee: that they may also be one in us.” St. Paul exhibits to us the manner in which this apostolic testimony is given, as the foundation of faith, so that persons may be brought through the word of those apostles to believe in Christ.** “For whosoever shall call upon the name, of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they be sent? As it is written. How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, of them that bring the tidings of good things! But all do not obey the gospel. For Isaias saith: “Lord who hath believed our report? Faith then cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” And we find it recorded in the Acts, †† that Christ declared

* Acts, iv. 11, 12. † Heb. xi. 6. ‡ John, xvii. 3. § v. 17. || 20. ¶ 21.
** Rom. x. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. †† Acts, i. 8.

to those apostles, "You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth." St. Matthew informs us of what things they were to testify,* "And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying, all power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and behold, I am with you all days to the end of the world." But as they were a very limited number, they could not teach all nations, by their mere personal exertions; and since they were mortal, they could not continue teaching all days to the end of the world. To effect what he directed, therefore, he communicated to them the power of extending to others that authority which was contained in their own commission; as he came forth, sent by his father, not merely to instruct by his personal teaching, but to constitute other witnesses, with authority to testify by their teaching what he had said and done; wherefore St. John informs us,† "The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord, He therefore said to them again, peace be to you, as the father sent me, so I also send you." In the same gospel we are instructed by himself of the manner in which the father sent him. ‡ "For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak, and I know that his commandment is life everlasting. The things therefore that I speak, even as the father said unto me do I speak." Thus we find the apostles fulfilling his views by immediately associating several well instructed members of the faithful into their commission, ordaining them to be their co-operators for the purpose of spreading abroad the good tidings into every nation, and of perpetuating the testimony to the end of the world. Thus St. Paul directs Timothy,§ "The things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same command to faithful men who may be fit to teach others also." And to Titus he writes,|| "For this cause I left thee in Crete that thou shouldest set in order

* xxviii. 18, 19, 20. † xx. 20 21. ‡ xii. 49, 50, § II. Tim. ii. 2. || i. 5.

the things that are wanting and shouldest ordain priests in every city." And this had been so extensively accomplished in the days of the apostles, that St. Paul proclaims,* "But I say, have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world." And therefore it was only required to continue in the same manner, and upon the same principle to perpetuate the teaching body, by securing in the same manner the continuation of its members; and this has been evidently done, even to this day, by preserving the succession of the bishops of the church in communion with the successor of that apostle, to whom the Saviour declared,† "behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren." Their commission is not of human origin, nor by men's authority, but derived from heaven by virtue of the institution of Christ, sustained by the power of that Holy Ghost, which descended visibly upon the first prelates of the church, on the day of Pentecost,‡ wherefore St. Paul addresses their associates, in the following words,§ "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Thus were they to be "accounted as the ministers of Christ;"|| testifying his doctrines, not speaking of themselves, but as He who sent them gave them commandment, what they should say, and what they should speak, whilst according to his own promise, he would continue with them all days to the end of the world, so that his church should be what the apostles describes it,¶ "The house of God, the church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth." To this fold was he to bring all his sheep,** so that they should by its testimony, "Hear his voice and there should be one fold and one shepherd;" as was foretold by many of the prophets, but especially by Ezechiel:†† "And my servant David shall be king over them, and they shall have one shepherd: they shall walk in my judgments and shall keep my commandments. * * * And I will

* Rom. x. 18. † Luke, xxii. 31, 32. ‡ Acts, ii. 4. § Acts, xx. 28. || I. Cor. iv. 1. ¶ I. Tim. iii. 15. ** John, x. 16. †† Ezech. xxxviii. 24, &c.

make a covenant of peace with them, it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will establish them and will multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for ever, and my tabernacle shall be with them: and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”* “And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David, he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd and I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David the prince in the midst of them: I the Lord have spoken it.”

Thus beloved brethren, do we receive by the testimony of this “cloud of witnesses,” an indication of the path in which we should follow after the ark of our safety, “it is a holy way,”† “it shall be unto you a straight way, so that fools shall not err therein,” for by this testimony we are assured of what God has revealed; his word is to us the foundation and the measure of our faith, as it is the code which also regulates our morality; we believe what he declares, we should also obey his commands. He has established the society of his church upon the principles of a well ordered community, making it the witness of his revelation, so that secured in “the unity of faith”‡ and of the knowledge of the Son of God, * * * we be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive.” Entreating then, we exhort you to continue steadily attached to this firm anchor of our hope, and submit your necks to the sweet yoke of Christ by regulating your conduct unrestrictedly by the great maxims of the gospel, as your code of morality.

But, beloved brethren, you are aware that it is by the institutions of the Saviour you must be made partakers of the fruits of his redemption. Your obedience to his law must be perfect. You cannot expect salvation upon any other terms than those which he has established. You must be enriched to growth and beauty in the heavenly garden, not by your natural powers, but by being engrafted upon Christ and drawing the sustenance of heavenly aid, in his grace, from his institutions. Neither by your own natural power are you able without the influence of that grace, to believe, or to hope, or to have useful sorrow for

* Ezech. xxxiv. 23, 24. † Isaias xxxv. 8. ‡ Ephes. iv. 13, 14.

sin, or to love or to serve God as you ought, so as to obtain heaven. You are, as the apostle St. Paul expresses it, "Cut out of the wild olive tree, which is natural to thee; and, contrary to nature, wert grafted into the good olive tree,"* so that drawing from Christ, the root of holiness, you may be purified from sin and bloom in virtue and bring forth fruit to eternal life. This the Saviour himself explains to us, when he informs us that he is the door by which the sheep enter into the fold;† and more at length when he says, "I am the true vine; and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he will take away: and every one that beareth fruit he will purge it that it may bring forth more fruit. * * * Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you the branches, he that abideth in me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. If any one abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch and shall wither and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire and he burneth."‡

Now it is by the means of his sacraments that he has provided in the ordinary communication of this grace for the various modes of our regeneration and sanctification. "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter the kingdom of God."§ "Now when the apostles who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For he was not as yet come upon any of them: but they were only baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost."|| In the gospel of St. John we read, "Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat of the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood you shall not have life in you."¶ As also his other statement, "When he had said this he breathed on them and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins ye shall forgive they are forgiven to them: and whose sins you shall retain they are retained."** The apostle St. James also exhi-

* Rom. xi. 24. †John x. ‡John xv. § John iii. v. || Acts 14, 15, 16, 17. ¶ John vi. 54. ** John xx. 22, 23.

bits to us another source of grace when he writes, "Is any man sick amongst you, let him bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man: and the Lord will raise him up, and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him."* In the Acts of the Apostles we read, "These they set before the apostles: and they praying imposed hands upon them."† One of the effects of this rite is expressed in another place: "Then they exhorting and praying, and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away, so they being sent by the Holy Ghost went to Seleucia;"‡ but more clearly exhibited by St. Paul, "Neglect not that grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with imposition of the hands of the priesthood;"§ and again, "For which cause I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee, by the imposition of my hands."|| Concerning matrimony we read in the Gospel of St. Matthew, "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder;"¶ and St. Paul informs us, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament: but I speak in Christ and in the church."**

How many sources of grace are thus opened to us for the several circumstances in which we may be placed? Again therefore, beloved; entreating, we exhort you not to despise the mercy of our God; not to reject the bounties of Christ, not to neglect the means of salvation thus placed within your reach. Not only for your own sakes, but for the sake of your children, of your families, of the whole church of Christ are you, especially the heads of those families, bound to have recourse to such of those divine institutions as are befitting your circumstances.

Your example is powerful for good or for evil: You desire to train up your children in the way in which they should walk; of what value will your advice be in contradiction to your example? "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a mill stone should be banged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the

* James v. 14, 15. † Acts vi. 6. ‡ Acts xiii 3. § I. Tim. iv. 14.
 || II. Tim. i. 6. ¶ Matt. xix. 6. ** Ephes. v. 31, 32.

sea. Wo to the world because of scandals! For it must needs that scandals come: but nevertheless, wo to that man by whom the scandal cometh. And if thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to go into life maimed or lame than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire.”* And in another place, we find a corresponding declaration of the Saviour, “He therefore, that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But he that shall do and teach, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”† We would therefore earnestly and solemnly impress upon our brethren, to walk worthy of the vocation in which they are called and by their example, to draw others to the practice of those great duties which on earth give a peace of which the children of the world have scarcely an idea, and which procures for us in heaven a joy and a glory, the like of which no earthly eye has seen, no description of which has penetrated mortal ear, nor to conceive which is the mind of man capable in its present state, and the contemplation of which bore the rapt apostle into such exstatic enjoyment.”‡

These things we have written to you, beloved brethren, respecting your first and greatest obligations, but there are others upon which we find it proper to express to you our views. They regard your exertions to provide for the external wants of religion and to establish those means by which instruction will be more generally diffused, the ministry more widely extended, the spiritual wants of great numbers better attended to, and even the temporal consolations of our afflicted fellow creatures, whether members of our church or estranged therefrom, better secured.

We should first call your attention to the erection and the decoration of churches and their proper furniture. From the very origin of christianity it was an object of great interest to your predecessors in the faith: it is essential for the decency of public worship, and nothing tends more to unite and to preserve in the bonds of affection, as well as in the purity of faith, the Catholics who reside in any vicinage: it is moreover exceedingly useful

* Matt. xviii. 6; 7, 8. † Matt. v. 19. ‡ II. Cor. xii.

for the purpose of preserving the faith of the children and affording to the well disposed enquirer an opportunity of learning our doctrines and correcting misapprehensions.

But in the creation of those edifices we would remark, that it has frequently occurred, that through a sad mistake respecting the nature of our church government, and the influence caused by the example of religious societies, whose principles are in direct contradiction to those which have come down to us from the days of the apostles, some of the managers have usurped powers to which they had no title, which are incompatible with our discipline and in some instances even with our faith. And when we were constrained in the discharge of our duty to oppose their pretensions, they complained that we interfered with their rights: and they sought by the law of the land, in contradiction to the spirit of those constitutions which guarantee our religious freedom, to subject our ecclesiastical administration to their supervision, and to withhold the funds created for the support of religion from their destined object, unless their irregular demands were acceded to. The results in some instances have been extremely disgraceful and disastrous; but we thank God, that at present the spirit of which we complain has nearly disappeared. We think it right however to apprise you, that viewing before God, and singly with an eye to the welfare of religion, this case, we have felt it to be our duty at all hazards, to preserve that faith, for whose defence you and we are bound if required to imitate the devotion of the glorious martyrs; and also to prefer officiating, as many of our predecessors have done, in the open air, in private houses, or in humble sheds, for those who are faithful to their principles and attached to their religion, rather than to enter the most gorgeous temples and accept of the most abundant stipends as the price of that freedom of ecclesiastical administration which it is our obligation to preserve, and the diminution of which would be most injurious to religion. Nor do we think it irrelevant in this place to observe, that it has almost uniformly occurred that the persons who thus affected zeal for religion and attachment to liberty, by perpetrating those usurpations, were notorious for their total neglect of religious practices

and were found most ready to abuse any power they were able to obtain. We therefore admonish you of the necessity of being properly informed of the due mode of conforming to the principles of your own church before you undertake to erect buildings for her worship. There is nothing in either the spirit of the constitutions or in the laws of our republics which is incompatible with the perfect freedom of our ecclesiastical institutions; no country affords better means for their security and protection by legal provisions; but the power which our states properly allow to each religious denomination to manage its own ecclesiastical concerns may be easily abused, as it has been in many instances, by persons who were members of bodies to whose spirit they were opposed. We exhort you then, in acting for the church, to consult with the recognized authorities of that church; let there be a full and perfect accordance between you and them, this will produce co-operation, success, charity, affection and peace, and will moreover secure to you the blessings of religion. We would also remark upon the necessity of providing for every church that furniture for the altar and the sacristy which will give to the divine offices, especially to the holy sacrifice of the Mass, that external dignity which becomes the service of the Most High. When God vouchsafed to prescribe special decorations for his tabernacle, in the desert, the people of Israel were invited to make their offerings, and their zeal and devotion urged their generosity to such a point that "The workmen being constrained to come, said to Moses: the people offereth more than is necessary. Moses therefore commanded proclamation to be made by the crier's voice: Let neither man nor woman offer any more for the sanctuary."* We need not remind you of the special benedictions which the Lord continues to bestow upon those who, animated with the due sentiments of religion, contribute with cheerful hearts to promote the great work of his service upon this earth.

"Let the priests that rule well, be esteemed worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine,"† was the admonition of St. Paul to his disciple Timothy who at that period, according to the primitive usages, had the entire apportionment and distribu-

* Exod. xxxvi. 4, 5, 6. † I. Tim. v. 17.

tion of the means contributed for the purposes of religion: and in his first epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle asks, "Who serveth as a soldier at any time, at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof? who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? speak I these things according to man? or doth not the law also say these things? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care of oxen? or doth he say this indeed for our sakes, for these things are written for our sakes, that he that plougheth should plough in hope: and he that thresheth in hope to receive fruit. If we have sown to you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we reap your carnal things?*" * * * "K now ye not that they who work in the holy place eat the things that are of the holy place; and they that serve the altar partake with the altar? So also the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel."†

We have placed this passage under your view, not so much for the purpose of insinuating against you any want of disposition to perform the duty which it inculcates, as of bringing to your consideration a subject which has been heretofore overlooked. We are ready to testify, that in many instances you exert yourselves in a manner very creditable to yourselves and beneficial to religion, in contributing to the support of your pastors; and we also are gratified at knowing that, as a body, our clergy are well deserving of what they thus receive. Indeed, we know of no other portion of the church in any region of the world, where in one sense, the words of the Apostle "who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof," would be so properly applicable as in the United States. For besides that almost all our churches have been built chiefly by the laborious exertions of the clergyman; their whole income is produced by his services; and if he ceases to officiate, the revenue would be small indeed! Nothing can then be more just than that the provision for the clergy should be the principal object of its application: as St. Paul declares to Timothy, "the husbandman that laboureth must first partake of the fruits."‡

*1. Cor. ix. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

†1. Cor. ix. 13, 14.

‡II. Tim. ii. 6.

In those countries where parochial or other benefices exist, the incumbent, when worn out by labour or age, or incapacitated by sickness or accident, is not cast aside; he still enjoys his right to the place, and continues in possession of the income; and it is fit that it should be so: for to use the expressions of the Apostle, who, when he admonishes Timothy to "labour as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,"* tells him also, that "no man being a soldier to God entangleth him with secular businesses, that he may please him to whom he hath engaged himself;" the clergy are prohibited by the canons of the church from being engaged in traffic, that they may be wholly occupied in their ministerial duties. The emolument which they receive is comparatively moderate, sometimes wretchedly small; they are liable to applications from the distressed, and to demands for the purposes of religion, sufficient to deprive them of the power, even if they had the will, of laying up for themselves a provision for age or infirmity, and the canonical regulations, in such contingencies, provide for their support out of the funds of the benefice, and for the discharge of the duty by giving an assistant, to maintain whom both the incumbent and they who are served contribute. Our circumstances render the creation of such benefices at the present moment extremely inexpedient, even if the canonical grounds for their creation existed: and instances have occurred where meritorious priests, after a faithful discharge of duty, have been neglected and left in great destitution; and few missions are known, in which the income of a clergyman is smaller than on these of the United States. We would appeal to your own feelings of justice to say whether this was as it ought to be. Cases may however arise, in which the clergyman would be in need of aid which he deserves, without having a sufficient claim upon any special church to entitle him to require that it should support him. To provide for cases of this description, and others of a similar character, we have recommended, that in each Diocess, the clergy themselves should create a fund applicable to such purposes, under the superintendance of the Bishop; and we should hope you will also feel that this object merits your aid.

* 11. Tim. ii. 3, 4.

For ourselves, we feel that we have always received, as we have endeavoured to merit, your support: but we would suggest that as the duties of the bishop regard the welfare of the whole Diocess, and as he is principally occupied in its general concerns, it would be fitting that all the churches and congregations should aid in creating a fund, not merely sufficient for his individual support; but also adequate to afford him the services of one or more clergymen, according to the extent and duties and means of the Diocess, to aid him in efficiently labouring to the advantage of the entire Diocess, for the promotion of religion and the spiritual welfare of his whole flock.

To provide for a succession of the clergy, is also a general concern of the churches and congregations, which, however well they may be served at the moment, cannot insure themselves against the casualties which produce a vacancy: and if no measures be taken to educate and to form, by proper discipline, a body of clergy to supply those vacancies as they occur, what must be the consequence? Many of our most flourishing churches have had to undergo long destitution, to struggle through great difficulties, to witness many scandals and to suffer heavy losses, because of the want of a clergy sufficiently numerous and properly qualified for our missions. Many catholics who came hither from other nations, as well as several of our own citizens who have removed to the interior, were condemned to wander in spiritual desolation, until becoming estranged from their religion they were indifferent to its concerns or its practices; and they and thousands of their children have been themselves lost to the church. It is an obligation of pressing importance, therefore, for every one to contribute according to his means, to supply this deficiency. The ecclesiastical state, especially in our church, is not a profession, to prepare his child for which a parent will make an extraordinary sacrifice, in the expectation that the future income will justify the present outlay; and the education necessary for a priest is one not to be acquired without considerable time, and no small expense. The body which is to be served has been accustomed to undertake that expense in many parts

of Europe, by the creation of Seminaries sustained by the public funds of the nation; and when these could not be obtained, the object was effected by the contributions of the faithful or the donations or legacies of the wealthy and the pious. In these United States, our fellow-citizens of various religious denominations, have numerous, large and well endowed theological schools, to which their yearly contributions are very considerable. Hitherto you have done little or nothing to aid our Seminaries. Many of us have received for this purpose, moderate aid from the piety of our fellow catholics in France, in Austria, and in one or two instances from Ireland. The Holy See has also generously admitted some of our youths into the Urban College of the Propaganda at Rome, where they gratuitously receive their education and have their wants supplied. We strenuously exhort you to do your duty, by contributing to raise up a national clergy; exert yourselves to provide that your own sons should minister at your altars. In your several Diocesses you can co-operate, each of you with his proper prelate, for this most important object.

We have on former occasions addressed to you our advice and exhortation respecting the use and the abuse of the public press, as respects our religion. It is a powerful engine for good or for evil: and in those states it has been, and still is, extensively used against us, both openly and covertly. We do not dwell upon the gross untruths, the false charges, the notorious perversions, the ribbald abuse which are continually spread before the eyes of millions of our fellow-citizens against you and us, and our religion, by what is called the periodical religious press: we need not exhibit to you the pages of several public journals to show the adverse spirit of a large portion of political editors to truth and justice, where we are concerned. Not only are the public libraries and the literary institutions formed upon the same principle, and tracts and pamphlets which exhale the poison of virulent misrepresentation and obloquy, widely disseminated, but the very school-books for even the youngest learners are infected; so that from the most tender childhood to the decrepitude of age, the great portion of

the reading public may be taught to detest and to despise what they are led to believe is our religion.

Within a few years however, some publishers have put forth a number of books containing a correct exposition of our doctrines and the defence of our tenets; though we regret that in some instances, either acting from their own views or having consulted with persons not sufficiently qualified to advise them, they have occasionally exhibited a want of judgment in their selection: We find that amongst you the spirit of encouraging their efforts has been daily becoming more strong, and we trust, that they will themselves feel it to be their duty, as it will be their interest henceforward to consult in the proper manner, with the ordinary ecclesiastical superior, before they undertake such publications.

We feel disposed also to exhort you to sustain with better efforts those journals, which though not officially sanctioned by us, still are most useful to explain our tenets, to defend our rights and to vindicate our conduct. We regret to learn that in several instances those conducted under the eye of the ordinary ecclesiastical authority are continued only at a pecuniary sacrifice to their proprietors, and by the zealous and gratuitous exertions of their editors. We would impress upon you the necessity of exertion on your parts, to have them better sustained and their circulation extended as widely as possible.

We have formed ourselves into a Society for the production and dissemination of books useful to the cause of truth and of virtue, leaving to each prelate its adaptation to the peculiar circumstances of his own Diocess, but committing for the present the administration of its general affairs chiefly to the Archbishop, who as soon as his leisure will permit, will proceed to execute what he has undertaken. Our object is, as far as practicable, to apply some remedy to those evils which we lament, and we trust that your love of truth and your zeal for virtue will lead you to co-operate with us, to the best of your power, for this most necessary purpose.

We would also beloved brethren, renew the entreaty which we have made to you on other occasions, to

unite your efforts to ours for upholding those institutions which we have created for the education of your children. It is our most earnest wish to make them as perfect as possible, in their fitness for the communication and improvement of science, as well as for the cultivation of pure solid and enlightened piety. And if we occasionally experience some difficulty and do not advance as rapidly as the wishes of our friends, or their too sanguine hopes would look for, some allowance must be made for the difficulties by which we are surrounded and the opposition which we experience. Yet, these notwithstanding, we are persuaded, that amongst those under our superintendance, are to be found, some of the most scientific and literary houses of education which our nation possesses; some establishments for the instruction of youth, male and female, in which there are successfully taught those speculative and practical lessons which inform the understanding, regulate the imagination, cultivate the taste, ameliorate the heart, improve the disposition, impress the importance and obligation of fulfilling every social, civic, domestic and religious duty, and teach the best mode of their performance. And we trust, that by a continuation of that patronage which they have received, we shall be enabled to behold them take deep root in our soil, flourish in beauty and vigour, and furnish an abundant supply of useful citizens and christians, fitted for conferring blessings upon that country which protects them and that religion which they profess.

We would especially commend to your fostering care those pious and meritorious sisterhoods, which in addition to the culture of the youthful mind, gather up the little orphan whom Heaven has deprived of its mother's care, who attend the couch of sickness to moisten the burning lip, to assuage the anguish of pain, to whisper consolation to the raving spirit and to point to the true source of the sinner's hope, when in the dimness of his eye he begins to be sensible of the darkness of the grave. These are the women, who generously devoting themselves to the whole cause of godlike charity, are found in good and in evil report; in the school, in the hospital, in the prison,

in the hovel of poverty, in the maniac's call, in the midst of pestilence, surrounded by the bodies of the dying and the corpses of the dead; discharging the duties of their holy zeal, alike to the professor of their faith and to its opponent, and tending with the same assiduity the wretched calumniator of their creed, their virtue and their sex, as they would their most generous defender.

To you, our venerable co-operators in the ministry, priests of Christ Jesus, we say in particular. "Continue you in those things which you have learned, and which have been committed to you: knowing of whom you have learned. And because from your infancy, you have known the holy scriptures, which can instruct you to salvation, by the faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture inspired by God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct unto justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished unto every good work."* "Flee youthful desires, and pursue justice, faith, charity and peace, with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. And avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they beget strifes. But the servant of the Lord must not wrangle, but be mild towards all men, apt to teach, patient, with modesty, admonishing them that resist the truth: if peradventure God may give them repentance to know the truth, and they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil, by whom they are held captive at his will."† "Hold the form of sound words which you have heard of us in faith, and in the love which is in Christ Jesus. Keep the good thing committed to your trust by the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in us."‡ "But according to him that hath called you, who is holy, be you also in all manner of conversation holy: because it is written, *you shall be holy, for I am holy.*"§ "Be prudent therefore, and watch in prayers. But before all things have a constant, mutual charity among yourselves; for charity covereth a multitude of sins. Using hospitality one towards another without murmuring. As every man hath received grace, ministering the same to one

* II. Tim. iii. 14, 15, 16, 17. † II. Tim. ii. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26. ‡ II. Tim. i. 13, 14. § I. Peter i. 15, 16.

another: as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”* “And you, employing all care, minister in your faith, virtue: and in virtue, knowledge: and in knowledge abstinence: and in abstinence, patience: and in patience, godliness: and in godliness, love of brotherhood: and in love of brotherhood, charity. For if these things be with you and abound, they will make you to be neither empty nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that hath not these things with him, is blind and groping, having forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore, brethren labour the more, that by good works, you may make sure your calling and election. For doing these things you will not sin at any time.”† “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking care of it, not by constraint, but willingly according to God: not for filthy lucre’s sake, but voluntarily: *** being made a pattern of the flock from the heart. And when the prince of pastors shall appear, you shall receive a never-fading crown of glory.”‡ “Be you an example of the faithful in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity. * * * Attend unto reading, to exhortation and to doctrine. Neglect not the grace that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy, with the imposition of the hands of the priesthood. Meditate upon these things, be wholly in these things; that your profiting may be manifested to all. Take heed to yourselves and to doctrine: be earnest in them. For in doing this you shall both save yourselves and them that hear you.”§ “We charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, by his coming and his kingdom: Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine. * * * Be vigilant, labour in all things, do the work of evangelists, fulfil the ministry, be sober.”|| “Charge the rich of this world not to be high-minded, nor to trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in the living God (who giveth us abundantly all things to enjoy.) To do good, to be rich in good works, to give easily, to communicate to others, to lay

*I. Pet. iv. 7, 8, 9, 10. †II. Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. ‡I. Pet. v. 2, 3, 4. §I. Tim iv. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. || II. Tim. iv. 1, 2, 5.

up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the true life.”* “Whosoever are servants under the yoke, let them count their masters worthy of all honour; lest the name of the Lord and his doctrine be blasphemed. But they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren, but serve them the rather, because they are faithful and beloved, who are partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.”† “And now we commend you to God and to to the word of his grace, who is able to build up and to give an inheritance among all the sanctified.”‡

Beloved brethren of the clergy and laity. “God is not unjust that he should forget your work and the love which you have shewn in his name, you who have ministered and do minister to the saints; and we desire that every one of you shew forth the same carefulness to the accomplishing of hope unto the end: that you become not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience shall inherit the promises.”§ “Wherefore we pray always for you: that our God would make you worthy of his vocation, and fulfil all good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith and power, that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you and you in him, according to the grace of our God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.”||— “But we ought to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, beloved of God, for that God hath chosen you first fruits unto salvation, in sanctification of the spirit and faith of the truth: whereunto he hath called you by our gospel unto the purchasing of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast; and hold to the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God and our Father who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope in grace, exhort your hearts and confirm you in every good work and word.”¶

“For the rest, brethren, pray for us, that the word of God may run and may be glorified, even as among you:

* I. Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19. † I. Tim. vi. 1, 2. ‡ Acts, xx. 32. § Heb. vi. 10, 11, 12. || II. Thessal. i. 11, 12. ¶ II. Thessal. ii. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

and that we may be delivered from importunate and evil men: for all men have not faith. But God is faithful, who will strengthen and keep you from evil. And we have confidence concerning you in the Lord that the things which we command, you both do and will do. And the Lord direct your hearts in the charity of God, and the patience of Christ.”*

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you all, Amen.

Given in Council, at Baltimore, this 22d day of April, in the year of our Lord, 1837.

†SAMUEL, ARCHBISHOP of *Baltimore*.

†JOHN, *Bishop of Charleston*.

†JOSEPH, *Bishop of St. Louis*.

†BENEDICT, JOS. *Bishop of Boston*.

†FRANCIS, PATRICK, *Bishop of Arath, Coadjutor of Philadelphia*.

†JOHN, BAPTIST, *Bishop of Cincinnati*.

†GUY IGNATIUS, *Bishop of Bolina, Coadjutor of Bardstown*.

†SIMON, GABRIEL, *Bishop of Vincennes*.

†WILLIAM, *Bishop of Orio. Coad. of Charleston*.

†ANTHONY, *Bishop of New Orleans*.

* II. Thessal. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 18.



5-
SKETCH

OF A

SERMON,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

NORTH CAROLINA BIBLE SOCIETY,

AT ITS ANNIVERSARY,

IN THE CITY OF RALEIGH,

ON SUNDAY, THE 12TH OF DECEMBER, 1841.

BY CHARLES M. F. DEEMS,

AGENT OF THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

RALEIGH:

PRINTED BY WESTON R. GALES, AT THE RALEIGH REGISTER OFFICE.

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1841.

At a meeting of the NORTH CAROLINA BIBLE SOCIETY, a motion was made by Mr. JOHN PRIMROSE, seconded and amended by the Hon. Judge CAMERON, that the thanks of the Society be returned to the Rev. Mr. DEEMS, for the Sermon delivered before them on the previous Sunday, and that he be respectfully requested to furnish a copy for publication, under the direction of the Board of Managers. To attend to this business, the Board appointed the Subscribers.

NELSON B. HUGHES, }
RUFFIN TUCKER, } *Committee.*
WESTON R. GALES, }

NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.

The Anniversary Discourse was delivered from very slight notes, and the whole of the following Sermon was written in the interval of business, several days after. Of course the language could not be retained, and the author is conscious that several illustrations used on the occasion have passed from his mind. Some points, too, are more nearly developed in the written than they were in the spoken Discourse. These remarks are thought to be due to those who heard the Sermon, and who may kindly peruse this Pamphlet.

SERMON.

“ *The word of God is quick and powerful.*”

Hebrews, iv, 12.

THIS blessed Book, which we have adopted as the rule of our faith and practice, is known among us by different names. We call it *the Bible*, as being pre-eminently the most valuable of all books; and we call it the *Sacred Scriptures*, because it contains what we believe to be the writings of Holy men of old, who were inspired from on high. In the text before us it is called *the Word of God*, as coming immediately from the mouth of the great Creator. And that this volume is not the production of unaided human intellect, but has come from the great Spirit, is a proposition which we not only most heartily adopt, but it is the fundamental article of Christian faith, upon which we build all our hopes of happiness in the world beyond the tomb.

As believers in the genuineness and Divine authority of the Bible, we cannot see that it requires any unnatural effort of the mind, to perceive and believe that it is possible and probable that He who has given us bodies and spirits, and established the mystic union between mind and matter; should make a revelation of his nature and will to the creatures whom He has otherwise so abundantly favored. Few are so far gone into the mists of error as to deny that there is some great First Cause; for Scepticism herself, as she stands before the magnificent temple of Nature, must silently commune with thoughts of the glorious Architect; and when she penetrates the *Holiest of Holies* of intellect, she is awed into religious silence, under an almost oppressive conception of the unfathomed resources of the Omnipotent Original Mind. How, then, shall we dare to question whether it is *possible* for that great First Cause to make any impressions upon the spirit which sprung from his own?

If he has created matter and modified it into a myriad of combinations, and is able still to operate upon it, and even to annihilate it; if that intangible agent, the mind, has obtained all its endowments from the Creator, who can say that it may not receive any impressions from his soul?

Is it not *probable*, too, that God—or call the author of Life by whatever name you please—would make a revelation to his creatures? Hush the voice of the Bible and the Priest, and listen to the speakings of Nature. She tells us that on all her broad bosom she bears not an irrational creature which is born to pains, and which has a longing unsatisfied. She tells us that He who gave them desires has prepared abundantly for their gratification. Let us then look in upon ourselves. Each one of us finds himself to be a singular and incomprehensible union of substances we call matter and mind. The peculiar conformation of the former, we call *body*, and find in the ample store-house of Nature a provision for all the wants of this body by Him who created it. The *mind*, a more subtile production of this great First Cause, has as many desires as the body upon which it operates, and these desires are far more refined than the appetites of the body which it inhabits. Now, if the Author of all has made a full preparation for the satisfaction of the body, can it be thought that He would purposely or inadvertently overlook the wants of the mind? Such an assertion would be a libel upon Him who has made in *mind*, what He has not in *matter*, a resemblance of Himself. Among other things we find that the spirit within us has an anxious craving,—we cannot say that it is unlawful,—to know its origin and its destiny. When it has tested the extent of its powers, it feels that it could never have come into existence of its own accord, and that the source of its existence must be than itself inconceivably far more powerful and glorious. When it looks into the future, it can see nothing in the dissolution which it finds must take place between it and the body, to suspend or destroy its own existence. Beyond that hour of dissolution, what shall be its abode and its company, its powers and its employments, are questions which become unspeakably im-

portant. In vain does it seek a reply from Nature's thousand voices, and it turns its anxious eye to its Author to know these things which so relate to itself. But, who and what is that Author? And the profound stillness of the Universe, when the soul proposes the solemn question, settles upon it with a most oppressive heaviness. Can it be possible that He has spread the splendid firmament above us, and painted the rich scenery of earth around us, to give us indubitable proof that He exists, and then retire behind the veil which we cannot pierce, to enjoy the malignant pleasure of beholding His creatures groping after Him until they fall into the pit of the grave? If He thought it not trifling to create us, Oh! would it be condescending too much to reveal Himself, in part at least, that the awful suspense of our spiritual ignorance might be removed? From the little we behold of Him in the works of His hands, especially in our bodies and spirits, we conclude that there is the strongest probability that the Author of Life and of the Universe would instruct His children.

And now, with this probability strengthening upon it, where shall the human mind turn to find this revelation? It is not upon the page of Nature, for that has been studied in vain. And of the many theories which have been presented, each has in its turn been discarded as unsatisfactory. The Bible is now presented with its high claims to a divine origin, and the human mind is called upon to render a verdict in favor of this volume, as being a production of infinite mind. Its defenders say that it brings more external and internal evidence of its genuineness and authenticity, than any other book in existence. They say that it contains all that it is necessary for us to know concerning the nature of the Creative Cause, of ourselves, our duties and our destiny. They claim for it a character of truthfulness without the slightest mixture of error; and challenge for it an examination by the light of all learning and the scrutiny of the severest tests.

That this book is "the word of God," all Christians firmly believe. To review the many powerful arguments which

sanctified learning has brought to its support, would be a task which would as far exceed the ability of the present speaker, as it would be inappropriate to this occasion. We cannot forbear, however, alluding to one of its internal arguments, which alone, we think, would be sufficient to commend it to every heart sincerely seeking after truth. It is, that doctrines necessary to the salvation of our immortal souls, which could not possibly have been discovered by unaided human intellect, are clearly and satisfactorily developed in the Bible. It is a truth not only asserted in the Holy Scriptures, but corroborated by the history of mind that "the world by wisdom knew not God." Take the theories concerning the Deity which are the offspring of the most gifted minds in those ages which had all the light that possibly could be possessed without the Bible, and we find that they represent God as a Being who, with all the greatness with which they clothe Him, is only an Almighty monster. If thus the great have conceived him to be, what can we expect to be the ideas of the vulgar? The mass have made him a detestable wretch, superior to themselves only in his greater ability to indulge more frightful lusts. But the Bible gives us a view of His nature, which is as sublime as it is consoling. A secret prompting of his heart told man that he must appease God, because he was sinful, and was exposed to punishment. But the world's wise men could not tell him where he might be cleansed of his moral defilement, they could not devise any manner of mediation between him and his God, they could propagate no plan of salvation which would suit all souls, under all circumstances, to the end of all time. This the Bible does! It reveals a God whose attributes of justice and mercy, both infinite, kiss each other upon a platform which His right arm has thrown up, in the presence of the Universe, for the salvation of a world. The mightiest human intellect may ponder upon the sublimity of this plan for ages, and rise from the study with expanded powers. It must be from the Creator of all—the book which develops such glorious doctrines! As Christians, we so receive it, and present the Bible to the world, saying, "Here is the Word of God!"

Of this book, the passage of Scripture before us says, it is *living and powerful*.

I. As our God is living, and is the fountain of all life, and the source of all existence, we may reasonably expect that the words which proceed out of his mouth shall have all the elements of life. Not like the sound which is given from an inanimate thing when a master hand touches it cunningly, it has the tone of life upon it.

The Word of God is *living light*. "The entrance of Thy word giveth light," is an exclamation of the Psalmist, verified in the world by innumerable examples. Apart from the teachings of the Bible, how darkened is the human mind! It is true, that in Christian lands many men do seem to be possessed of expanded powers of mind, who never read the Bible, and who have never been accustomed even in childhood to its teachings; but their light is only the reflection of that which glows all around them in society. A conversation with such men would soon discover their spiritual darkness, as there is many a Nicodemus who is celebrated for his learning in the world, and yet not able to comprehend the simplest doctrine taught in the school of Christ. An acquaintance with general literature, a familiarity with the circle of the sciences, a close study of the arts, will not supply the lack of a devoted perusal of the Sacred Scriptures. The chamber of the mind may be well furnished with the rich tapestry of varied learning, and the graceful statuary of polite letters, but unless the living light of "the word of God" shall illuminate it, its elegant adornment will be useless. The light of truth adds a charm to all beauty.

Again: We very frequently find men in the lowest walks of life, on whose powers the incubus of poverty has ever pressed, who never had the polish which mingling with the intellectual imparts, but who have been converted to God by his Holy Spirit, and have thenceforth given attention to the study of his word. How perceptible is the change which is produced upon their minds! In a short time we find them speaking understandingly of those things of which we thought them profoundly ignorant. And why is this? Because they

have studied the word of God, and it has turned their minds in upon themselves, and they have become deeply interested in the sublime doctrines of the Bible. Their minds are now more ready to receive instruction in secular learning, and they have become theologians and metaphysicians at the same time. "It giveth understanding to the simple."

Let the Bible, "the word of God," be taken to a heathen in his own language. It finds him in the veriest darkness, deceiving himself with the illusion that all around him is light. But the living light of the word of God plays on the image before which he is bowed in his degrading worship, and he beholds all its horrid deformity. He turns from his Deity with disgust, and is driven out a godless wretch. The light enters his mind, and discovers to him the filthy figures which crowd his imagination; it pierces into the heart and reveals its moral defilement and loathsome leprosy. This living light points him to the sword of justice gleaming from the dark cloud of the true God's indignation against sin, and he is ready to sink into despair. But a concentration of all the light of this wondrous book arrests his sinking mind, and with trembling he follows its brightness until it mantles the cross of Calvary. There he "beholds the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." The pitying glance of that eye in death's agony melts his heart; the blood from that pierced side sprinkles him, and lo! he is more spotless than infant purity! With this "word of God" in his hand, he joyfully pursues life's rugged way, for he beholds his path growing brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

But the "word of God" is also *living seed*. Deposited in the heart, as it often is, by some unseen agency, it germinates and brings forth righteousness and bliss. The living preacher is he whom God hath appointed to sow this good seed, and the field is the world. And how often does the minister go to the performance of his public duty with a heart weighed down with some of earth's cares or sorrows; how often does he retire from the altar to his private chamber, feeling that he is an exceedingly profitless servant! And yet that very discourse which may seem to him a failure, may be blessed

of the Lord to the salvation of some soul. God does not always show the spiritual husbandman the first quickening of the seed he sows. Let this consolation sustain those of us who minister in holy things, for "in due time we shall reap if we faint not." At the family altar, as well as in the sanctuary, the good seed is planted. How often does the Spirit of God bless the reading of the sacred Scriptures in families! Fathers, Mothers, heads of families, fail not daily to gather your little ones to the reading of God's holy word; and if they seem thoughtless be not discouraged, for the living seed is silently falling upon the fallow ground. Many a winter's snow may come, but as surely as the God of the sun and rain exists it shall survive. The voice of the mother will be remembered, when all else connected with childhood shall be forgotten. It is the last music which dies out of a boy's heart. Passages of "the word of God" in the mother's tone will often ring upon the heart of the man when wrinkles and furrows are on his time-worn visage. Words of instruction and consolation, and powerful appeals from the Holy Scriptures, breathed upon his mind in earlier days at the family altar, but lost in the lapse of time, will come meltingly upon the young wanderer's heart, when the thousand mouths of the Ocean shall yawn to swallow him, and the storm-spirit pour its unearthly shriek upon his ears. In these instances, and they are numerous, we find a fulfilment of the prophecy, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

"*The word of God is living!*" Contrasted with it, all other religious theories are lifeless, all philosophy is dead. Let the Natural Religionist read the page of that volume, which he thinks tells all that the immortal spirit needs to know, and if he find a reply it will tell him that there is a Mighty Spirit in the Universe. But of the character of

that Being its teachings will be ambiguous, for while it has lessons of his love of beauty written with the pencils of light on the graceful flower ; and speaks of his love of grandeur on the rocky tablet of the immense mountain, on the glorious scroll of the firmament, and on the unmeasured undulating face of the ocean—it reveals his terrible might in the volcano, the conflagration, the tempest, and the deluge. And what are the responses of the oracle of *the heathen*? With a heart burdened with unspeakably interesting questions, he rushes into the temple and presence of his idol. Tell me, oh, tell me ! he cries,—what and where the Great Spirit is? And what am I? and whither bound as carried down this rushing stream of life? Beyond the portentous clouds which I see settling most heavily before me, are there torments or is there bliss? Does an eternal sunlight play on the blessed islands in that veiled state, or do thunders and lightnings and a horrible tempest empty their furies on the ruined soul? Oh, when this tiresome strife of present existence shall close, shall I have seen but the beginning of sorrows? Is not the great Spirit lovely, and will he not save me?—The God is silent, the oracle is dumb! The Priest who conducts the unhallowed service of its damning rites points the enquiring wretch to the instrument of torture, to blasted hopes, to the hearts' finer feelings crushed, to a dark grave and to a hopeless hereafter.

It is not so with the word of our God, it is quick and life-giving. As when the Incarnation of that Word stood at the grave of Lazarus and commanded the buried one to come forth, so “the word of God” now speaks to the soul which is dead in trespasses and in sins, and lo! the thrill of life shoots through its faculties. And when the enquiring spirit asks of this our oracle it finds a ready and most satisfactory answer. Every objection is anticipated, every fear removed, every trouble soothed, every wound gently bound up. The living Word speaks to the soul and bids it be happy, even in this world. It tells the Spirit that God is love, that every provision is made for its wants, that in this matchless mercy and unfathomed wisdom, He has satisfied the demands of justice and effected its emancipation. It speaks to

the Spirit and its chains fall off, and in the majesty of truth, in the strength of freedom, and in the light of love, it treads the temple of that God, whose living word reveals the high and holy destiny which awaits it. It beholds in all things of beauty around it the developement of that undying love which watches all its paths, and which is preparing for it beyond the tomb a more glorious habitation. For not only does this word impart a spiritual life here, but it reveals to the soul the state of unceasing and blissful existence in the world which is to come, and informs the Christian that he is now only upon the lowest step of that sublime pyramid of life which he shall be everlastingly ascending, whose summit is lost in the inconceivably intense brightness of JEHOVAH'S peerless glory.

And this *word of God*, so *living* and life-giving must remain forever. It bears in itself the elements of indestructible existence. Heaven and earth may pass away, but it shall not be shaken; for the throne of the Eternal must fall and the light of all life expire, before the words which he speaks shall fail. And here the Christian stands, planting his feet upon the Rock of Ages, while he defies the tempest to rob him of his immortality, or shake his trust in God. Truly, *the word of God is living.*

II. The second characteristic of the word of God, is that it is *powerful*. When that word went out at creation it traversed the ocean of chaos and startled myriads of worlds into existence. When that Word appeared on earth in the flesh it was a power which suspended the laws of nature, working astonishing miracles and destroying the power of sin. That Word, as written out in a volume, is powerful, even "the power of God unto salvation."

The effect which the perusal of the Sacred Scriptures has upon a man is very different from the study of any human composition. There is nothing in the writings of the learned, in the theories of philosophers, to change a man's entire nature. Even those who have been the authors of the best moral precepts have frequently been most wretched exemplars in practice. But the Bible, having been written by the

all-wise God, through his amanuenses, holy inspired men, is so perfectly adapted to every circumstance under which every man is placed, that it exercises a power over the human mind and heart which nothing else possesses. An arm of Omnipotence as it is, it beats down the bulwarks of pride and unbelief, bursts open the doors of the heart, seizes the lion in his fury and binds him with fetters of adamant. It leaps from heaven, a blessed preserver, into the torrent of sin on which the soul of man is borne to destruction, rolls back the tide of nature, brings him up from the fearful abyss and places him on an eminence from which he can behold his former danger and adore his Redeemer.

The word of God by enlightening the intellect has given man the ability to see the way which leadeth to God through Jesus Christ. At the foot of the mercy seat he hath been pardoned, at the foot of the Cross he hath been cleansed. With his mind purified, his affections hallowed, his soul sanctified, the man hath become a benefactor. He takes no longer any pleasure in living simply for himself. His mind is now lifted from its filth and degradation and gathers perception of harmony and beauty. Here we have the foundation of the Arts and Sciences which adorn life and administer more refined pleasures to the immortal spirit. It is because the Word of God is in your midst, that your houses are palaces and your meals banquets. As the intellect increases in its elevation it gathers clearer ideas of relations, and the Word of God furnishes all necessary standards of judgment in these cases. The husband learns to use his superiority as not abusing it, and the wife submits to the husband, not as to a master, but as to a stronger companion; not as a degradation, but as a relief and a pleasure. The parent learns to value his child, not as a slave to his caprice, but as a stream of intellect which he has the ability to direct for its own endless happiness and the benefit of a world. The child is now bound to the parent, not by a feeling of servile fear, not by a tie which weakens as the parent grows helpless with age, and breaks when he becomes a burden, but a love which is respectful when the parent is at the fullness of his matu-

rity and becomes more tender and refined as the infirmities of years press him down. Having thus given to man a code of morals to govern a family, the observance of which will be crowned with domestic bliss, and the least deviation from which will produce discord and misery, it leads man to look upon his neighbor as his brother, and a member of the great family of which God is the common Father. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Compare that one injunction with the code of morals of heathen philosophers.) Thus we see the social compact strengthened by the holy influence of the Bible. But man has certain rights to be guarded. The Bible clearly sets them forth in a tone of authority which is satisfactory, rebuking the oppressor, giving strength to the oppressed to assert the truth and yet restraining him from all acts of unlawful violence. We here find the power of the Bible to give a balance to Society and to erect a sound fabric of Government. The man changed through the instrumentality of that Word which is powerful, is not satisfied to have a proper government established, and the arts and sciences flourishing; his heart, now a fountain of goodness, goes out towards his fellow men. This creates the benevolent institutions which are the glory of Bible lands. We thus see the influence of the Word of God upon communities by changing individuals and giving that direction to the strength of their heads and hearts which was originally intended by the great Creator.

The *preaching* of "the word of God," how powerful it has been! Before it the bold face has blanched and the stout heart quailed. The proud boast of the wicked has been silenced, the mockings of the fool have been hushed. The lion and the tiger have been tamed, and the heart of the lamb has been made powerful for good. The torrent intellect which was devastating whole regions of mind has been turned into the channels of beneficence, and the powers that stagnated in indolence have been sent forth to irrigate the waste and weary land. It has thrown open the prison doors and set the captive free. It has poured light in upon the depths of darkness. It has gone into the midst of communi-

ties, and under its influence, the ignorant have become wise, the churl liberal, the spendthrift economical, the vulgar refined, and the sinner a saint. Like oil it has allayed the tumultuous waves of strife. It has dashed down misrule—trampled upon anarchy, and lifted up the comely form of fainting order. It has extended the sceptre of mercy, and arranged the scales of justice. It has reformed the laws and their executor. As the word of God has been spoken out by the lips of truth, Empires have been convulsed, crowns have fallen, and kingdoms have passed away. Its *consolations* have been as powerful as its reformatory energy. The widow and the orphan have had their hearts to leap within them, and the fainting traveller over earth's desert has felt the gift of new life as this Word of Power has called him to the waters. Its power has disrobed Death of its terrors and deprived the grave of its victory; and the weak child and feeble woman have calmly walked down to their resting place with a holy smile on their countenances. Even before the darkness of the tomb had entirely shrouded them, they have seen the first light of a glorious and eternal morning.

It has been powerful against the enemies of God. Every thing which human ingenuity and infernal malignity could devise have assailed it. And yet, like the billow-beaten ocean-rock, it has been unmoved, while the waves of opposition have fallen back into spray, and the lightnings of persecution have been woven into a diadem of glory to adorn its summit. And while God lives it *will* remain—it *will* be powerful.

And why is the Bible *living* and *powerful*? Because the Spirit of the Living and Almighty God is in it. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Take His Holy Spirit from it, and it will be as lifeless and as powerless as a dead body. If we could preach the doctrines of the Bible without any assistance from the spirit of God, we should find it as useless as declaiming the orations of Cicero. Let us, then, remember, in our private study of the Scriptures, that we are not reading merely the writings of the Prophets and the Apostles, but endeavor to feel each word as though it were spoken immediately from the great God our Savior,

out of heaven and in an audible voice. In our efforts to supply the world with the Bible, let us keep ever upon our hearts the assurance that we are not sending the words of worldly wisdom, but "the word of God which is living and powerful," and which will do good to the bodies and souls of our fellow men. And Oh! let us who are engaged in the hallowed co-operation with the blessed Trinity, take the more diligence to make our own peace, calling and election sure! If the gifted and sainted author of the text, after having seen Christ and possessed the power of working miracles, entertained the slightest apprehension lest after having preached unto others he should himself become a cast away, let us not be satisfied unless we feel continually that God's living word is powerful even unto the salvation of our own souls.

And now, brethren beloved, this sacred gift is deposited in our hands by its holy Author, to be dispensed to the whole world. It is a *Testament*: our Heavenly Father's will. As the lines have fallen to us in a pleasant place, and we have a goodly heritage, let us not forget our brethren who are away in the darkness of other lands. What shall we say unto God our Father in justification of our conduct if we suffer them to perish without telling them of our home in heaven? It may cost us some sacrifice, but let us keep ever before our eyes the example of Him "who though he was rich yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." And "if God so loved us we ought also to love one another."

Father, when you retire from the sanctuary this morning and see the happy faces of your loved little ones around your board, think of your brother in heathendom who has no domestic comforts, no pleasant fire-side, no hallowed altar-spot. Christian Mother, let your mind fly from this temple this hour, to behold that mother who is now committing her offspring to the flames or to the waves.* Think not that that mo-

* To impress this remark, the following anecdote was related: "A Hindoo woman cast her child, between three and four years old, into the Ganges, as an offering to the Goddess. The little creature made its way to a raft of bamboos that happened to be floating by, and seizing one end of it has drifted along, crying to its unnatural parent for help. Perceiving from the shore the dangers of the child's escape, she plunged into the water, tore away its hold, broke its neck, and hurled its life-warm corse into the middle of the current, by which it was soon drifted out of sight."—*Jyerman's and Bennett's Journal*.

ther's heart never knew woman's feelings! When she first pressed that child to her bosom she felt the rapturous thrill of a mother's pure, devoted affection. But the iron heel of a tyrannical religion has crushed the buds of her love. Would you save that innocent? Send the Bible and its power shall tear down the temple of the idol and erect the altar of that Religion whose essence is love. Lady, robed, jewelled, accomplished and happy,—think of your destitute sister in the darkened land! Less fair, perhaps, than yourself, but Oh! she hath a soul as immortal as your own! And if you leave her to die in her degradation, at Christ's judgment that she may thus upbraid thee:—I was hungry, and blind, and oppressed, and sinful, and dying; your hands held that which would have relieved me, the tale of my wo fell upon your ear, but with a profitless word of commiseration you turned coldly away to the sound of the viol, and the excitement of the dance—and I died! How then can the Lord turn upon you the smiles of his love, when he hath said that “if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his?”

And now, in behalf of the North Carolina Bible Society, I appeal to this congregation. I feel a solemnity come over me when an appeal on behalf of the cause of Christ is to be made to an assembly of Christian people. It is upon me now, for I know that for all I have said I must give an account; and lest I have said something amiss, lest I have left some appeal untouched, there is a fear in my heart. And when I look around upon you and know that God the Father, and the blessed Saviour, and the Holy Sanctifier are here, that the Godhead knows the power of His own word and hears the thousand cries and shrieks of a heathen world, and that an account is to be taken of the doings of a crowded, intellectual and wealthy assembly of Christians, oh! how can I but feel for the result? Remember, my brethren, that “with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” May the Great Head of the Church speedily send the light and health, the life and power of his Word to all nations! And let us remember that he has appointed human instrumentality to accomplish this glorious consummation as we unite our hearts in responding AMEN, and AMEN!

A

VALEDICTORY SERMON,

DELIVERED

IN CHRIST CHURCH,

RALEIGH, N. C.

BY

REV. GEORGE W. FREEMAN, D. D.

ON HIS RELINQUISHING THE PASTORAL CHARGE

OF SAID CHURCH.

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SERMON.

II CORINTHIANS, XIII CHAP. II.

“ Finally, Brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”

THESE words were addressed to the Christian disciples at Corinth. Among these Corinthians, St. Paul had formerly laboured for the space of nearly two years; having been the first to set before them the Gospel of the grace of God.— During this time, he had had the satisfaction of witnessing the conversion of considerable numbers to the Christian faith, and of seeing the Church well and permanently established. But being afterwards called away by other duties, he soon had the mortification to learn, that the good work, which he had been instrumental in accomplishing, had become sadly marred by the introduction of a contentious and schismatical spirit; that the Church, which he had bestowed so much pains in establishing, was split up into parties; that grievous abuses, both of Christian doctrine and Christian practice, had crept in among them; and that, through the machinations of an unauthorized Teacher, his own influence and authority were greatly diminished. Being moved by this information, he wrote with promptitude his *first Epistle*; in which, he boldly asserted his spiritual authority over them; exposed the insidious arts of the self-constituted Apostle; reproved the Corinthians for their errors and excesses, and threatened them with the strong arm of discipline.

This letter, having produced the desired effect, in awakening them to a just sense of their faults and bringing them to a deep feeling of penitence, the compassionate Apostle wrote

to them *again*, in order to *comfort* them in their sorrow, occasioned by his former severity, to prepare them for an intended visit, and to confirm them in those Christian doctrines and principles which he had, from the first, so carefully inculcated.

In this Epistle, he employed considerable space in apologizing for himself against certain *charges* and *insinuations* which had been thrown out, respecting his sincerity and integrity in the discharge of his Ministry, and in justifying his conduct by recounting the evidences of his Apostleship, the scenes of suffering in which he had borne a distinguished part, and the labours which he had undergone, and the doctrines which he had preached in the course of his Ministry. In conclusion, he bade them, for the present, an affectionate farewell; summing up the particulars of his parting advice, in the words of the Text—"Finally, Brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

And, brethren, may I not with propriety adopt these words of the Apostle as the basis of *my* parting counsel to you?—Though *no* *Apostle*, *certainly*, in the sense in which St. Paul was; though destitute of inspiration, though standing at an immeasurable distance below him in authority, in zeal, in wisdom, in devotedness to the cause of our common Master; yet, like him, may I not, on this last occasion of my appearance before you as your Minister, refer to the past exercise of my Ministry among you, and leave with you a word of exhortation with respect to the future?

When I came first among you, "I came not," as you will readily bear witness, "*with excellency of speech, or of wisdom;*" and during the space of eleven years, I have continued with you, not in any vain confidence of an ability and strength at all *proportionate to the importance of the station* which I have occupied, but "*in weakness, and fear, and much trembling.*" Nevertheless, according to my

ability, and agreeably to my understanding of the truth of God, I have made known unto you the way of life. I commenced my Ministry here, by spreading before you, from this same Epistle of St. Paul, the nature and obligations of the *Christian ministry*, together with the correlative duty of *those* for whom that ministry is provided. *Ambassadors* for Christ, *heralds* of the Cross, *stewards* of the mysteries of God, *watchmen* upon the walls of Zion, *we* are called upon, (I showed you from the Apostle,) to “renounce the hidden things of dishonesty,” not to “walk in craftiness,” nor to “handle the word of God deceitfully,” “but, by *manifestation of the truth*, to commend ourselves,” if possible, “to every man’s conscience in the sight of God;” and in furtherance of this great object, to “preach not *ourselves*, but *Christ Jesus the Lord*, and *ourselves your servants* for Jesus sake.” And having shown you what it was to preach one’s self, and what to preach Christ Jesus the Lord, I inferred and inculcated *your duty* in relation to a preached Gospel—proving, that if *we*, the Ministers of Jesus Christ, are bound to lay aside all selfish considerations, and to preach unto you the *pure Gospel of Christ*, the obligation is equally strong upon you, to *receive* and *profit* by our preaching.

Thus it was that I *commenced* my Ministry as a Preacher of the Gospel among you; and from that time to the present moment, it has been my constant aim to set before you, with all plainness, and with what of power I possessed, the doctrines and the precepts of the blessed Gospel of Peace—the *whole truth* as it is in Jesus—and to urge upon you, by the aid of such considerations as the vast importance of your eternal interests most readily suggested, to *receive* the truth in sincerity, to *embrace* the hope set before you, and thus to “lay up in store for yourselves, a good foundation against the time to come, that you might lay hold on eternal life.”

To this end I have said much to you of your naturally sinful, helpless, perishing condition, labouring, by appeals to

your own experience and observation, as well as *to the holy Scriptures*, to convince you of this fundamental truth; so that being made sensible of your disease and its fatal consequences, you might become anxious for relief, and be induced earnestly to apply to that glorious remedy which the mercy of Heaven has provided.

This remedy, I have taught, is to be found in the great, the tremendous sacrifice of the Cross; by which, atonement was made for sin, so that God might consistently with justice pardon the sinner, and through which, the gift of the Holy Spirit was procured for the illumination of your understandings, the conversion of your hearts, and the sanctification of your whole nature, soul, body and spirit. And *to this sacrifice of the Cross*, I have constantly exhorted you to apply, with penitent and contrite hearts, in the full assurance of faith that your application would not be rejected—pointing you, for proof, to the kindly invitation of the Son of God himself to “all the weary and heavy laden” to “come unto him” and “find rest unto their souls,” and his gracious declaration, that “him that cometh unto him he would in no wise cast out.” I have encouraged you by the example of the prodigal son, to “arise and go to your Father,” and by referring you to the most solemn asseveration of our blessed Lord, that “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one* sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.”

I have exhorted you to “*strive* to enter in at the strait gate,” and urged the necessity of so doing from the consideration that “many will *seek* to enter in” who “shall not be able,” because they seek not earnestly and perseveringly, or because they seek amiss—and I have exhorted you to labour diligently to “make your calling and your election sure” for the reason, that though “many are called,” there are but “few chosen,” and that it is only *they* who “*continue in the word of Christ*,” that will be counted his “disciples indeed.”

I have cautioned you against mistaking the use of the outward forms and the *profession* of religion, for religion itself; showing you, by the case of the Pharisee and Publican, that God looks at the real emotions of the heart, rather than to the expressions of the lips, and that he who approaches the mercy seat with the earnest cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," will go down to his house justified, rather than *he* who may boastfully exclaim, "God I thank thee that I am not as other men are;" and proving that no imagined perfections of character will avail you in the sight of God, while it can be *emphatically* said to you, as our blessed Lord once said to an amiable youth, "*one thing thou lackest*;" that, though it is easy to *say* to the author of our holy religion, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," yet he who would be the disciple of Christ *in reality*, must not only *say*, but *do*—must "deny himself and take up his cross and follow him;" that "not every one that saith unto him Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that *doeth* the will" of God; that whatsoever a man's profession may be, if he be not truly "*for* Christ, he is *against* him;" if he gather not *with* him he *scattereth abroad*; and that "if any man have not the *spirit* of Christ, he is *none of his*."

I have warned you of the fruitlessness and the fatality of attempting to "*serve two masters*," so opposite as are God and the world; of the great danger you incur, by such an attempt, of coming under the condemnation of those who are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;" of the fatuity of suffering yourselves to "be deceived" by the vain hope that you may continue to "*sow to the flesh*" and yet "*reap of the spirit*;" of the folly of delaying your repentance, like Felix, "to a more convenient season," or presuming, like some of old, on the "long suffering of God," as if he were "*slack concerning his promises*" and threatenings, "as some *men count slackness*."

I have warned you also against the delusion of expecting

to be justified before God, either by your own good works, or by a barren and unfruitful faith—against the imprudence of affording opportunity to “any man to spoil you of your faith through philosophy and vain deceit;” and against the awful danger, to which you are liable, of being “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

In seasons of trial and affliction, I have counselled you “not to despise the chastening of the Lord,” remembering that “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,” that “they who sow in tears shall reap in joy,” and that, if you “cast your burden on the Lord, he will sustain you.” In the hour of doubt and despondency, I have encouraged you to “wait still upon the Lord,” in the full confidence that he would “strengthen your hearts,” to “be of good comfort and arise for he calleth you to him,” and, under the severest trials, *not to “fear,”* for, if you do indeed belong to the “little flock” of Christ, you have the assurance that “it is your father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

In fine, so far as space of time, and my abilities have allowed, I have fully spread before you, I trust, the blessed Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. “I have not *shunned* to declare unto you the *whole counsel* of God;” and, I think I may say, that it has ever been my principal aim to render *that “counsel”* effectual to your spiritual and eternal well-being, by striving as much as in me lay, to keep always in view the great object of my ministry, so as to be able in sincerity to say, “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.”

But, brethren, these things are not said by way of boasting. Alas! how little reason have I to glory in what I have done! Even if “the *spirit*” had always been “willing,” O, how weak has been the *flesh*! Had I been diligent and faithful in performing among you all that it was in my power to do, or, possessing the ability, had I fully discharged all the duties

appertaining to my station, still I should have had no ground for boasting; but must have acknowledged myself to be “an unprofitable servant,” who had “done no more than it was his duty to do.” But now, when I look back on the past, and call up in review the numerous occasions when I might be justly charged, by him whom I profess to serve, *with apathy*, with slothfulness, with neglect; when I look over the field in which I have been so long labouring, and see so little really accomplished for the glory of Christ and *the salvation* of the souls committed to my trust, I find, you may well conceive, much greater cause for the deepest humility and sorrow and prostration of spirit, than for any thing like exultation and glorying. No, brethren, God forbid that I should seek to magnify my weak, my exceedingly imperfect services in the Redeemer’s cause among you.—My *sole reason* for this slight recapitulation, is, that thus recalling to your minds *some* of the truths you have been taught, I may peradventure, lead you to bring yourselves into judgment, and to decide how far you have discharged *your* duty, in *receiving* the truth into an honest and good heart, and bringing forth fruit to the honour and glory of God—how far you have been “*doers* of the word, and not *hearers* only.” And happy will it be, brethren, both for *you* and for *me*, if the result of such retrospect and self-examination, shall be deep contrition for our past remissnesses and unprofitableness, and a greater degree of earnestness, a more hearty and thorough engagedness in the great work, which, as Christians, we all have to do.

Having thus briefly called your attention to the past, I would now direct it to the future. As this day terminates our connexion as Pastor and flock, as this is my last address to you in that endearing relation, it seems to me not unfit, it seems exceedingly appropriate, that I should address you in the language of the Apostle—“Finally, Brethren, *farewell*. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”

Permit me then to explain, to enlarge upon, and to apply, this farewell advice of the Apostle to the Corinthians, *as my parting counsel* to you. And should you receive it in the same spirit of sincerity and affection in which it is offered, I cannot but cherish the hope that it will not have been tendered in vain, but will prove to you a word fitly spoken and in season—yea, even a “savour of life unto life” to your souls.

The first part of the Apostle’s exhortation is “Be perfect.” *This*, taken literally according to the translation, means, “go on unto perfection—come not to a stand in your Christian profession—be not content with moderate attainments, but aim at the full completion of the Christian character—labour after perfection in holiness, perfection in knowledge; cherish every grace and every virtue unto maturity; and cease not your exertions till ready to be crowned with the cheering sentence in a better world, “well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

This, certainly, *is the doctrine of Scripture*, whether it be inculcated in this particular place or not; and I may well be excused, if I embrace the occasion, briefly to apply it.—Some people seem to think they have done enough in the way of religion, and for their own souls, when they have summoned up sufficient resolution to make a public profession of the faith of the Gospel—and that after this, provided they are not positively and flagrantly vicious, they are very good Christians and have but little more to do. But, brethren, let it *not* be so with *you*. Remember that your public profession of Christianity in the sacraments and ordinances of the Church, was but the *commencement* of a work, which you then covenanted to *carry on*, diligently and without intermission—the *beginning* of a *warfare* with the great enemies of your salvation, “the world, the flesh and the Devil,” in which you solemnly pledged yourselves to “fight manfully” as the “faithful Soldiers” of Jesus Christ, even “*unto the end of your lives.*”

You have been taught that the Christian life is progressive (*even* like the morning light which shines more and more unto the perfect day)—that you are to “*grow* in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” —and that you must be *always pressing forward* “towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,” or you can never hope to attain unto “the end of your faith,” “the salvation of your souls.” Be not satisfied, then, with a *low standard* in your religion—think it not enough, that you are outwardly observant of the Lord’s day, constant in your attendance on public worship, exact in your private devotions, scrupulous in the daily reading of the Scriptures, and moral in your life and conversation in the world; but strive also, after *holiness* of heart and life. Aim to be truly converted to God, and thoroughly imbued with *the spirit* of his Son’s Gospel. To this end pray, continually, to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, “that he would grant you to be strengthened with might *by his spirit* in the inner man; that *Christ may dwell in your hearts* by faith; that ye being *rooted and grounded in love*, may be able to *know the love of Christ* which passeth knowledge,” and thus “be filled with *all the fulness of God.*”

The meaning of the expression, however, in the original, here rendered “Be perfect,” is put together again or restore what was before deranged or out of joint. And if we suppose the Apostle to have had reference in his advice here, to those divisions and contentions which had formerly prevailed among the Corinthians, it might with much propriety be translated, be reunited, or be reconciled again. “The Apostle’s meaning,” says one of the commentators, “is, that whereas the members of the Church were all, as it were, *dislocated or out of joint*, they should be joined together again in love; and they should endeavour to make perfect, what was amiss among them, either in faith or manners.” And, in *this sense* also, I may be permitted to apply the exhorta-

tion to *you*, brethren. Whatever differences of opinion may have existed among you hitherto, suffer them to continue no longer. Be reunited and knit together in the bonds of Christian friendship and brotherly love. Have any, through dissatisfaction with some of their brethren, or with their Minister, or for any other cause, been prompted to withdraw from the communion of the Church or from the common worship of the Sanctuary? Or, are there any unholy, unfriendly feelings between different members of the congregation, which prevent the mutual interchange of social intercourse and good offices, or that union of counsel, influence and support, so necessary to the prosperity of the Church? O, my brethren, *be united again—be perfectly joined together in love. Let not* the welfare of your own souls, the interests of religion at large, or the advancement of the Church of your affections, *be hindered* by private views, by party prejudices, or by personal dislikes. Especially, now, when you have to provide a successor to him who is about to leave you, let *all dissensions* cease; and let the only emulation among you be, who shall show most attachment to the cause of Christ, who shall be most active in promoting the peace and unity and prosperity of his Church. *Be perfect; grow in grace—increase in holiness—be completely united, and steadfastly maintain “the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.”*

The next part of the Apostle's advice is, “Be of good comfort;” that is, be not cast down, but take courage and put your trust in the Lord. This might have been intended to apply to such of the Christian brethren as had been overwhelmed with sorrow, produced by the severity of the Apostle's reproof in his former epistle. Finding them so tender of conscience, so easily affected by his rebukes, and so deeply penitent for their faults, he was probably anxious to raise them up from their despondency, and restore them again to cheerfulness and peace of mind. “Be not disheartened,” he

would seem to say, “you are sensible of your faults and sorry for them—you have renounced your errors and commenced a new course of action—“be of good comfort,” then—with humility and penitence cast yourselves at the foot of the Cross, and your sins and iniquities shall be remembered no more.”

In the same language would I address such of you, my brethren, as may be cast down by a sorrowful sense of past transgressions—look upon the Cross of Jesus Christ—see what he has done and suffered in order to take away your sins, and be not prevented from going to him, either by the number or the aggravation of your offences. But, be of good comfort, arise and seek confidently, the pardon which he has died to procure you.

In like manner, should you be called to struggle with the trials and distresses incident to human life—should disappointment and sorrow overtake you—should the waves of affliction and mourning break over your heads—should your pathway be beset with briars and thorns, and should the wide bosom of the world offer to your anxious eye nought but the prospect of a barren and trackless wilderness—still I would exhort you to “be of good comfort”—when trouble is near the Lord is not afar off—cast your burden therefore, cast all your cares and sorrows on him, and he shall sustain you.—Put your trust in him, and you *shall be* supported—Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, and he will not suffer your feet to be moved.

And so, are there any of you sorrowful at parting with your Minister, to them also would I apply the Apostle’s words, “Be of good comfort.” This separation, though painful, is but for a time—*we shall meet again*—if not here in this world of trial, yet in that blessed world above, we may hope to meet, where there shall be no more separation—no more sorrow nor crying; but where all tears shall be wiped from our eyes. “Be of good comfort,” beloved—though sep-

arated in person, we shall be united in heart and affection—united in one common hope—united in prayer to the one God and Father of us all—united in pressing onward in the same narrow path, towards the same blessed mansion, which our common Lord and Master and only Saviour has gone to prepare for us.

The next advice of the Apostle is “Be of one mind,” or as the original may, more literally, be rendered, *think or mind the same thing*. This, of course, is not to be so understood, as if the Apostle meant to enjoin *a universal agreement* in matters of *mere opinion*. There are many things about which men may lawfully differ in sentiment; indeed, they are so variously constituted by nature, that *universal accordance* in opinion must be regarded as nearly impracticable. But the advice is given to *Christians*, and has reference, mainly, if not *solely*, to those doctrines and principles, by which *they* are to be distinguished from the rest of the world around them. In *these* it must be highly important that they *be of one mind*—a difference *here*, must necessarily involve consequences of the most disastrous kind. Of this, the Corinthians derived abundant proof from their *own experience*; when, according to the Apostle, there existed envying and strife and divisions among them. Their want of consent in doctrine—of oneness of mind in the duties of their Christian calling—had opened the door to many excesses, introduced confusion into their counsels, and well nigh totally destroyed their existence as a Church.

And such is the manifest tendency of *a want of union in sentiment*, among Christians at the present day. Well, therefore, may I, brethren, on taking leave of you as your Minister, exhort you, with the Apostle, to “be of *one mind*.” And this I would press upon you, as essentially necessary to your present well-being, and to your future prosperity as a Church. “Be of one mind,” in regard to the great doctrines of the Bible, as set forth and explained in the Liturgy, offices

and articles of the Book of Common Prayer. Suffer no one to unsettle your faith in those doctrines, or to lower your estimate of their importance. Give no place to that suggestion of the Devil, that articles of belief are of no value, and that you may be sound Churchmen and good Christians without troubling yourselves about doctrines and creeds. But hold fast your profession as Christians and as Churchmen, without wavering, and earnestly “contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.”

“Be of one mind,” also, in respect to the settlement and the treatment of your next Minister. In this matter, it is highly important that you should *think* or at least *speak, the same thing*. Without unanimity here, all human efforts to advance the prosperity of your Zion, must prove unavailing—and though you *may have* a Minister, yet his situation will be uncomfortable, and his prospect for usefulness among you, almost hopeless. Should you, therefore, be so fortunate as to obtain a Pastor willing to cast in his lot among you, who, possessing useful, if not showy talents, is sound in principle as a Churchman, evangelical in doctrine, holy in life, zealous and in earnest in the cause of Christ and the salvation of immortal souls; O, let no considerations merely personal, no private views, no capricious preferences of another, no party prejudices, prevent your being heartily *united* in contributing to his support and comfort, in strengthening his hands and encouraging his heart, and in convincing him, that, whatever differences there may be in *mere opinion*, between you and him, you are determined that, at least *in practice*, you and he, will be of “*one heart and one soul.*”

Above all, brethren, be of one mind in regard to the great end of your Christian calling. In this respect, it is of infinite moment that you should all *think the same thing*, that you should fix your minds and hearts upon the *same object*, that you should agree to travel the *same road*. Let the one thing needful, the religion of the Gospel, the means of salvation,

be that in which you all agree, the object of all your exertions, the centre of all your hopes. In this let *us all be united*—*this*, let *us all* seek after, at all times, with *one heart* and *one soul*, so that when called to separate from one another in this world, as we must all sooner or later certainly look for, we may be comforted with the blessed assurance, that we shall meet again, in the world to come, around the throne of God.

The last particular of the Apostle's farewell advice is, "live in peace." This is an exhortation always needful in this world of tumult and strife, and well worthy of being heeded by all classes of men. But it is specially important that it be observed by them who are members of the household of *Him*, who is emphatically styled the *Prince of Peace*, and among *them*, if any where, we have a right to *look* for peace. It was the parting legacy bestowed by our "blessed Lord upon his Church, a little before his death, "*Peace* I leave with you, *my peace* I give unto you." And it is only so far as this precious legacy is preserved among Christians at the present, that they truly deserve the appellation of disciples of Christ. If then, brethren, you would maintain the honour of the Christian name, and prove your claim to be counted followers of Jesus, "live in peace."

Be at peace among yourselves. Causes of offence *will* arise among you. Events will be perpetually occurring, calculated to try your patience, to irritate your temper, to provoke, perhaps, your indignation. But these must all be met by the exercise of the Christian virtues of forbearance, meekness, humility, gentleness and an affectionate, conciliatory disposition. Brethren of the same family must be mutually yielding, compliant and forgiving. "The servants of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all, patient, in meekness instructing all that oppose themselves," "forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

“Live in peace,” also with others, those who are not of the household of faith—even those who are not of the same mind with you, in religious things, according to that of the Apostle—“if it be possible as much as lieth in you live peaceably with *all* men.” Cultivate a friendly disposition towards them—seek all opportunities of doing them good—be not too ready to believe reports of their harsh expressions or evil designs towards you—and especially return not evil for evil, or railing for railing—but contrariwise, blessing.—And ever remember that *the true Christian spirit* prompts its possessor to *forgive* an injury, so soon as it is committed—so do, and you will “live in peace.”

But be careful above all things that you “live at peace” with God. This, brethren, is your *grand concern*. This is the point to which the whole circle of Christian virtues tend as to their centre. This is the sum of all Christian perfection—the goal to which *all* your efforts must be directed. And unless you attain to this, however you may live, you can neither *die* in peace, nor *dwell with* peace hereafter.—O, then, labour earnestly for reconciliation and peace with God; be faithful in the examination of yourselves, and importunate in your application to the great mediator of peace between God and man; be vigilant in keeping your hearts and ruling your lives. In fine—be perfect; be of good comfort; be of one mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Yes, brethren, *God* shall be with you—he hath so declared by his holy Apostle, and he will keep his word. Be you but sincere and honest in your profession of attachment to his service—be but obedient and faithful, and you shall not be left destitute—God will come unto you and dwell with you in love and in peace. Be you of one mind and love one another, and the love of God shall fill your hearts. Be you perfect and live in peace, and the peace of God shall always attend you.

The God of love and peace shall be with you, to bless and

prosper his Church. He will not suffer his vineyard to languish, nor give his heritage to reproach. He will be a wall of defence to his people who trust in, and are obedient to his will, and will not suffer the foot of pride to come near to hurt them, nor the hand of the ungodly to cast them down—By his gracious presence, he will comfort them in their sorrow, and cheer them in the darkest hour of their desolation—He will make their “peace to be as a river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea.”

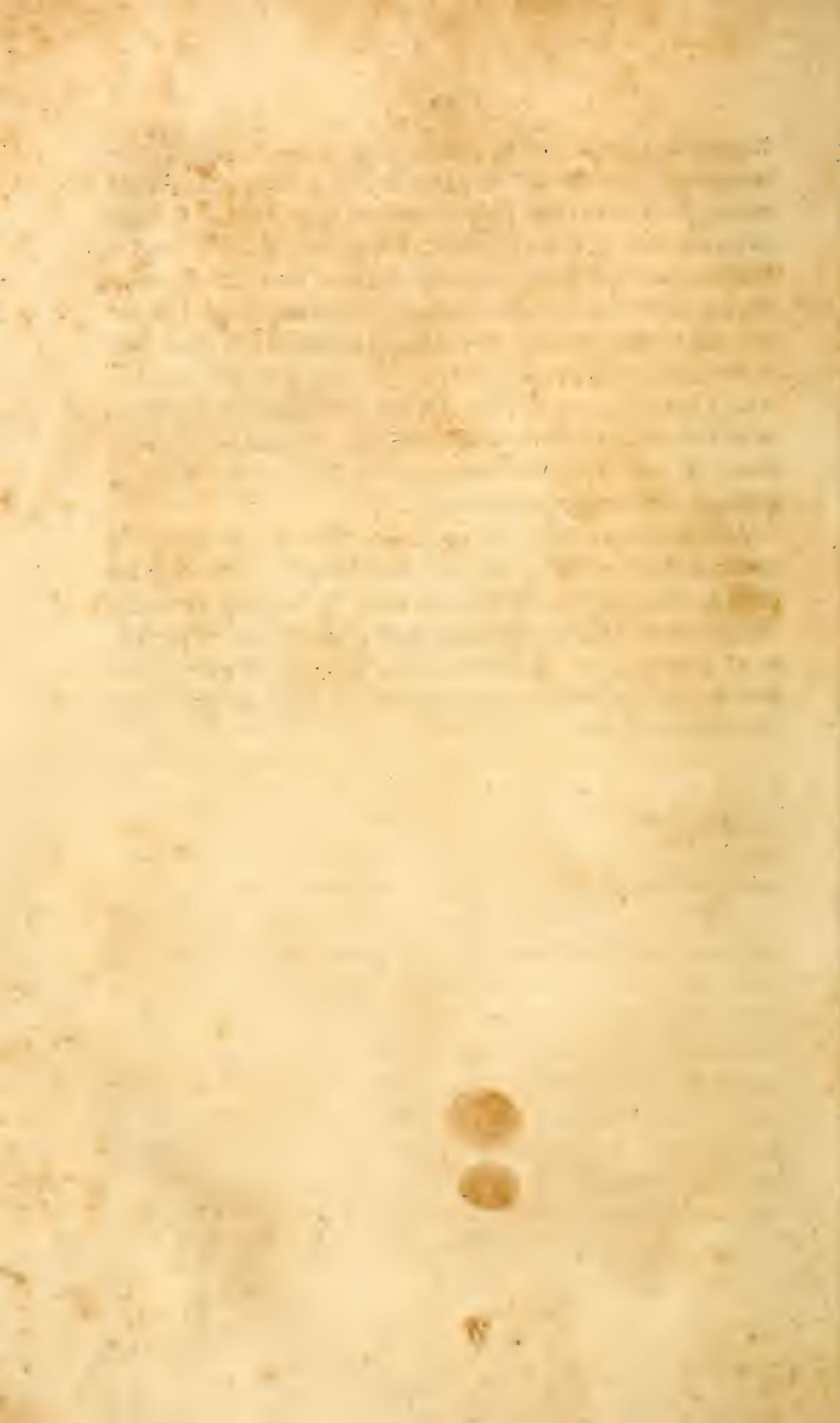
And if the God of love and peace shall thus be with you, dear brethren, then be not dismayed at the approach of evil—be not cast down by the *appearance* of trouble; but take courage and trust in him. What he doeth unto you by his trials, ye know not *now*, but ye *shall* know hereafter. Hope in God, and you shall yet praise Him—seek a refuge in “the secret place of the most High,” and you shall *securely* “*abide* under the shadow of the Almighty.”

And now, beloved brethren, and friends, a few words more, and my message to you is ended. The ministry which I have so long exercised among you, is this day brought to a close. For eleven years, nearly one sixth part of the life of man, I have been your Minister, the appointed watchman for your souls—and during this long period, it is not improbable, that I may sometimes have erred, both in doctrine and in practice. But if there has been any thing in the instructions which I have given you, *inconsistent* with the *truth* and *the spirit* of Christ’s Gospel; if ever a word has fallen from my lips *ensorious* or *uncharitable*; if any part of my conduct has been at variance with the principles of the religion which I profess; and if, in any of these respects, I have been a stumbling block and a rock of offence, or have needlessly give pain to a single soul among you, as I most humbly pray for the pardoning mercy of God, so also, I here in sincerity crave *your* forgiveness. And as I would hope for this mercy myself, so do I most freely extend it to others.—

If there is a single person among you, whose enmity I have incurred, (I do not *believe* there is one in this whole community)—if any of you have ever done, attempted, or thought to do me evil, in word or deed, I do most heartily forgive him—as well as, most sincerely declare, that there dwells not the individual in this community towards whom I entertain any harsher feelings than those of kindness and good will.

Most sincerely, then, can I say to you *all, Farewell.*—And I heartily pray to God that you may, indeed, fare well, in all things—in your worldly business, in your family relations, in your religious interests—in life—in the hour of death, and throughout all eternity.

And now, brethren, let us draw near to the table of our common Lord and Saviour, and while there, celebrating his great sacrifice of himself for our sins, let us pray earnestly for ourselves, and for one another, that we may all be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, and live in peace—and that the God of love and peace may be with us both now and forevermore!



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A

USEFUL LIFE

Book...
ill boy...
AND

A PEACEFUL DEATH:

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

...
LEGISLATURE OF NORTH CAROLINA,

...
DECEMBER 18, 1842.

BY REV. E. L. MAGOON,
PASTOR OF THE SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH,
RICHMOND, VA.

RICHMOND:
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1843.



PREFATORY NOTE.

THE author of this pamphlet visited Raleigh, for the purpose of attending a series of religious meetings. On the night of his arrival, he was present at the organization of an Executive, Legislative and Judiciary Temperance Society, and, after an address on the occasion, was desired to preach before the Legislature on the following Sabbath night. The largest church was procured, a very full audience of every rank were present, and the following discourse was submitted.

A request was soon after received, signed by twenty-one Senators and Members of the House of Commons, "in behalf of themselves and their associates," desiring a copy for publication. This request is reluctantly complied with, urged chiefly by the desire that the publication may prove beneficial to citizens renowned for a tolerant spirit.

As early as 1672, George Fox, when he had crossed "the great bogs, laying abroad anights in the woods by a fire," and reached the groves of Albermarle, "met with a tender people" who received "the authority of truth;" and when he had "opened many things concerning the light and spirit of God that is in every one," he was still "received lovingly." From the house of the Governor, who "heard him meekly," he went to the residence of "Joseph Scot, one of the representatives of the country, where he had a sound and precious meeting with all conditions of people;" and when he returned to Virginia, he declared that he found the people of North Carolina, "generally tender and open," and that he had made among them "a little entrance for truth."

The characteristics which this envoy of humanity found in that chivalrous State yet remain. The kindness which the unworthy author received will be gratefully remembered, and in return he prays that every soul on her domain may become enlightened, sanctified and saved.

E. L. M.



DISCOURSE.

ACTS XIII: 36.—*For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep.*

THE Apostle uttered these words in his argument at Antioch. His immediate object was, to prove that JESUS was the true Messiah “whom GOD raised from the dead.” In this allusion to the person of David, we have a compendious description of a good character and a useful man.

The occasion which has called us together, will, perhaps, require and justify a slight departure from the usual style of sermonizing; but while we proceed to discuss some of the great principles which relate to the general good, most earnestly is it desired that none of you will forget the dread responsibilities connected with your personal relation to Almighty GOD. In this service we shall consider the subject of **A USEFUL LIFE AND A PEACEFUL DEATH.**

It is said of the ancient Monarch of Israel that “He served his own generation by the will of GOD.” This will suggest several particulars.

In the *first* place, he took his position in society as Providence directed, and recognized this life as a state of active service. He felt a tie linking him to his brother man, to all men, and while he served them beneficently, he felt most deeply that his highest relation was a divine one, and because he was truly devout, his patriotism was the inspiration of goodness. He was greatly sincere in his uncommon greatness; though imperfect in his life, he was perfect in his purposes, and hence he was by infalible wisdom declared to be “a man after GOD’s own heart.” His repentance was as profound as his faults were obvious. He was “zealous for the LORD,” and desired the prolongation of earthly existence only that he might be more useful. In the seventh chapter of Acts it is said that “David found favor before GOD, and *desired* to find a tabernacle for the GOD of Jacob.” Perseverance, that great element of usefulness, entered into his composition. Having served the world through a long life in the highest station, he made his death-bed a throne of perpetual admonition, from which he taught his son to “show himself a man,” and died praying that his influ-

ence might be augmented through the agency of worthy successors.

In the *second* place, this ancient servant of God and humanity served his generation. By this we are to understand that he served the age in which he lived. He went out of himself, rose above the narrow and contemptible precincts of sectional prejudice and took generous and comprehensive views. It is not forgotten that public men are here,—men who rule this commonwealth and legislate for this great people,—men older, wiser, and better every way than the speaker. We come not here intentionally to degrade the pulpit so low as to make it the desecrated scene of political fulminations, nor would we willingly deserve contempt by presuming to dictate to your superior sense. But we meet as citizens of a common country, christians of a common faith, and descendants of a race who never deemed it irrelevant to inquire earnestly into the process by which successive generations have been served and by which coming ages should be blessed. How will the Christian Patriot serve his age?

First of all he must *understand* it. He must be capable of imbibing its spirit before he can ennoble it. The wind must not only be strong, but it must come in contact with the sea before the billows roll and are purified by the motion. As well might we expect, that of itself "the spicy breath of Araby" would cause the stormy Atlantic to swell and dash against the adverse shore as that the great mass of the people will be moved and elevated, and constantly impelled towards one great point by the conflicting whims of those whom luxury has emasculated of strength, and ignorance has incapacitated for counsel.

Moreover, one will begin to understand his age just as soon as he has the power of *feeling its claims*. Cold theorizers and frigid dogmatics are obsolete in our day. Men of acute sympathy are our men of power, and men who have had experience *among* the people, are the leaders who have won wisdom in the best school, and with that prophetic sagacity which is quickened by the throbbings of the popular pulse can intelligently guide human destinies to the noblest goal. What is the predominant character of our age? Action! Who are fitted to serve it? Men who are active, who are practical, and who in every vocation are working men. The age of metaphysical disquisition is past, and the time has come when if one would be useful he must be active in acquiring wisdom and equally industrious in embodying all he acquires in magnanimous acts which are palpable to the general feelings and conducive to universal good. Healthy souls in sound bodies, men of solid qualities and indomitable application are demanded now. This age though distinct is not separate from those that have preceded. We are bound to past generations, even to the most remote, by a sublime connection. Our age is the cumulated and compressed result of all antiquity, as the majestic river widening to the sea, is the result of every tributary, however obscure, and of

every fountain, however small. Hence he who would mould and guide the elements of the future should not take his position as a pilot in the eddying current of opinions until he has explored the past and caught an inspiration commensurate with the magnitude of the world's increasing claims. Our proper destination is into purer and deeper waters; but he who is ignorant of what has been will be most indifferent to what needs be, and will be as likely to navigate his craft in one direction as another.

There are two ways by which we obtain the power of serving our generation. The first lies in *generous and comprehensive self-culture*. Human nature is identical in its constitution and in its susceptibility to social influence. We thrill others most when our own soul is best toned. But the elements of public thought are diversified, temperaments differ, and local characteristics conflict. He therefore who is to mingle among all and would move each must possess an education as varied as the multifarious gradations of the surrounding intellectual world, and must urge repugnant demands through the universal avenue of love. The giant in his best condition can move no farther than he takes hold. The power of grasping moral powers is moral, and is within us. We reach the soul through the soul,—we arouse the passions only through the passions. True power is intellectual. Its honor and reward lies in the capacity of uttering the bright coinage of immortal thought.

Providence has appointed our existence in an age and country most favorable for the illustration of this point. In ruder ages, physical strength obtained mastership in life. In the subsequent era of chivalry, the prowess of military chieftains monopolized the brightest smiles and the highest honors. But under the higher civilization of modern times, beautiful thought is the favorite sovereign, who from the printed page or speaking lip sways with omnipotent energy a sceptre that is omnipresent. Look at the regal power of mind. If it cannot "create a soul under the ribs of death," it will chisel frosty marble into the lineaments and gracefulness of more than kingly majesty. Disdaining to employ agents weak and fragile to execute its purpose, creative mind has produced a titan-progeny whose strength is greater than Briareas with his hundred hands. Vivified with a soul ethereal and lightning-winged, these servants, whose toil is neither uncompensated nor unjust, open the quarry and drive the loom; or when linked to the car and ship they unexhausted go

" Tramp, tramp over the earth,
Splash, splash across the sea. "

There are intellects at this moment extant and luxuriating in the solitudes of profound meditation, or active in public toil, whose

conceptions, long since dispatched on their mission of conquest, are rushing in a thousand directions with infinitely more speed and energy than the Eagles of imperial Rome. As the lightning shineth from the east unto the west, so the clear broad light of sterling thought, glittering through "the spacious circuits of her musing," is pouring an effulgence round the globe. Not the fitful coruscations of vapid mediocrity, but profound and glowing mind is the universal queen whom all must adore or serve. Republicans though we are, we must acknowledge that here is a sovereign victorious beyond our envy or our hate.

But mental strength does not lie in the power to sit still. Action, action energetic, persevering and comprehensive, is the condition of development and progress. Mind must have mind in masses to act upon, and in that contact there is an exciting power beyond all human computation. Napoleon must have high Alps to overleap, nations for his conquest, and universal empire for his dominion. Nothing less than a whole planet will answer for Columbus to shape his course upon; and such mental emperors as Bowditch and Newton require immensity thick-shown with myriads of constellations for apparatus, angels for fellow students, and all eternity to unfold the latent energies of the human mind.

Why even here in this doomed earth, where storms howl and disease destroys, the empires that rise, and the institutions that rule, are only lengthened shadows of individual minds walking before the sun of immortal glory. It is the same now as it ever has been, the thick ranks of the great army of mankind are marching with lock-step over the field of time to great conflicts and eternal rewards. They march to the music of thought regular or distracting, and he who plays loudest and best will be followed by the strongest host.

A thought put into action is infinitely more effective than exploding cannon. The tones of true eloquence will drown all their uproar, counteract the force of their destruction, and render the emperor of all the Russias utterly impotent before the splendors of inspiring truth. The crash of iron hail and the growlings of "the dogs of war" are intermittent, but the salvos of mental artillery are perpetual.

Our power to serve the age in which we live is measured by the excellence of our spiritual cultivation. God has indicated our duty in the wonderful endowments of our race. He has made it the eternal nature of the soul to make all things its own; and it is the glorious prerogative of a virtuous mind to make all excellence its solace and its food. Is a diamond beautiful?—mind will set it on fire and from its flame educe truth more sparkling and profitable than the perishing gem. Is light transparent?—mind lays hold of a ray, and with a scalpel more ethereal than the subject it dissects, spreads before the eye of admiration, the discriminated hues which in diversified combinations tint the rose and form the

rainbow, beautify the earth and adorn the heavens. And is the deep blue vault of those heavens sublime with the resplendent glories of majestic worlds circling there?—mind, aye the mind of man, has from that awful dome suspended its balance-beam, and calmly weighed vast systems of worlds in the even scales. Mind thrown into the lowest vale of nature, an intangible and immortal essence, illumines whatever is dark, conquers opposing strength, and with pinions swifter than the lightning's wing, flies an angel-flight, forth and right on whithersoever it will.

Again, by high self-culture we reach the spirit of our age and *move it by the power of principles*. He who deeply *feels* the riddle of the world is in a good way to unravel it. One spark may kindle a conflagration which shall destroy the temples of liberty and justice. Such is the fanatic who hurls his torch on high and vaunts himself as a philosopher, when he is only a madman. One spark of hallowed fire may set rubbish in a blaze, from whose flashy and blasting heat rich products may flow, as Corinthian brass was first formed amid the cinders of a voluptuous city. One little word embodying a nation's spirit,—one speech glowing with the inspiration of the age,—may fall on combustibles which oceans cannot quench. Old John Adams, when a college student, chanced to be in Boston and heard a patriotic speech, one of the first sparks struck by the Genius of American Liberty from his majesty's oppressive throne. That seed of fire was not lost. It fell in the already glowing heart of him whom a great rival frankly termed "our colossus in congressional debate." What the worth and power of the principle then broached were is indicated by Mr. Adams' declaration, "I say in the most solemn manner, that Mr. Otis' Oration against Writs of Assistance breathed into this nation the breath of life."

Martin Luther found a bible uncumbered by traditions, and read it in secret, panting after truth until the bright vision burst upon his enraptured heart. In the light of a new and nobler principle than was possessed by his cotemporaries, his cell became more glorious than grandeur's most magnificent saloon, and he deeply felt that no man should hide what God designed all men to know. Inspired by holy truth he could but inspire, and those reachings of his soul went forth conquering and to conquer, until he had kindled the surrounding atmosphere into a canopy of magnificence, inspired contiguous minds with his own ardor, and left the world all blazing from his torch, to assume hereafter a crown compared to which the laurels of selfish heroes are weeds.

And yet the reformation was not complete. Latimer and Ridley struck for a still nearer approach to undoubted right. For their fidelity they must share in the peril and glory of all great advancements. "Fear not, Master Ridley," said the heroical Latimer, as both in chains were going to the stake, "for by the blessing of God we will this day kindle such a flame as shall

never go out!" No! it shall not go out. Each new principle discovered and proclaimed, is a new and imperishable luminary added to the moral heavens.

To support an unjust war, Charles I of England taxed his subjects illegally and without just cause. Hampden resisted the trifling assessment of twenty shillings on his vast landed property, and stood up the mightiest among the mighty to defend a down-trodden principle of justice and ceased not until he had brought from the dust the cry of liberty, and rendered *ship-money* in all men's ears a hated word.

There is another and still more striking illustration of the service rendered to one's age and to all ages by the discovery and defence of profound and original principles. Sir Edward Coke, the distinguished lawyer,—for it was fashionable for lawyers to go to church in those days,—one day discovered a lad taking notes during divine service. Being pleased with the modest worth of the lad, he asked his parents to permit him to educate their emulative son. It is said that Coke sent him to Oxford. He drank from the fountains of knowledge, and in those draughts he found

“ The sober certainty of waking bliss.”

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, he longed for the wisdom that rouses the might which so often and so long slumbers in a peasant's arm. He communed with the past and with his own startling thoughts. He summoned around him the venerable sages of antiquity, and in their presence made a feast of fat things,

“ A perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets where no crude surfeit reigns.”

At the fount of holiest instruction he cleared his vision, and from the mount of contemplation breathed in worlds to which the heaven of heavens is but a veil. But his soul was too free for the peace of his sycophantic associates, his principles were too philanthropic for the selfishness of his age, the doctrines which he scorned to disavow were too noble for old England, and he sought an asylum among the icy rocks of this wilderness world. He came

“ To plant the Tree of Life, to plant fair Freedom's Tree.”

and was driven from the society of white men through wintry storms and savages more lenient than interested factions, to plant the first free colony in America. That boy was the founder of Rhode Island, that man was the patriot who stooped his anointed head as low as death for universal rights, and ever

“ Fought to protect, and conquered but to bless.”

That christian was Roger Williams, the first who plead for liberty of conscience in this country and the pioneer of religious liberty for the world.

Such lovers of truth and justice are the pillars of society and the benefactors of their age. They expel popular fears, steady popular fickleness, expand narrow prejudice, and sink factious tempers in their enlarged wisdom and public spirit.

Such service is neither transient nor spasmodic. Thoughts born in solitude and agony most frequently convulse or console the world. In the lightning-gleam of intellect which in the murky gloom of his indigence and neglect created in the mind of Columbus the conclusion that the earth is spherical, and that the Indies might be reached by sailing due west, America with all her vast domain inhabitants and history *was discovered!* But we have had moral explorers who, striking out a new and successful voyage, have returned with "rich argosies" of inestimable wealth. Fifty years ago a few Baptist preachers assembled in a small parlor in the retired town of Kittering, Eng. After spending a season in prayer for divine direction, they resolved to form an association for diffusing religious knowledge in the heathen world, and from their own scanty means they contributed thirteen pounds sterling as alms to accompany their devotion. This was the beginning of the great work of modern missions. The germ has grown to a mighty tree overspreading the earth. There are now fifteen hundred missionaries in the field, aided by five thousand native teachers. These are laboring around twelve hundred central stations and fifty printing establishments. One hundred and eighty thousand have already professed conversion to the Christian faith, and two hundred thousand more are daily taught wisdom, human and divine, in the missionary schools. William Carey struck the first blow at home and kindled the first beacon light on the shores of the kingdom of darkness abroad. He rose to be the first scholar and foremost philanthropist in India. He emulated every excellence and became the purest among the great, the greatest among the pure. The government which first opposed him came at length to acknowledge their obligations to true religion, and on the 10th of August, 1842, a great concourse of British statesmen and native patriots in Calcutta resolved to signify their gratitude and veneration for great services and exalted worth, by ordering the form of Dr. Carey cut in marble. But neither they nor the angels above can fully estimate how wisely and how well he served his generation.

Robert Raikes, the industrious and benevolent printer of Gloucester, having acquired a fortune, set about subordinating it to the benefit of his age. Happily he struck upon a new principle, by gathering the vicious and ignorant into a Sabbath school. A great light has sprung up and spread from that heavenly spark, and millions are now blessed in that institution of which, since

GOD himself is the President, every matured christian should be a teacher, and the whole world of youth the alumni.

Clarkson out of Parliament and Wilberforce in it, with their tongue and pen, like Howard with his heart and hand, served their generation in the advocacy of justice and mercy, and won fame and glory which shall be luminous and immortal when the names of their calumniators shall rot in the caves of eternal infamy and oblivion.

Another illustration, the strongest and most striking of all, will stand prominent in the history of this eventful age. It is that those six inebriates in Baltimore, when drunk, should have staggered upon the only true principle of sobriety,—a principle which, had it been acted upon, would have prevented previous dissoluteness and which is hereafter destined to rescue the abandoned drunkard from his hell, and elevate the moderate drinker into the condition of a temperate and virtuous man.

The influence of true service to one's age goes on multiplying. Washington and his compatriots went to "war against a preamble,"—behind a small but unjust requisition they detected the presence of tyranny, and dragging up from the deep well of truth an old but undiscovered antagonist principle, they first felt its worth, authenticated its justness, and then went to the struggle of death in its defence. What are the results? The principle has survived its first patrons, and is now circling the globe. From us to the south pole, from sea to sea, almost every foot of soil is disenthralled from European rule, the peasants of the vales and hardy mountaineers of the old world snuff the air of liberty from our shores and pant for the blessings we enjoy.

What has done this? Opinion!—mind aroused, and stimulated into action. It is a fearful power to unloose, but it is more fearful when arbitrarily confined. When ardent truth has once fallen where it kindles, and latent thought has been drawn from the quickened mind, it thenceforth becomes a sword of lightning which no material scabbard can sheathe.

The volcano in eruption, if allowed in a natural way to expend its force may be comparatively harmless. Its currents of noisome scoria and melted rock may flow down through channels blasted by outbursts of preceding flame, or they may quietly subside at the roots of richest vines to improve their flavor and mature the richest fruit. But when the crater is closed by force, and the abortive attempt is made with coercive bonds to imprison internal heat, then there is danger all around. No one can safely anticipate where or in what shape the inevitable explosion will appear. You may, if you choose, play with the uncaged lion,—you may tantalize the tiger when the first gush of warm blood is on his gnashing teeth, but do not peril yourselves and your country by sporting with an incensed public opinion!

"At whom do lions cast their gentle looks?
 Not to the beast that would usurp their den.
 Whose hand is that the forest bear doth lick?
 Not his, that spoils her young before her face.
 Who scapes the lurking serpent's mortal sting?
 Not he that sets his foot upon her back.
 The smallest worm will turn when trodden on;
 And doves will peck, in safeguard of their brood."

The age of physical force is passing away. Men are beginning to be less enthusiastic in heroising their fellow men for wholesale murder. Probably we shall not vote the apotheosis of many more military chieftains. The gladiatorship of mind must be our peril and our glory. It is useless to stand still and frown, as if we could wink difficulties away. If a great conflict arises, why "let the weakest fend off." Two things demand gratitude.

First, *God gives the best minds the widest field.* All souls have some points of contact. Love of fraud and error are unnatural. One true soul will touch the latent springs in every other. The sparks of genius will kindle. The voice of reason, truth and justice will eventually be heard. The whole earth listens. When the ambassador from God shall appear with true credentials,—a heart to feel every throbbing of humanity and an intellect armed and ready to make aggressions on every tyrannical foe, *that man will be heard!*

In the *second* place, *God gives favor* to the best men by *ensuring their success.* The certainty of triumph lies in the inherent superiority of truth over error. Good men have a wide field,—they ask no favor but a fair one. If this is unjustly forbidden, it is only a momentary restraint. Every free element comes to their aid. Some press will throw out rays of light. Some kindred soul will speak. Slander only reduplicates truth indirectly by its repetitions of detraction. Every breeze blows but to augment the treasure it circulates. Every bounding billow rolls joyously on to the world's limits, rejoicing in the dissemination of that which is most like itself—truth!—knowing no fear and yielding to no chain, but living on forever, boundless, fetterless, sublime! Who is so mean as to quail before the discussion of any important truth?

"If we have whispered truth,
 Whisper no longer;
 But speak as the thunder doth,
 Stern and stronger."

If a storm gathers in the political or moral heavens, it is more than folly, in our age, to deprecate its approach or fear its might. We must have men of no whimpering, childish composition to

conduct off safely the elements of cumulated wrath. Men who efficiently serve their generation are of this mettle. They were anticipated and described by the classic poet,—the moral giants who march along the earth and across the ocean, but their front is among the stars. They do not stand with pale lips and quaking knees, but grasping the pillars of the temple where tyranny sits enthroned, not in blindness, like the strong man of old, to be self immolated, they crush oppression from its iron throne and trample in their strength on the colossal ruins. Day and night, sunshine and storm, are vicissitudes which neither impede such men nor change their course. They are not weathercocks to be turned by the winds, but they take their positions in storms, like the Alps, to turn the wind. A great American poet has told us the whole truth in lines worthy of the country and the man:

“ Truth crush’d to earth shall rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers ;
But error wounded writhes in pain,
And dies among her worshippers. ”

It is suggested in our text that the service we owe our age is measured and sanctioned by the Divine will. “ David served his generation by the will of God.” How shall we deserve this eulogium? We must rise above a slavish devotion to a sect, and consult our common Father’s will. We must so far loosen ourselves from a segment of the circle of humanity as to comprehend the whole. When men are furiously and fanatically fond of a particular object, they will prefer it to their own peace, to their own life, and to every other claim. Men should be decided, all men should have their sentiments well understood by themselves and frankly avowed to others. “ ’Tis noble to have a giant’s strength, but not to use it *as* a giant.” We should be open to conviction while we are enforcing it. The outlet of generosity is the inlet of true greatness. “ The liberal soul,” said Solomon, “ shall be made fat.” God puts a noble and generous man into stall-feed, while the poor, meagre, miserable miser is left to shrivel up his pigmy soul in this world, and in the great winnowing day of God’s almightiness, the crisped and haggard *thing* will be blown into eternal despair by the burning winds of contempt.

The will of God requires us not to elevate a few by depressing the many, but on the contrary to seek the greatest good of the greatest number. What means are to be used? This brings me to the great point I would enforce in all this discourse. We must educate. Let us not leave the mass of mind to grow ignorant and corrupt, and afterwards attempt coercively to bind it. Xerxes may as well expect to chain the vexed Hellespont in peace. Legislation is impotent any longer to resist the beamings of a brighter day. Knowledge is generous and communicative, and jealous-

sy at its progress is a sure symptom of its want. But, thank God, the day has come when it cannot be successfully resisted. Superstition may condemn Galileo for his improved astronomy, but the earth continues to turn round with all its stupid inhabitants revolving into light. Some are born in darkness, have always dwelt there from choice, it is *their* native land, for it they fight, and it is the only sense in which they are patriotic. This is natural, but they and all like them who fear the effulgence bursting up the horizon should quickly kindle counter fires and *educate*, EDUCATE! The more obstructions you throw before the flooding tide of knowledge, the more destructive energies will be developed. The force of cannon may quell mobs, but education will prevent them. Moral power creates the strongest munitions of safety; while arbitrary compulsion degrades both the tyrant and his victim. We may expect that a few will continue to cry out against increased illumination, as that which they deprecate shames bigotry, cures superstition, and destroys all tyranny over body and soul. But the fire-cross of wisdom is shining from hill-top to hill-top, and is rapidly bounding from hand to hand. Aggressions into the kingdom of darkness have commenced. We do not "cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war," but in God's name and for all God's creatures we do say "Let there be Light!" It is said that if the beak of a bird is bound up fast, and his wings broken, he can still live and breathe through the hollow bones. But, say we, give the bird both wings and beak to be used as heaven designed. Epictetus told his sovereign that he would confer a greater favor upon the state by elevating the thoughts of the people than by raising the roofs of their houses.

To sow the seeds of thought in uncultivated mind, is the first duty of this age; and on the timely discharge of this duty our salvation depends. The lower classes must be made intelligent men before they can possibly become useful citizens. The time will soon come if it has not already dawned, when the greatest martial victory ever achieved will be regarded as infinitely less important than the opening of the first Lyceum or the establishment of an additional school. Mind, ruling with a sway as peaceful as sunlight, like it will be most powerful. There are not physical energies enough in the universe to bend one thought of the human soul: and if we can succeed in training the rising generation as they should be trained, each youth will become an intelligent patriot ready to say to any oppressor as the ancient hero said—"You may destroy the *case* of Anaxarchus, himself you cannot reach."

The extent and resources of our country ought to stimulate us to prompt and persevering action in this enterprise. We have already under cultivation a fragment of our vast domain, including twenty-six sovereign states, some of which are larger and more powerful than whole kingdoms in Europe. We are occupying

an area of two million three hundred thousand square miles; or, one billion four hundred and seventy two million acres. What a theatre is here spread out for the last experiment of civilization! A son of the Pilgrims may turn his back on the dust of his sires and the foam of his ocean haunts, and travel three thousand miles towards the setting sun, and still be on his fatherland. The most magnificent scenery will greet him everywhere. Chains of inland seas, and innumerable majestic rivers leaping from their mountain springs, and coursing from Columbus to Oregon, from the Lake of the Woods to New Orleans, may entice him on through every zone and every clime, from the stern north to the balmy south, from the regions of rock and ice to the perpetual zephyr and rose, a journey of twenty thousand miles, and yet he will not have passed from his fatherland.

But what if along our coasts, our rivers, our plantations, mind lies passive to the bigot and the demagogue? What if some crafty intriguer, clothing his hollow pretensions in "the rhinoceros skin of impudence," shall act the part of a baser Cromwell here, by launching from the little fulcrum of a military and religious despotism a power which once annihilated all that remained to England of church and parliament, frightened the great nation into submissive, dumb despair, and

"hewed the throne
Down to a block!"

Let foreign bigots flood our land, and native intellect be steeped in ignorance but for a brief cycle of years, and the dreadful end will come, the last experiment of republican government will fail, patriotism will perish and this great national compact will tumble to ruins, like a globe shattered by earthquakes. We must educate. We must supply the means to cultivate the hardy yeomanry scattered over "the low-lying fields of our beautiful land." Especially is it needed that the cant and tenets of religion should give place to a generous spirit and an active benevolence. Make the pulpit respectable and it will be respected. Do not drive thinking men from the sanctuary. Let the altar of God remain attractive as it was originally designed, the watch tower of wisdom and not the throne of dulness. Keep teachers of religion out of the political arena. May God paralyze the hand that would unite church and state under our skies. We can dispense with such a curse. Let statesmen look well to their appropriate business, and let religionists see that truth is not perverted nor morals injured. No preacher should be a partisan, but every herald of the Cross should be a sentient nerve of Freedom, the toughest sinew in the whole body of patriotism.

The result and reward of a useful life is a peaceful death. When David had served his generation "he fell on sleep." This

beautiful description of a peaceful termination of life's toils and solicitudes, is applied to David, Solonion, Jehosaphat and Hezekiah in the Old Testament, and to Lazarus and Stephen in the New. To the conscientious there is no guile in life, and to the useful there is no terror in death.

“ The good man lays his hand upon the skies
And bids earth roll, nor heeds her idle whirl.”

He who has consulted the will of God and the welfare of mankind in the transactions of his life, will not fear with Moses to “go up into mount Nebo and *die in the mount.*” The veteran christian be his walk of life what it may, will hear the summons without remorse, and like the venerable Grecian sage surrounded by grateful pupils, will calmly fold his mantle about him and sit down to die. He bids the world good night and wakes in eternity all fresh for an immortal race and reward!

The purpose of this discourse will be lost unless an immediate effect is produced on those who hear it. We have no time to waste. The remote horizon gleams with lurid foretokenings, the monitory thunder mutters hoarsely, and reverberates through subterranean caves. The sagacious look thoughtful, and the patriotic with suppressed forebodings anticipate coming storms. There is no better alternative than to prepare for them. To be conscious of our peril, is to be already in a propitious condition to avert it. To have good men among us well educated, is to possess the richest gifts of a beneficent Providence; but to suffer under great powers perverted, is to be scourged with the bitterest curse. An uneducated population may be degraded; a population educated in unrighteousness will be ungovernable. The one may grind in slavery; the other will give anarchy its venom and its crimes. All lesser luminaries that shone on the reflecting Nile found no responsive melody; but when the Sun shone there, even stony Memnon poured forth melodious strains. The light of flowers, of stars, and of kindred intellect may with intellect harmonize in the notes of inarticulate praise, but it is only the highest light that wakes the adoration of gratitude vocal and sincere. A palace of ice may be radiant with hues as splendid as they are cold, but while the fabric is admired it melts, and as its treacherous material grows liquid around the imprisoned occupant, his remorse will ignite it into a sea of flame.

It is demanded by our country and our God that you who occupy the principal places should be men of principle. Your talents, all the influences you can wield, are to be consecrated to the public good. Your responsibility is fearfully great. If you err even in an honest view of your duty, mistake the spirit of the age, wound the constitution under which we subsist or indulge private passion at the cost of the general weal, than will you

suffer the reprisal which neither wealth nor station can avert,— you will receive in your persons, and forever pay in your fame, the penalty of those whom Providence signalizes as doomed but not useless barriers to the violent current of changeful times. If any wish to augment the fury of gathering waters by braving them, they will only prepare fertility for coming generations by forcing them to sweep away unrighteous impediments, and then to waste their rage in diffusion. Every violence done to human rights is grimly noted down in the grand impeachment-book by the Genius of Humanity who patiently waits till the shadow upon the darkening political sun-dial points the hour of retribution. The crafty demagogue may hurl

“ His dazzling spells into the spongy air
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion
And give it false presentiments,

but hypocritical falsehood is always suicidal to its own interests. “ Be ye sure your sin will find you out.” The gawdy shows of the coronation of chicanery and ignorance cannot endure and will not long beguile. Restless wisdom has a broom to give to the world a speedy riddance of all such nuisances.

We all have a great work to do. Political asperity should be softened, popular ignorance dispersed, and a moral emancipation every where achieved. This will require protracted and incessant toil. It is vain to wait for some potent magic to change the character of a people all at once. We have the inveterate habits of centuries to conquer. A copious administration of food is not the most prudent means of curing the debility which results from protracted abstinence. The influence of example descends. We must have purity, patriotism and piety in high places. We need statesmen who shall aspire not so much to harrangue each other as to exemplify exalted virtues before a great, earnest and intelligent nation.

Pardon the warmth of my expressions. I know where I am and whom I am addressing; but under the eaves of your magnificent Capitol, and in this dense throng of chivalrous Southerners, I think of that venerable christian patriot whose son was my father, and on whose white locks my young brow leaned and learned the sentiments which he enthusiastically imbibed from the lips of Washington and Lafayette. Not like Spartacus do I rush to this scene and under oppression cry—“ I’m here to fight!”— but as a free man among the free, I pray you guard well and transmit unimpaired the great inheritance which our fathers won. Go to your constituents and declare your purpose; and if some rival, skilful in meanness, commands more votes because his whiskey equals his selfishness let him enjoy his brief triumph. Labor generously for the real good of your county and your

commonwealth, while life lasts, and then fall on sleep as gently as the beneficent orb of day sinks from human view. A glorious reaction will follow, and your son, justly proud of an upright father's integrity, or a beneficiary, rescued from obscurity by your kindness and educated as a worthy successor in the legislative hall will stand there with tears of gratitude more noble than a coronet, and inspired with an eloquence more thrilling and magnanimous than the sycophancy of a parasite will proclaim in deathless tones that,

“—————Man was made to know,
 And there will be a time when this great truth,
 Electric shall run from man to man,
 And the blood-cemented pyramids of ignorance
 Shall by its flash be thrown to earth in atoms---
 When it shall blaze with sun-refulgent splendor
 And *the whole earth be lighted.*”

There is an imposing grandeur in public testimonials to exalted worth. It is a noble thing to honor the truly excellent of our race; it awakens the purest sympathies and gives energy to the most generous sentiments. It has always been natural for nations to associate the honors rendered to great men with religious solemnities. We would not be idolatrous, neither would we wish to deprive society of the illustrious, nor disenchant human nature of the love of glory. We would only have men seek true celebrity, by executing what is worthy of being celebrated. True honor is not external; it can only be acquired by virtuous integrity in all our relations to man and God. Moral honor alone is permanent. Like a hymn it is always attractive, while the fleeting puff of worldly praise is like a street song, which wearies the ear. Fame created and sustained by intrinsic worth is like the planets on high. To our imperfect sense they may sometimes appear to stand still, or move backward; while in reality, under the guidance of the Infinite, they never are arrested in their orbits, but with an original and sublime momentum compass the heavens. False fame is like a gawdy flag floating over a foundered ship; it streams out gaily as the craft sinks, and then disappears forever. Fondness for such honors is certainly “avarice of air”; while a deep passion for enduring reputation is among the noblest emotions of the human heart. The mind that is indifferent to the veneration of posterity is undeserving of contemporary esteem. Citizens and Patriots make this great boon your own. Secure the homage of unborn generations, by opening fountains to supply their wants as they rise. Let the stream of high thoughts and generous deeds go sounding down the future, to charm the dull into intelligence and rouse the obdurate into praise, deep and sublime as the mighty ocean.

There are in this congregation many christians, and christian ministers. Let us, my brethren, approach the holy altar in spirit, and before this solemn stillness is broken by the moving mass, like the young Carthagenian swear eternal enmity to every vice. Then may a Father's blessing go with us, our words of stern truth be more often a warning than a prophecy, and our influence in the cause of God and our country continually increased,

“Till wrapt in fire the realms of ether glow,
And heaven's last thunders shake the world below.”

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C. A. T.

REVIEW

OF

THE SERMON OF THE RT. REV'D L. S. IVES, D. D.,

“BISHOP OF NORTH-CAROLINA,”

AT THE CONSECRATION OF

THE RT. REV'D JOHN JOHNS, D. D.,

ASSISTANT BISHOP OF VIRGINIA.

BY THE REV'D BENNETT T. BLAKE,

OF THE NORTH-CAROLINA CONFERENCE.

RALEIGH:

T. LORING, PRINTER—OFFICE OF THE NORTH CAROLINA STANDARD.

1843.

TO THE READER.

“What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee, to the earth?”

READER: The age of miracles and prophetic vision has passed away—the world is growing old and tremulous. Signs and wonders are seen in the earth, in the heavens, and under the earth. Terrific dreams disturb our repose—and waking visions, unlike departed and unhappy ghosts, go not away “when the light of the morning breaketh.” Now the Raven’s croak—that dread precursor of Death—spreads terror in the domestic circle, and the little ones draw closer to the maternal arm. The fiery Comet with its blazing trail, portentous of approaching war, sweeps in its unmeasured orbit over our world. The sun goes down behind a lowering sky. Forked lightnings skip and play amidst the sombre clouds, in lines of lurid light; and loud, rustling thunder—“the majestic voice of an angry God”—peal after peal, strikes consternation in the guilty heart. When lo! riding above the storm, One like the Son of God appears in sight, and utters the language of reproof—“Ye hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times.” Then came one and told his dream, saying “The burden of the Lord, the burden of the Lord;” and another asked “What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee, to the earth?” and he ran to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said, “Is not my word like as fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? The Prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream: and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully! What is the chaff to the wheat?” saith the Lord. “And when I looked, behold a hand was sent into me, and lo! a roll of a book was therein, and he spread it before me: and it was written within and without, and therein lamentations and mourning and wo.” And when I awoke, I found I had been reading the Sermon of Bishop Ives.

Reader! Catholic, Protestant, or Dissenter, procure *the Sermon!* Read, learn, mark, and properly digest it, if you can, and you will be more ready than ever, in the language of the Fathers of the Reformation, most devoutly to pray: “From all false doctrine, heresy and schism, from hardness of heart and contempt of thy word and commandment—Good Lord deliver us!”

REVIEW.



By a careful examination of the principles and statements set forth in the Sermon of the Rt. Rev'd L. SILLIMAN IVES, the intelligent reader will not fail to discover that the Sermon, in its published form, is designed to arouse *Churchmen* in Virginia and North-Carolina from a too quiescent and conservative state in regard to heresy and schism, (as these terms are applied to other Churches,) which the Bishop saw every where abounding, and often running into the prurience and excess of novelty. Appropriating to the Protestant Episcopal Church the name of Catholic—limiting the generic term of christian to the members of his own sect, and ranking all other Churches under the general denomination of *dissenters*, and sometimes *professors* of the faith—the reverend gentleman overlooks, for the time being at least, the evils existing in the Catholic Church and “*the world at large*,” and enters, like a redoubtable champion, into the general crusade of high-churchmen against these pestiferious sects, defined in the appendix as “Romanist, Calvinist, Socinian, Methodist, and their kindred hosts;” exhorting and invoking, most feelingly and piteously, the Bishops and Clergy, and all true churchmen, to put on the armor of ancient Apostolical authority, and aid him in extirpating schism and heresy and semi-infidelity, as they are revealed in all their proportions, under the various modifications of dissent—a principle so antagonistical to the catholic unity of the Church, that one, if not both, must needs die in the conflict—assuring them, by the most infallible arguments and the most candid statements, that the prosperity of the Church catholic has been greatly diminished, her glory obscured, her advancement retarded, if not entirely obstructed, by dissenters; that the difficulties of the success of the modern Apostles have increased to such an alarming degree, by the degeneracy of the times, that the heart of a Bishop well nigh fails at the appalling scene upon which he gazes;—that, in view of these difficulties and embarrassments, it is the first duty of Bishop JOHNS to come out openly and decidedly a high-churchman; to lower the white flag of peace and amity; to raise the banuer of the cross, bearing on one side in no *ambiguous terms* the inscription *Apostolical Succession*, and on the reverse *Episcopacy*

Diocesan jure divino; that under this banner all true churchmen should unite; that by lessening the comprehension of their charity and amity, and bringing them within the narrow limits of the system of Catholic exclusion, they should not only put themselves in a posture of defence, but resume the originally aggressive character of the Apostolical Church in its purest and most ancient form—not so much as a witness and defender of the truth against the wickedness and profligacy of “*the world at large*,” but as a reprover of sectarian infidelity, which, under the mask of a loud and rampant *profession*, shelters itself against the weapons of truth, securely entrenched within the enclosures of some modification of ecclesiastical polity, from which it may now more successfully assail the institutions of the Catholic Church; that, inasmuch as they, and they *only* who are thus truly catholic, compose the one only true Apostolical Church, it is their duty as christians, in the only available sense, not only to contend for the faith once for all delivered to the Saints, and now in the highest sense committed to their trust, but, as churchmen, to contend for Episcopacy, as the only instituted means, as the only channel of mercy and grace to the otherwise desperate necessities of *dissenters*, as well as other condemned sinners;—that, in view of *this* desperate condition of “*these men as a body*,” it is the very highest act of mercy and charity to make an effort, however unsuccessful, to inform them, to correct their errors, and bring them into a state of *certain salvation*, through the interposition of a divinely constituted ministry.

After carefully reading the Sermon over and over again, weighing its studied and ingenious phraseology, we sum up its contents in the words of a strong and perspicuous writer on a similar occasion, varying only a few terms to justify the application of our views to the Bishop’s Sermon, instead of to the publication of the Bishop of Aire, which called forth the “*Difficulties of Romanism*,” by GEO. STANLEY FABER, Rector of Longnewton, England:

“Of this *Sermon* the main object is evidently the proselytism of *Methodist and other dissenting* laity. Such being the case, it was necessary on the one hand to attack *dissenters generally*, while on the other it was equally necessary to vindicate and to recommend the peculiar doctrines and practices of *high-churchmen*. The respectable author of the *Sermon* is a Prelate of the *Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocess of North-Carolina*. He has undertaken to exhibit the peculiarities of *high-church divinity*, as they really exist, not as they

are alleged to have been disfigured by *the Oxford tract writers*, or dissenting misrepresentations; and in his high Episcopal character he may be viewed as one who speaks with a full measure both of knowledge and of authority. Under the hands of the exemplary Bishop of North-Carolina, *high-churchism* appears in its most captivating habiliments. Whatever might awaken the *suspensions of a dissenter* is gracefully and ingeniously decorated by a glowing conception and a fervid eloquence. Doctrines and practices which the articles and homilies had taught us to look upon with unutterable dislike, are shown, on the professed score of scriptural and primitive christianity, to be not only lawful, expedient and most eligible, but even venerable and obligatory. And that *alone* Catholic Church, which the distempered imagination of the panic-struck dissenters, and a due proportion of Protestant Reformers in the Church of England and the United States, had charged with verging towards an unmixed spiritual despotism, proves, upon a candid examination, to be nothing more nor less than the glorious liberty of the Gospel, wherewith Christ has made us free. If, then, high-churchism, even as exhibited by such an advocate as the Bishop of North-Carolina, *still* presents such inseparable difficulties, the sober churchman, as well as the dissenter, will at least pause before he adopts a theological system thus unhappily circumstanced."

We have long since desired to see under what modification the theological system of Oxford would make its appearance in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States; there being so little affinity between that freedom of worship which is so successfully maintained in her articles and liturgy, and that form of spiritual despotism which has been but too extensively revived and promulgated under the imposing names of "ancient christianity" and evangelical piety. And although it does not come to us in the Sermon of Bishop Ives, like the meteorous and portentous glare which streams across the Atlantic, it nevertheless falls gently on us like the changeful moonlight from the shores of New Jersey. If the pure coin, bearing the full image and superscription of D. Hook, has not been imported into the American Church in sufficient quantity to supply the deficiency of a circulating medium, enough has come to us to enable us to mould our symbols after the same likeness and image, and thereby to supply the desideratum out of our domestic manufacture. Hence in the short space of a few years, newspaper scribblers, tract-writing sermonizers,

and book makers, some with names and some without names, like the ephemera of nature, drawn out of their cells by a genial sun, have sallied forth from their long night and winter of discontent, to breathe and live and flutter among kindred animalculæ, until the short day that gave them birth sinks to rest. The coming forth of these, under the burning zeal of the master-spirits of Oxford, has called forth another tribe equally strong, courageous and belligerent, and a war of extermination seems to have begun. At all events these skirmishes between the small tribes seem to have been a prelude to a more general and more irreconcilable hostility between the two adverse principles of spiritual domination and religious freedom. In this contest, it may be said with truth, "Greek has met Greek." learning has met learning, antiquity has met antiquity, authority has met authority, Bishop has met Bishop and Archbishop has met Archbishop, Priest has met Priest, layman has met layman, until MARY and ELIZABETH, if they have not been combatants, have mixed an itching desire to share in the spoils of victory. Although the battle-field be not in those once happy and sunny plains where first the war-worn Trojan found a home and a heart in the hospitable dome of the Latin King and his lovely daughter, where the Horatii and the Curiatii, to stay the slaughter of their countrymen, sacrificed their lives on the altar of patriotism; although the deadly strife may not be going on in the valley between the Capitoline and the Quernal hills, where for the last time Roman and Sabine arms clashed in direful conflict, till the Roman matrons, allied to both by nature's sweetest and strongest ties, bade them put up the sword—yet, may we not hope that the fair daughters of Jerusalem, who went forth weeping, to behold the crucifixion of their Lord, may have tears to spare to bathe the wounds which he now daily receives in the house of his friends?

Disclaiming all personal unkindness to Bishop IVES, entertaining for the Church over which he presides naught but feelings of high christian regard, and for the individual members of the Church the most sincere and unaffected good will, which we have on all suitable occasions evinced, we approach the task upon which we have essayed to enter, under the most honest conviction that, if we succeed in what we have undertaken, we shall alike benefit the cause of true piety, whether in the Church which claims to be the only true Church, or in that which claims an humble share of the blessings and privileges of the family of God—"the household of faith, builded upon the Apos-

bles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."

The hue and cry which has been made against dissent, since the reign of the too haughty and overbearing ELIZABETH, Queen of England, which has come down to our own times, like the rolling onward of the coming storm, falls gratingly and harshly on an American ear, and must ever be regarded by all considerate men, in whose estimation the end to be attained does not sanctify the means, as one of the artifices by which clerical vanity and jealousy endeavor to fortify themselves in the possession of titles which they have not legitimately acquired. Next to the assignation of a false cause and the imputation of evil where it does not exist, we regard the frequent, the incessant application of dissent to the different Churches in the United States, as one of the most disingenuous devices of intelligent men to perpetrate a pious fraud upon their less informed fellow-citizens; to harrow up their minds by terrifying images, rendered the more horrible and monstrous because they are indistinctly seen or imperfectly defined; and thereby to transfer the hatred and malignity of a cruel and barbarous age to a period and a people whose chief excellence it is to place things in their true position, accurately to define their varied relations, and to enforce, by equitable laws, as far as possible, their mutual obligations. Among the appellatives used for this purpose, by churchmen of the higher order, none seems to be so availing or relied on so much as that of dissenter—a term imported, with other like commodities, across the Atlantic, and incorporated in the vocabulary of Church tactics; transferred to the catechism of young children, and taught them as regularly as the Creed and Lord's prayer. Every intelligent man knows that in its application to the different Churches in the United States, it has neither reason nor analogy nor common sense to justify it; that it is an outrage upon the courtesies of life, upon the decencies and proprieties which the common consent of mankind regards essential to the well-being of society. However, in the American States, it has no meaning at all, or just so much as will make its application as proper and fitting in the mouth of a Mormon Prophet as in that of a modern Prelate. In this country we have no ecclesiastical machinery attached to the Government; and it is a subject of devout thankfulness to Almighty God, that we have not. Had it been otherwise, the various political conflicts and revolutions (as has been the case in Great Britain, and as it may be the case again) instead of being marked only with the personal disappointment of various aspirants—and if you

please so to add, pecuniary embarrassments in the fiscal operation of the Government and the affairs of individuals—would have whirled on in their accelerated fury, like the merciless car of Juggernaut, over the best blood of American citizens. Where, then, is the propriety of familiarizing to our minds and the minds of our children, the images of things which, with us, have never existed since the sages of the Revolution laid it down as a fundamental principle in national law, that no man should be restrained from the worship of God according to the dictates of his conscience, so long as he regards the rights of others? When our enlightened statesmen laid it down as a maxim of judicious policy, that error may be tolerated while truth is left free to combat it, why, let me ask, do we continually revive the images of the past, unless, like desperate adventurers, we sigh over some irrevocable loss, or riot in fancy on the pleasures of a long cherished hope. If after all that has been said for years past—after our own charitable effort to reform them of their errors—churchmen will persist contemptuously to style us dissenters, we shall be compelled to give them over as incorrigible offenders if not contumacious schismatics, to the “uncovenanted mercies” of public criticism; as legitimate subjects of a literary inquisition, for violating the rules of philological accuracy, overturning the established principles of logical precision, and sinning against the common decencies of christian intercourse.

As the main point of attack set forth in the Sermon is dissent, we hope the reader will not be offended if we take some little pains to define the term. WALKER says: “*Dissent*, a verb, to disagree, differ. *Dissenter*, one who refuses the communion of the English Church.” That, of course, applies to those who live under the English Government. A dissenter, in that sense, is one who refuses communion in the established Church of the Government under which he lives.—Will the Bishop allow us to take the word in the first sense? Then it will amount to this: WE *dissent* from the BISHOP, and he *dissents* from us; so we are both dissenters. Will he take it in the second sense? Then the Bishop may be a dissenter from the Church of England for all that we can tell—at least he does not pray for the success of Her Majesty’s fleet and army against the Chinese; nor do his members nor himself, like the oppressed and persecuted dissenter, pay the burdensome taxes imposed for the support of the establishment, whatever may be the character of the parish minister—whether a “cossacked huntsman or a fiddling Priest”—and then pay their own minister, and

support by voluntary contributions their benevolent institutions. If the Bishop dissents, we do not; for if the English Church has been brought over to the American States, it must have been by Bishop DOANE, of New Jersey, and as it has no corporation in this country, we do not know it, either in civil or ecclesiastical law.

But let us try the third definition, which is more general, and say that a dissenter is one who refuses communion in the established Church of the Government under which he lives. If this is what the Bishop and other high-churchmen mean, we shall not fall out, though it is given to us in contempt, without the least propriety of speech. If this be dissent, we are content to bear the contumelious sneer of the churchman when he arranges his organs of articulation with so much precision and says *dissent*. We are in company with some of the choicest spirits, whose stern and unbending courage made the thrones of the CÆSARS tremble—not by thundering anathemas, but by reasoning with their occupants in meekness on the great subjects of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come, and telling the simple story of Jesus and the Resurrection. In this respect, at least, we are the followers of the Apostles, if not their successors. For his dissent from Judaism, PAUL says: “Of the Jews, five times I received forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day have I been in the deep.” We find ourselves among the faithful at that period when the courageous ATHANASIUS, for his inflexible adherence to the doctrines of the Gospel in opposition to the decree of the Emperor, was banished from his Episcopate at Alexandria; we find ourselves in company with WICKLIFF, that luminous star that rose on Britain’s Isle, the precursor of the glorious Reformation; and finally, we are with CRANMER and RIDLEY, and thousands of Reformers in England, whose blood enriched the soil of their country and made it prolific with all the fruits of religious freedom. What were all the Reformers who fell victims to the ferocity of Bloody Queen MARY? Who saved their lives, in those times of blood? The obsequious Parliament and the obsequious Clergy, who—like the French diplomatist who was always on the side of him who retained the power to bestow his benefits—could in one reign call the Church of Rome a harlot, and in the next reign submissively ask absolution from the Pope.

Search the History of the Church, either of Catholic, or Reformed,

or Protestant history, and every candid and impartial man will see that, in almost every instance, the triumph of *dissenters* has been the triumph of religious and often of civil freedom. The genius of liberty has ever hovered over them; and when they have fallen, she has wept and hid herself in dens and caves of the earth.

The English historian, who, though he was an infidel, not so much in respect of true christianity as set forth by its most blessed Author, as in respect to that mongrel generated by the extraordinary mixture of truth with error, freedom with bondage, which the English establishment has ever exhibited, and which it will continue to exhibit, under its present modification—we say, the historian has left it on record that the Puritan dissenters of ELIZABETH'S reign, “were they by whom alone the precious sparks of liberty had been kindled and were preserved, and to whom the English owe the whole freedom of their Constitution.” And yet these are the men against whom the Sermon aims its sternest, heaviest blows! These are the disturbers of the Bishop's indivisible and universal and unchangeable unit! To put down whom, he most imploringly and piteously calls upon the Bishops and all good churchmen to unite! That this is the main design of the Sermon appears on its face, its body, and its appendages. If any further proof were necessary, we have it at hand, in the antecedent course of the Bishop in his Diocess. But to form a just estimate of the Sermon—to see its “merciful adaptation” to accomplish its charitable end—let us take a more extended view of the circumstances that gave birth to the Bishop's most extraordinary performance. The mere consecration of Bishop JOHNS was an incident only; the Sermon was consequent only in the order of time. We must look for its causation below the surface of the events then transpiring; and to give the subject its proper illustration, we must go back, we must look around; we must, by the power of sympathy, transfer ourselves from our own position and stand where Bishop IVES stood, that our eye may trace the images which disturbed and perplexed, and fired and cooled, alternately, the Bishop's mind; we must catch the inspiration of his fervid eloquence, while, like a Prophet of old, he gives out the shadowy images of coming events—events yet in the future, but painted on the broad canvass of rational conception, which we may trace, though unblest with prophetic vision.

It is known, doubtless, to the intelligent reader, that in addition to that subdued tone which, ever since the haughty Queen ELIZABETH,

whom the Bishop in his appendix quotes with so much complacency, took it into her head to strip the Clergy of England of every thing except the ministering God's word and the Sacraments, and, in return for their submission, agreed to rule all estates and degrees committed to her charge by God, whether they be ecclesiastical or temporal, and to restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evil doers; the voice of discontent, as well as dissent, has grated harsh thunder on the churchman's ear. The Church of England, being an essential element, a part and parcel of the Government, the Church is necessarily involved in all political questions as well as ecclesiastical. Whatever may be the popular will, they have for the time being transferred their original and inherent sovereignty to a Constitution which, while it was wrung from the hands of their rulers at different periods of their history, nevertheless secured to the subjects an eminent degree of constitutional liberty; such as, perhaps, no nation on earth ever enjoyed under the prerogative of the crown and the privileges of an aristocracy. But notwithstanding, the British nation presents an anomaly for which it is difficult for the most enlightened statesmen to account—a mixture of spiritual despotism and civil freedom.

The parties disaffected towards the Government in its radical principles are, perhaps, few in number; and they, as in all Governments, may be, for aught we know, of the baser sort, at least in the estimation of the "powers that be." But they are few in comparison with the great body of the nation, who, while they seek redress as far as they have the constitutional power, are as loyal to the Queen as her most humbled and obliged Bishops and Archbishops, without money and without price, without the regalia of office or the ensigns of royal favor. Among these are Catholics, and dissenters in general; not those who rebel against the Government, but who dissent from the authority of Bishops and other Clergy to take the keeping of their judgment, their consciences and their souls out of the hands of individuals where the God of nature and of grace has placed it. But yet they pay their taxes, they pay their Church dues—not without complaint, but they pay them—although they see themselves oppressed and burdened, and ground down to misery and poverty, to support a bloated establishment called a Church establishment, which, were it not for the golden chain that binds it to the throne, would fall to pieces by the repulsiveness of its own materials, or dwindle away to an *invisible or indivisible* UNIT. As the only hope of relief is from the

House of Commons, that being the popular branch of the Government, religion has become so involved with the popular elections that christians of all sects, as well as infidels, have, in these elections, been found in union—not to subvert the Government, but to carry the election. However diversified their views may be on every other subject, they are united in this: *that there ought to be a reform at least in the ecclesiastical machinery that grinds them so heavily.* It would be folly in the extreme for those who are oppressed, to hope for any relaxation of the prerogatives of the crown or the privileges of the Church, (especially when the Queen is daily admonished that her throne stands or falls with the establishment,) unless, by a formidable array of numbers, the subjects of the Government can wring from their death-grasp the reluctant concessions which they demand. They have already accomplished much—as much as the times and peculiar circumstances of the country, perhaps, justify. The dread of Romanism, which, notwithstanding the long oppression of Catholics, has increased to a most alarming extent, has arrested the progress of reform. The great body of the nation have been, and ever will be a religious people; and while the ecclesiastics of the establishment have been working the wires of Government, the Catholics and dissenters, having no part nor lot in the matter, have confined themselves to their appropriate work of spreading their religion, whether true or false; while a refined species of infidelity, affecting the Church as well as those out of it, has been substituted in the place of vital piety; and a decent conformity of the exterior man to the periodical services of the Church, constitutes, to an alarming extent, the distinctive character of a churchman as well as of a dissenter. Honorable exceptions are found; more numerous than, perhaps, have existed for many years; but still, the fact is not to be disguised that political contest between those in the Church establishment and out, that gangrene of piety has preyed upon the vitals of the Church as well as of the dissenters.—Some new adjustment of the union between the Church and the State, is imperiously demanded and impatiently looked for. The English hierarchy may continue to keep the fires of the volcano pent up, by the stern arm of civil rule; but as the smoke and dust precede an eruption, just so sure will the outbreaks of popular fury, which are frequently recurring, pour the melted lava over the plain, unless those who can do so will meet the crisis in the spirit of honorable compromise and conciliation.

A proud and overbearing priesthood may continue to sport with the miseries of an oppressed people, and trifle with the elements of the human constitution which are at work in the British nation; but the time will come when, perhaps too late, they may see their folly. So sure as human nature is the same; so sure as the fundamental principles of man's nature are the gift of God; so sure as the love of freedom is the constituent element of the English character—just so sure will the nation be one day as free in their ecclesiastical as they are in their civil Government. The stern arm of civil authority may do what the authority of the Church never has done, and never, in any age or nation, could do—smother the fires of religious freedom. But, ere long, the crisis will come; the issue will be made up, and the demands of justice must be met;—if in the true spirit of primitive Apostolical christianity, the Church and the nation may be saved; if with scorn and contempt, the giant of freedom, stung and chafed, and galled, by worse than Philistian mockery, sightless with rage but still mighty, will lay hold of the columns that support the fabric of Government, and with the last convulsive throe, pull down ruin on millions of the oppressed and the oppressors—a ruin and a desolation, beneath the rubbish of which he may find his own sepulchre, without a Priest or a ruler to write his epitaph!

In view of such appalling disasters, well might the heart of a Bishop fail! Well might any man, if soft humanity ever touched his breast; if ever pity moistened his eye; if ever, in the deep heavings of his soul, he has sent a prayer to Heaven to avert impending evils from our guilty, sin-stricken world—well might he, in view of these calamities, gather strength and fervor, from bitterness and anguish, when he prays: “From all blindness of heart, from pride, vain glory and hypocrisy, from envy, hatred and malice, and all uncharitableness—Good Lord deliver us!”

That the case of the English establishment is somewhat as we have represented, we learn from the writings of churchmen themselves. We have but little knowledge of the science of Government, much less of the secret springs which move the political machinery of nations. We know some little of human nature, and for several years we have been silently watching the movements of the Church in England and the United States. Our information is neither extensive, nor perhaps definite enough to make up an opinion as to the result. But that the issue is now made up between the Church of England and dissent,

none can deny. What mean such expressions as these on this side of the Atlantic: "Unholy alliance of infidels, papists and dissenters"? What mean the cant and studied speech of those who appeal so imploringly to the American Church "to defend her mother"? But we affirm that the issue is made up; and if there be any essential connection between the Church of England and her dissent, and the *American Church* and her dissent, we want to know and prepare for it; that it come not suddenly upon us, unawares.

The wisest and best men of all parties, in the Church and out of the Church, are preparing to meet the crisis; and there are many projectors and projects. Some, nothing will satisfy but a disruption of the Church and State alliance. Others go for a new adjustment of the union—a reform on the basis of enlightened christian principles, not according to the ancient doctrine, "no Bishop no King;" but according to the true nature and genius of christianity, as taught by the Son of God and so beautifully illustrated in the lives and acts of the Apostles—a religion which, if it does not accommodate itself to the varied "*tastes*" of men, shows us a most beautiful adaptation to their *wants* under every form of Government, absolute or constitutional, despotic or free—a religion which may live, and flourish, and glow in pristine purity, in the bosom of a Russian serf as well as in that of an American freeman—a religion which is, at all times and in all places, the "same one and only one true and saving" power, which, in the beautiful language of an English bard, says to all, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free,

*Who does the best his circumstance allows,
Does well, acts nobly—angels could no more;—*

A divine system which, when isolated from the various machineries of human government, stands alone, bearing "twelve manner of fruits, whose leaves are for the healing of the nation." Such was christianity when PAUL planted it in the various cities of Asia, Africa, in the Roman empire, and in the British Isle. Such it stood, rooted and grounded in the doctrines of Christ and his Apostles, until the dispensation of its fruits became the exclusive province of weak and fallible men, who, by a most strange infatuation, took it into their heads that God had made angels of them and had placed them, with flaming swords, pointing every way, to guard the tree of life. And because, forsooth, men would gather the fruit and eat thereof, in spite of their spiritual weapons, which they never had only in their vain imagination, they

dug up the tree as far as they could; they cut off the branches and transplanted the naked trunk in the Palace Garden, as a soil more congenial than that which God had chosen, fast by his own eternal throne. And there, in the Palace Garden, to this day it stands, if not a leafless, lifeless trunk, a vine of Sodom, yielding most abundant crops of "*horrid enormities*." While we live, we shall ever devoutly pray, from such a curse "Good Lord deliver us!"

No, say the learned men at Oxford, let us dig about and dung it, and if it bear fruit, well; if not, cut it down. But, before you do this, we will prepare to meet the crisis. If we must lose our right arm, we must strengthen the left. If civil government, which is alike ordained of God; if rulers and princes (once intended by God as nursing fathers and mothers) must resign their headship as defenders of the faith, and take their places in the Church of God, according to the relative merit of personal virtue and holiness, we must go back to ancient christianity; we must take the spiritual "*sword and axe*"—the one to guard the vine of Sodom, the other to cut down and grub up every sprig of the Apostolical root which, owing to its indestructible nature, we can never kill. By a new impropriation of all authority, of all good and all salvation to us and our successors for ever, "Princes and rulers, and men of every rank will come to bow down to us, and then we ourselves shall become rulers and princes, and our diocesses shall be principalities." To stop the allegory, let us ask what this parable meaneth?

It is known to the intelligent reader that, in view of the loss of civil power, to stop the overflowings of dissent and Romanism in England, which must ensue by a disruption of the Church establishment from the throne, some of the most learned and ingenious men in the English Church have laid the scheme to engraft on the English Church that spiritual despotism which seems to have grown up spontaneously in the very first ages after the Apostles. When usurping Prelates, like heathen priests, to increase their power and authority and enlarge their prerogatives, being destitute of the spiritual power which the Apostles had, of which they gave witness in the bestowment of spiritual gifts and the immediate punishment of the contumacious, when such punishment became a matter of prime necessity to meet some alarming exigency, they, the Bishops, devised the device of making mysteries of God's institutions and revelations. Baptism was made a mystery; confirmation, a mystery; the Lord's supper, a mystery;

marriage, a mystery; the bestowment of grace, a mystery; and ordination, the greatest of all mysteries; into which none but the Bishop was permitted to inquire, unless by his most gracious leave. This we say is the system of despotism, with all its kindred vagaries, that the learned men at Oxford would engraft on the English Church as an available substitute for the authority of civil rule, to stop dissent and Romanism in England, and save a rotten establishment.

And this they have attempted to do, not in the character of enlightened statesmen nor of enlightened christians, by giving the outlines of the plan and the details as far as the exigences of the case may be anticipated; but like artful politicians, who, keeping the great principles out of sight, proclaim they are no abstractionists, and begin by tinkering at the odds and ends of some favorite scheme, until the nation is committed to its support. Nor do they come out like honest architects, with a matured draft and an accurate admeasurement of space, and a safe estimate of cost, to meet the liberal views of an unsuspecting employer, but as a skilful projector, who, for fear of awaking the jealousy of a too rigid economy or the stronger principles of avarice, begins by shewing the plan of the vestibule, and asking the pitiful sum of a few thousand to begin with, which it would be meanness not to appropriate; and when the foundation is once laid and there is now no way of retreat, rising in demand in the increased ratio of the one million to a thousand. As one million is to one thousand, so is one thousand to a million. One thousand will do the work, but it will take a million to complete it. The Oxford men are not only men of learning, but they are far from being learned fools. They are philosophers in the highest and most comprehensive sense of that word as a scientific term. They are deeply read in human nature, as well as in the writings of antiquity. They know that the world is governed by compromise, conciliation, concession, and insinuation, as well as by attraction and cohesion; that the discordant elements of nature only required to be adjusted by the hand divine, to bring order out of chaos. They know that heat and cold, moisture and dryness, fluid and solid, might be made to dwell together in unity, could some master-spirits brood over the face of the great deep, arrange the materials and fix the bounds of their habitation. They know that the lever must compromise with the fulcrum, that the mass may be moved; that the wedge itself, with all its tremendous power, must enter by conciliation and insinuation. Accordingly they have hammered their scheme into the

form of an entering wedge; they have ground it and polished it to an imperceptible edge, and now, without hammer or mallet, or the sound of a tool, they are driving it imperceptibly into the heart of the English nation;—and but for the poor, despised dissenters, those ever watchful guardians of liberty, the British nation would, *ere long*, be, if not *now* quietly slumbering in the tranquility of a pure, unmixed spiritual despotism, in its most malignant form. Their system is so framed, that it accommodates itself to the religious prejudices of all ranks of men, however diversified their “*tastes*” or opposite their qualities, so they are not dissenters or Romanists; and even these are not left out in the details of the scheme. Their profound erudition enables them to control, if not originate the entire literature of the Church and the nation. With the great lever of the press, they are acting on the whole nation, always compromising its length to the levity or ponderosity of the mass to be moved. They have abstruse science for the thoughtful and inquisitive, and light literature for the gay and polite; leaden sermons and tracts for the grave, and songs and ballads for the gypsies; primitive christianity for the puritan; evangelical piety for the dissenter; ancient christianity for the churchman, and old and venerated names for the catholic. Such is their power over the varied department of mind, that, like the men of Ephesus, the wondering multitude lift up their voices and say, the gods are come down unto us in the likeness of men; and they call them by the names, not of heathen gods, but of the Lord Jehovah—holy fathers, holy confessors, princes, priests, and kings. And if the established priesthood do not bring oxen and garlands unto the gates to sacrifice with the people, it is because the Bishops of Oxford and Exeter* exert the *salutary influence* of their office to check their folly and extravagance; or because some desperate, hopeless dissenter, who had no hand in *originating* the scheme, and fears that his own scheme is tottering, strips off the livery of heaven, which these men have stolen to serve the Church in; exposes their nakedness, that the people may see that they are men of like passions with themselves.

But what has all this to do with the Sermon? Much every way; but chiefly and mainly because it is the head and front, the body and tail of the Sermon. There is the same connexion between them, as between the sprig and the tree from which it grows; the same connex-

* See *Note* to Bishop IVES' Sermon.

ion that there was between the Shadow of the degrees and the sundial of Ahaz. If the Sermon has no connexion with the state of the English Church and dissent, "its bones are marrowless," and there is no speculation in its eyes. And to say the least of it, it is an ingeniously contrived hobgoblin; so true, however, to nature, that unless the Bishops were drowsy and did not see the fairy thing, they must have taken it for a fancy sketch. If the Bishop applies his statements to the Churches in the United States, then they are false in fact, false in form, and false in almost every particular. These Churches are not dissenters; they are not semi-infidels; they do submit as a body to the authority of God as revealed in the Gospel, at least as fully as churchmen in general do; and their case is not more desperate than the case of those who claim to be in a state of certain salvation because they are churchmen.

We admonished the reader, in the outset, that we must not look to the circumstances immediately connected with this extraordinary Sermon. It has a deeper and more concealed root, which it is our duty to dig into. The Sermon certainly affects to appeal to private judgment and interpretation, so far as the Bishop has left the interpretation out of his notes and appendix. We will not go behind the acts of the Bishop to interrogate his motives; nor will we torture his acts to extort an answer of our own framing. We will duly acknowledge and desire to feel all the restraints of legitimate interpretation. Some things we may dare to suggest, because we have no testimony such as will be satisfactory to one who does not see the Bishop's true position.

The relation existing between the Church of England and Protestant Episcopal Church is so intimate, that, in the tropical language of their writers, one is the "mother" the other "the hopeful daughter." The metaphor has, in some instances, been carried to a ridiculous excess; and the expressions of deep solicitude for each other, would justify the belief that some high-churchmen are really afraid to trust the daughter out of sight, lest she might sell the ornaments of a mother's purity, by too much familiarity with dissent. From others you might take the impression that, though old enough, she is a rickety child, and must not be allowed to go out alone. While others view her as being yet bound by ligaments, the pulsations of which have not yet ceased to diffuse the life-blood through her system; and that if such cords as Bishop DOANE and Bishop IVES were cut asunder,

she would die an unnatural death. Writers on the other side of the Atlantic take a more rational and consistent view of her, as a noble monument of the wisdom of those pious men who reared her up from her infancy, and rejoice that, in the event of the going down of the establishment in England, *she* stands on firm footing. Such being the view entertained by churchmen, it cannot be but that a churchman in America constantly associates in his mind the two Churches; especially when it is remembered they are, as to catholic unity, one and the same. A daughter who had just been reading the painful story of a mother's calamities, might just as easily have lost sight of them in a detail of family afflictions, as for Bishop IVES to have composed a Sermon on the difficulties of a Bishop and the afflictions of the Church, without borrowing his most glowing images from the afflicted state of the Church in England. As before remarked, we must place ourselves as nearly as we can in the position of the Bishop, to see the scope and comprehension of his Sermon. After our foregoing remarks, the Sermon will help us to do so in some good degree.

The Bishop, then, must have composed his Sermon in full view of the present distracted, *dissenting* world; in view of the rapid progress of Romanism and dissent in the United States, and especially in North Carolina; and in full view of the difficulties and embarrassments he had thrown around himself, in taking the oversight of his flock in North-Carolina. Then the Sermon, in some respects, is such as we might have expected from mortified clerical ambition. He has, most signally, failed in bringing his Church out of the wilderness, in North-Carolina;—not for want of the most indefatigable zeal, the most untiring industry on his part. All who know the Bishop, know that he resembles more a universal Apostolical Bishop than a modern Diocesan, or an ancient Pastoral Bishop, from his abundant labors and visitations. His diocess extends from the Atlantic, over the Blue Ridge and the Alleghanies, to the Tennessee line; contains forty-three thousand eight hundred square miles—nearly as large as England; with a scattered population of seven hundred and fifty-three thousand one hundred souls, and twenty-five clergy. To have fulfilled his ministry, he must have crowded ten years' labor into one. But he has nearly worn himself out, literally, in the work. The last conventional report, if we remember, gave one thousand four hundred members of the Church. We have followed the Bishop, in North-Carolina almost to the seaboard, where, about ten years ago, we labored in his diocess, and often heard,

not the Episcopalians, but the Methodists speak of him in the highest terms as an eloquent, zealous minister. But the Bishop has been exceedingly disappointed, in the result of his labors; he feels it most sensibly, most painfully. But the Bishop sees nothing defective in his Apostolical organization; nothing injudicious in his own course, or defective in his own laborious ministry. He must assign some cause for the failure; for it is an implied censure upon the wisdom of God's most "wonderful adaptation" of the Gospel to meet the necessities of dying, perishing sinners; if some cause, which was not foreseen and provided against in this plan, cannot be brought to light. But the Bishop, not being able to assign any better cause, fastens it on the poor dissenters, who, perhaps, have done more towards adding to his Church than the labors of his twenty-five clerical assistants. We could inform the Bishop where the great error lies, if his insatiable cupidity of instructing others did not render him inaccessible to the teaching of unauthorized men. But the Bishop was chafed and irritated, and for aught we know dyspeptic, for his Sermon seems to be marked with high nervous excitability, under the painful influence of which our difficulties are magnified beyond all proportion. He was called on to preach at the consecration of Bishop JOHNS, assistant of Bishop MEAD, in Virginia. Now the Rev'd Bishop elect and the Rev'd Bishop IVES are as far apart, in their *private views* and some of their avowed sentiments, as a dissenter is from a high-churchman. The reader is referred to the address of the Rev'd Mr. JOHNS, to his former charge in the city of Baltimore. The Rev'd Mr. JOHNS left a flourishing church in Baltimore, of whom no churchman need be ashamed, unless he hates dissenters as if they were leprous. Under the charge of Bishop MOORE and Bishop MEAD, the Church in Virginia was comparatively undisturbed, and at peace with themselves and dissenters; and the Church was happy and prosperous. It must have been truly mortifying to the Bishop—not that it was so, but that things were so different in his own diocess. Now, to heal the wounds of his mortification, he fixes the censure upon dissenters who had blocked up his way, and like the Boar out of the wood, had spoiled his vine. He being an *experienced* Bishop, and Mr. JOHNS being an *inexperienced* Bishop, it was a most fit occasion, if possible, to cure him of his suspected fondness for dissenters; and to assure him that the most effectual way to approve himself unto God, would be to break amity with dissent; deal out to it—if not thundering anathemas, at least the heaviest, dead-

liest blows. Now we are not acquainted with the Rev'd Mr. JOHNS; but if he be the man that his writings seem to indicate, he must have thanked the Bishop for his *good intentions*, and good-naturedly joined with others in asking for the publication of the Sermon, hoping that, as there was much ambiguity in the Sermon, it would be most favorably interpreted by those most interested in it. But if Bishop JOHNS and the other clergy were aware of the purpose of the Bishop, to add his explanatory notes, and to send it forth as a suitable tract for the times, we have but little gratitude for their friendship on less imposing occasions; and we further say, that while we hear the notes of friendship quavering from their lips, we feel the sword going to our vitals. Let Shimei curse us, if so the Lord will, for our supposed rebellion against our lawful king; we can forgive him; but we trust to be delivered from the tender mercies of a Joab, lest we die with malice in our heart.

We now distinctly affirm, as our most matured private judgment, that if the Bishops and clergy asked for the publication of the Sermon, with the notes and appendix, as it now appears for distribution, it is one of those pious frauds which even good men have sanctioned in their corporate capacity, but of which they would be ashamed to have originated on their individual responsibility; that in so doing, they have affixed their official sanction to the most absurd and improbable tales against their fellow-christians; and by the circulation of the tract, in its present form, have assisted in destroying that *peace* with mankind, which they solemnly promised to promote, as far as in them lay.

The only apology our ingenuity can devise, is that they knew not what they did. They asked for the Sermon, as they heard it glowing from the speaker with all his fervid eloquence; that, as is often the case, under such circumstances, when appeals are made to our religious sentiments and feelings, they were affected more by what the speaker *said* than what he *meant*; that, consequently, they desired the Sermon, and not its explanations, as the Bishop has given them, with his silly tale about the Methodists. The pamphlet, as published, we look upon as a tract for the times, and shall so treat it.

Had the Sermon been the production of some newly initiated coxcomb, we would, in pity, have passed it by. Had it come from Dr. TAYLOR, the first fruits of Bishop IVES' labor in North-Carolina, we would have let it pass for what it is worth. But the Sermon comes to us

under the official sanction, not only of Bishop Ives, but of the Bishops and Clergy present at the consecration. It has been sent abroad, with the spirit's wing, over our poor earth, to speed on the too tardy wheels of a righteous retribution; to appease the manes of Ghostly Power, and avenge the deep damnation of this taking off. It has come to us in questionable shape;—we have dared to speak to it, if perchance it might reveal the secrets of its prison-house; and although at its revelations our blood did not curdle in our veins, nor our eyes start in their sockets, nor our hair stand on end—yet we could not forbear our pity, when we heard its sepulchral tones relate the story of its difficulties, speaking so imploringly; and we involuntarily exclaimed, Poor ghost! for well we knew that, when the shrill notes of the wakeful sentinel that tells of the coming morn, should fall on its ear, it would retire with the first stream of light, and seek companionship with its kindred *ghosts and kindred hosts*; and should ever *its shade*, that now so nobly bears the “Banner of the Cross,” deign to visit our chamber and leave his *caveat*, we will prepare to meet at Philippi; and should it be our sad misfortune there to see the noble array of Scripture facts and arguments, which we are prepared to bring into the field, overwhelmed by the superior force of authority—we shall have left to us the last resort of an American citizen, if not of a Roman freedman, to entrench ourselves behind the impregnable fortress which has been so successfully reared by freemens' noblest sons*; we shall at least leave but this last resort for the Bishop, that is: to put us, together with the learned defence of a Vestry in his own diocess, into the *Index Purgatory*, as too deeply tainted with damnable heresy to be read by the faithful.

Having thus shewn the object of the Sermon, namely, to excite the minds of churchmen against dissenters; we will now show how admirably the Bishop has preserved the unity of his design:

To accomplish this *christian* design, and to carry out the enterprize most successfully, the mere narration of facts was not sufficient, though supported by Episcopal authority. The Bishop knew full well that men's hearts have something to do with their religion, as well as their heads; he disdains not to employ all the art of the most suc-

* Declaration of Rights made by the Representatives of the Freemen of the State of North-Carolina, in Congress assembled, at Halifax, the 17th of December, in the year of our Lord 1776 “Sec. 19. That all men have a natural and unalienable right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences.”

cessful orator; he kindles up his own conception by contemplating the scene which he had spread out before him, with all its grand and sublime prospects, as well as the desolation and ruin, the fens and bogs, which contrasted so well together; he sets off the Bishop of the apostolical days in the most happy and delightful task of preserving the Church in the unity of the faith and the bonds of peace, when as yet it was comparatively united and undisturbed; he continues his description of the Church in all the freshness and perfection, and beauty which she possessed when she came from the hands of her great Architect, when the Bishop's task was comparatively easy, yet having his difficulties. Then as quick as the Bishop's bounding thoughts could carry him from the glowing picture of unity, peace and concord, the Church stands before us marred, mutilated, trodden down, "a jest for the profane and a rock of offence for the schismatic." Behold it churchmen! To you it appeals, imploringly. See her walls are broken down, her altars are desecrated with the incense of the unholy and profane. See how desolate, how forsaken! And who has done all this? The Turks? No! The Saracens? No! The wicked world? No! Who, then, has perpetrated this mischief? Behold the man!—a poor dissenter! Poor old CALVIN! Poor old WESLEY! that "set up a Church in his dotage"—a *mighty good old man*; did a great deal of good among the colliers and poor of England—*pity his people ever left us*; HE never intended it. The Bishop would have made an admirable auxiliary to the Grecian orator, when he wanted to arouse his slumbering countrymen to arms against an invading foe! This part of the Sermon, to say nothing more, is an admirably contrived piece of machinery. The figure of contrast is carried out most successfully. We are only surprised that his listening and entranced auditors, who felt their church-blood stirred up, did not, under the impulse, rise up and call for fire from heaven to consume the uncircumcised Philistians! Had such an appeal been made in Italy or Spain, the result might have been truly disastrous to the English Protestants. We feel devoutly thankful to Almighty God, that the Sermon was delivered at the capital of that State, whose emblematical representation shows

"A tyrant crushed beneath the foot of liberty:

"Sic semper tyrannis."

We condemn the proffered charity of that man, though it comes with paternal solicitude and pity's tears, be he Bishop or be he layman,

who could thus artfully work upon the noblest principles and feelings of our nature, and turn them with the full tide of a new and awakened energy against—what? Not sin and wickedness, drunkenness and debauchery, but against our fellow-christians, who adore and worship the same God; who trust in the same Lord Jesus; who have the same Holy Ghost to comfort them; who believe in one holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting—simply because they do not see, and therefore will not acknowledge, that Episcopacy is the only constituted means of salvation for the millions of our apostate race.

As to the name of dissenters, we bear it cheerfully, though spoken contemptuously. As to heresy, we can well retort the charge. As to schism, we have yet to learn what the term implies—who will tell us? What is that which has caused the shedding of so much blood? We ask the Catholic Bishop, he replies “that it is separation from the Pope, the universal Bishop; that the English Church, ever since a wicked and profligate Prince, to gratify his own lust and ambition, denied the authority of the Pope, the whole church of which he claimed to be the head, is in a damnable schism and heresy.” I ask the churchman what is schism? He says, a separation from your Bishop, and setting up another altar in his diocese; that in England and America, Romanists and dissenters are in the damnable sin of schism. I ask the high-churchman what is the difference between Romanism and the Church of England? He replies, just the same as there is in a man before he washes his face and afterwards. I ask the old Reformers, and they answer in their homilies, the difference is the same as between a scarlet whore and a chaste bride. I ask the Bishop of North-Carolina to tell us how we are to know that he is not both schismatical and heretical? The only reply is, that *the Church teaches by authority, not by judgment*; that he teaches as the Church teaches; and they both teach according to the Scriptures, interpreted by the Church. Is the Church infallible? May it not teach some things that are wrong? The whole system of despotism, either in the Catholic Church of Rome or the Catholic Church of the United States, is founded on this infallibility. With it the Catholics make a plausible theory; without it, the Protestant Church, in the hands of a high-churchman, is a fit subject for ridicule to Romanists and dissenters.

The Bishop, having wrought up his own high-church blood, and that of his brethren, by the most horrid representations; and having

guided their just indignation towards the dissenter, for fear that, in the warmth and animation of his appeal, they might miss the track—lest, in their good nature, they might be led to apply his just remarks to “*the world at large*”—he gives another “whoop.” Here they are: *I know them; as a body, they talk earnestly of the value of Holy writ, contribute liberally to its general distribution,* (mark the particularity;) *they may* be sincere; they may believe the Bible, for aught we know. But let the Bishop fill up the picture, without our daubing it “I am not disposed,” says the Bishop, “to question either their sincerity or their belief in its divine authenticity;” *but they are professors.* And then, as if he was leading on a new importation of Florida warriors, he would fain track them into secret places, where none but God could see them. I mean, says the Bishop, that they *fail* (to do what? to fall before the Bishop?) they fail “with a believing eye to trace upon its sacred pages *the awful presence of Almighty God,* revealing to them, condemned sinners, *the only way of salvation.*” And what is this way? The Bishop tells us “a three-fold ministry”—Diocesan Episcopacy by divine right, to ordain, to confirm, and consecrate; priests to offer sacrifice, and deacons to attend upon them.

Now let us sum up the Bishop’s ingeniously framed category, and see how it stands. First, they are MEN, (rather indefinite); secondly, a *body of men* (more specific,) *not of the world at large,* (still more so); thirdly, they are *professors*; fourthly, *they talk earnestly of the value of holy writ*; fifthly, they contribute liberally to its general distribution; sixthly, sincerity not doubted, or doubted, as you please; seventhly, their belief in the same predicament; eighthly, their faith fails (if they have any) to trace the awful-presence of God; and therefore, ninthly, mainly, chiefly, and lastly, they are *condemned sinners.* And lest, by any possibility, the clergy and laity might get on the wrong track, the Bishop, in his notes and appendix, specifically points them out—“*Romanist, Calvinist, Methodists, and their kindred hosts.*”

Here you have the natural product of that universal, invisible, unchangeable, and indivisible *unit*, spiritual despotism, absurdly called the unity of the Church—a union which, while it condemns the abuse of an inquisitorial tribunal, regards it as a legitimate instrument in the hands of a Bishop, for the safety of the Church against schism, heresy and dissent. Is it amazing, that such a *unity* should become a “jest

for the profane and a stumbling block for the schismatic"? The Bishop's good intentions may screen him from the force of our remarks; but candid men must see that the Bishop either said what he did mean to say and that he meant what he said, or that he did not know what he was talking about—as is too frequently the case when men are irritated.

The next thing which strikes our attention as very merciful for the poor, desperate dissenter, is the most singular adaptation of merciful provision, not in the Gospel, but in the Bishop's plan. They are required, in order to realize its benefits, to yield the most entire, unqualified and childlike submission in faith, and obedience to this *provision*. What provision? The Bishop answers the question: The three orders of the ministry. A friend of the Bishop may reply, the Bishop does not mean so. Well, let the *Bishop* tell us so. If he does not mean this, what does he mean? Is he talking nonsense all the time? Sure, the Bishop is his own best interpreter. "I do not mean," says the *Bishop*, "that this spirit (of faith and obedience) always requires a *written* command to ensure its obedience. Far otherwise—such a spirit, ever ready to be taught, reads God's will, as well in his established institutions, as in His recorded precepts. When, for example, it sees three orders of ministers fixed in the Church of God, as it arose under his direction, through the instrumentality of the inspired Apostles, and that the power of ordination in its exercise, was restricted to the highest order, it asks not in shaping its obedience to the divine will for a command to continue this arrangement, but for authority to alter it."—(Sermon, 14th page.)

The good churchman, we hope, sees that the Bishop did mean what we have said. The only offset we have is this: We *do not see it*; we *cannot see it*; and we, therefore, do not submit to the Bishop's plan to save dissenters. That we have not pushed the Bishop's doctrines beyond the legitimate deductions of common sense, plainly appears from the fact that the moment these half-infidel professors, these desperate sinners, called dissenters, without the least change in their moral characters, except what is implied in their submission to the Bishop, ask for and receive confirmation or ordination, they are at once assured that they are in a state of certain salvation; their sincerity or good intentions having little to do in the premises.—(See the Bishop's note, 11th page.)

We cannot follow the Bishop through all the mazes and intricacies

of his Sermon. We will transcribe a part of the seventh page, and add such explanatory words as make sense of the Sermon. The Bishop continues: "I mean that they, *these men described*, fail, as trembling rebels brought in chains to the feet of their dread sovereign, to hear him, *through the Bishop*, speak to them the words of eternal life; tell them, in mingled accents of love and authority, what they must do to be saved—*that is, to submit to a three-fold ministry*, that they may point them to the only begotten of the Father, now through simple means of his own appointment, by *a three-fold ministry* in his Church, opening the treasures of his grace and shedding on them abundantly—*first by baptism, secondly, in greater measure by confirmation, and thirdly, by the Lord's supper*—the energies of his blessed spirit. And, lest their presumption should lead them to violate this plan of *a three-fold ministry*, recording the applying testimony in Rev. xxii, 18, 19." If ever military prowess was successfully exerted to shut up an enemy and bring them to lay down their arms at the mercy of the triumphant General—the Bishop, at least in his own estimation, has shut up these dissenters. But there is one serious defect in the Bishop's seige. He built a castle, first, to put the enemy in; he brought all his artillery and engines to bear upon its walls—but lo! the enemy was not there! They had watched the Bishop's movements so closely, that, before he was aware, they seized his own armor, which he thought he had so dexterously used, and dealt out to him its deadliest, heaviest blows! Nothing could have been so imprudent, at this juncture—nothing could betray the Bishop's want of controversial generalship so much—as his drawing so largely upon the rich magazine from which the dissenters draw all their weapons. The Bishop had much better fought in SAUL's armor than with DAVID's sling; it certainly suits better the princely dignity of Oxford, than the simple stones gathered from the brook of Truth. Besides, the sword of the spirit, in unskilful hands, may be harmless to an adversary, while it deals death to him that uses it. The Bishop seems to have been aware of this; and before his final triumph—before he could shout over the spoils of victory—he cast his sword away, as a useless thing; and to end the contest most gloriously, he says: Submit to my *authority*, if you will not to my heaviest, deadliest blows!

Here is, indeed, a noble achievement for the successor of the Apostle who said, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds"! After a whole

campaign of exterminating warfare against heresy and schism, the Bishop concludes with this most grave and solemn truth: that a spirit of obedience does not *always* require a written command to ensure its obedience, in a case where the penalty of disobedience is damnation!

No wonder that the Bishop prefers to teach by authority, rather than Scripture, or reason, or common sense; that he may tell dissenters, with all the authority of his official dignity, that they are to *see* what is not to be seen—to do what they cannot, dare not do, without violating honesty and truth, and reason, and scripture—in order that they may be saved by God's instituted means, namely, submission to the authority of a diocesan Bishop, as the successor of the Apostles; for which there is no *written command* in the word of God, none on the face of nature, and every thing in God's providential dispensations against it.

As we have commenced a review of the Bishop's Sermon in another place, we here dismiss it, with this single remark: that in all the attempts to make out a case, we have met with but one instance of such a triumphant failure as that in the case before us. The case is that of a Mormon Prophet with whom we conversed, very recently, who, when he was asked how it came to pass that JOE SMITH could interpret the Mormon Scriptures when no one else could, very gravely replied, by "Urim and Thumimim."

And now, candid churchmen, we address ourselves to you. We anticipate the cry of persecution. That comes with an ill grace from one who aids and abets the persecutions of others. But whom have we persecuted? The Protestant Episcopal Church? We deny the charge. Let any man of honesty look into the writings of the Methodist Church, and he will see that, in every instance of controversy with the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, or the English Church, the Methodist Church has always been the criminal prosecuted; and she has set up her defence on the broad ground of the law of nature, as well as scripture, that a criminal should not be condemned unheard. The Methodists make no assaults on the Church; and if they at any time have admonished the Church of what might appear to them to be blemishes, it has been only, in the language of Dr. HOOK of Oxford, that she might be the same Church after as before, as a man is the same man after he washes his face as he was before. We have never seen the time since our attention was called to the subject of christianity, that we could not in conscience have been a

member of your Church, until the exposition of her doctrines by the Sermon we have reviewed. And even now, could the great purposes for which the Church was instituted—the alleviation of human sufferings, the renovation and sanctification of human nature, and the preparation of every one to meet the glorious advent of the blessed Son of God—be best subserved by an association with the Protestant Episcopal Church, it would be no sacrifice to us to subscribe her articles; to adopt the traditions as set forth in her admirable and scriptural prayer book. Leaving all other denominations to make their own apology, in that way and at that time which to them may seem best, to ward off the illiberal and unfounded attack of the Sermon—we ask, what intelligent Methodist has ever assailed the Church of which you are a member? The traditions of WESLEY, of CLARK, of WANSON, of BANGS, and EMORY, have taught us otherwise;—we have endeavored to follow their teachings. But we have assailed your Bishop? By no means. We have assailed his dissent, his heresy and schism; and could we find a competent tribunal, having appellate jurisdiction in the premises, it would be a small task to convict his Sermon of the charge of heresy and schism, if not of dissent. If we carry the cause up to the Bishop of Rome, he certainly would be at no loss to decide;—if we take him to the Fathers of the Church for the first three centuries, his case would be equally hopeless;—if we carry him still farther back to Primitive Christianity, even the Oxford tract men, as well as Bishop IVES, acknowledge that the command to continue the Bishop's arrangement in the establishment is wanting;—if we take the case up to the Reformation, there the judges have been divided; but a majority of the early Reformers are against the Bishop;—could we take the case up to the House of Bishops, at their next convocation at Philadelphia, we could just as easily convict him of heresy and schism, as he can convict us of dissent—heresy in doctrine, leading to schism. And the Church may wake up as much as she may, to the dangers that are without; but she will yet feel most deeply from the injuries within her body. Schism in the body, is PAUL's schism against which he cautions the Church. We want nothing but the prayer book and the old homilies, if they have not been abrogated by disuse, to establish all we say.

To charge the Methodist Church with heresy and schism, comes with a very ill grace from the author of the Sermon; when the Methodist Church has done more to revive and perpetuate the godly and

wholesome doctrines of the homilies, than the Protestant Church itself! With most churchmen they are obsolete—not in phraseology only, but in substance and matter. And it is but a poor apology, indeed, that their antique diction should be so offensive to a churchman's ear, that—in a Sermon of twenty pages and an appendix of ten pages, interspersed with references to and quotations from PALMER, DOANE, and Bishop IVES, and the Oxford writers—there is not a single quotation, not a single reference to the old homilies of the Church; and any one may see that the Sermon has dropped its acquaintance with those antiquated authors, and exchanged them for the writers of high-church Episcopacy. But still you cry out, persecution! We have not persecuted Bishop IVES;—we have only picked up his Porcupine quills, which were intended to kill us out-right, and, with reversed points, thrown them back at him—not to kill, nor to wound him; much less to abate the reverence due to his official character or his moral worth. We do not wish to hurt a hair of his head. The only essential principle of his nature we would affect, is his conscience; the only accidental property we would destroy, is his excessive vanity; and we would do that in perfect good humor. There is another view which churchmen overlook, in this controversy. Were we to gain a complete victory, the Protestant Episcopal Church would stand forth before us in all the freshness and beauty of primitive times;—in other words, her face would be washed—perhaps, a little cleaner than when she escaped the enormities of Rome. That would be all the injury we could in our heart give her, if we had her in our power. On the other hand, if high-church Episcopacy triumphs, what monstrous consequences must follow, any intelligent man may see: all of us are living without grace, and, like our fathers before us, we must die without it! If the Bishop triumphs over our Church, and we suffer him to put his heel on our necks, we have too little confidence in his sort of charity to suppose he would stay his hand until we were dead and buried, and a stone of the heaviest weight set down on our graves, for fear that we might by possibility get up again. Now let us ask, if a man who fights for a garland of flowers may yet be allowed to agonize, what may not a man do when he strives for breath? If Bishop IVES can be allowed to contend so warmly for an indefinable something, that no human being has ever seen or can see, if it exists at all, or has been able to find it where it has been said to exist, sure a Methodist preacher may be allowed to contend earnestly for that “liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free”?

We are aware that those who have not properly analyzed the Bishop's Sermon, may think we are persecuting the Bishop instead of exposing the enormities of the Sermon. We ask them not to read our remarks, without having read or intending to read the Sermon. We ask them to consider what are the legitimate deductions from the Bishop's own doctrines and statements.

Notwithstanding his ingeniously constructed category, here is what the Sermon distinctly assumes: That dissenters, as a body—that is, Methodists, Calvinists, and their “kindred hosts,” who are so well known to the Bishop; who talk earnestly of the value of holy writ, and contribute liberally to its general distribution; whose sincerity the Bishop cannot feel disposed to question; whose belief in the divine authority of the Bible he is not disposed to doubt; but who, nevertheless, fail with a believing eye to trace upon its sacred pages, the awful presence of Almighty God, revealing to them, condemned sinners, the only way of salvation, by “a three-fold ministry,” Bishops, Priests and Deacons; the evidence of which failure, is found in their not yielding, in order to realize its benefits, the most entire, unqualified, and child-like submission in faith and obedience to this merciful provision of the three Orders in the ministry, as God's scheme of saving guilty and perishing men—being in a damnable error, it is the duty of all churchmen, Bishops, Priests and Deacons, to address themselves mainly to the most charitable work of proselyting them from their different communions; and when tears and entreaties fail, to overthrow them with nothing less than the sternest, heaviest blows of the two-edged sword of the spirit, polished and sharpened by tradition and the authority of the Church—by telling them, that they might just as well try to make a world, as to obtain the promised grace of the Gospel, except in the Protestant Episcopal Church; that they are schismatical and heretical, their ministers intruders, and their sacraments nothing more than eating bread and drinking wine;—and now, having, by the Providence of God, the requisite means of avoiding error, they are without excuse, and even the uncovenanted mercies of God will not avail.

Now let us suppose the Bishop's feeling and resistless appeal to the religious feelings of Bishop JOHNS, the other reverend Bishops and Clergy, and the congregation, were to take full effect. What would be the consequence? But that is nothing to a fanatic—yet it ought to be to a Bishop. A man should be morally certain that it is his duty to act in the premises, before he scatters firebrands, arrows and death,

amongst his neighbors. He ought to be able to say, "thus saith the Lord," at least, before he begins.

Suppose the Methodists were to take it into their heads, among their other "vagaries," that they were the true Church, the only catholic and Apostolic Church; that all others were intruders, and were in a damnable sin, so long as they refused submission to a Methodist Bishop; and under an exciting sermon from him, were to think it their duty to go on a crusade to convert the Episcopalians. We should like to see a Methodist Bishop leading a Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church to the altar to get his soul converted by their "new measure—the *opus operatum of Popery*." Would it not be a sight *supremely ridiculous!* Would not the Methodist unity be a jest for the profane, and a rock of offence to the schismatic? And after all, what is this stumbling, this rock of offence, which the Methodists throw in the Bishop's way, and in the way of Protestant Episcopalians? We do not bring them to our houses of worship or private dwellings, and shock and insult them, by abusing their Church, which we believe to be a branch of the true Church: we do not go to their houses of worship or their dwellings, unasked, to sing hymns and pray and exhort them to repentance, and to bring them back to our Church as the only true Church—the only saving sacraments—and thereby outrage all the decencies of life and the rules of hospitality. "What is it, then? It is *this*. We differ from them, and do not make their consciences and opinion the rule of our conduct. But is it reasonable to expect this? They differ as much from us as we from them. Why should they govern *us* more than we them? Why should not each be content to differ, without any breach of kindness or charity? To love and bear with those who agree with us in *all things*, said a distinguished divine, is but a low pitch of virtue. I had almost said it is but sacrificing to our own pride, and little better than loving ourselves over again in others. But to bear with and be kind in our opinions of those who differ from us, is to sacrifice pride and self-complacency at the altar of charity. Let us learn to bear with all that variety of judgment which can possibly be accounted for from that variety of temper, education and conversation, which are unavoidable in this State."

After all, what is that great and irreconcilable difference between the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States? We ask, what is that impassable gulph over

which a Bishop of the one Church cannot pass in the interchange of ministerial courtesy, unless *the* Bishop chooses to occupy *a* pulpit of *a* Bishop, when he has none of his own? What is that leprosy that so cleaves to a Methodist minister, that every clerical comedian must withhold from him even the common title of his office, for fear of injuring *the Church*? And what must be the foundation of that Church which stands or falls by the right or wrong use of the definite and indefinite articles *a* and *the*! Is this the rock upon which the Lord Jesus built his Church? What, then, is there in Methodism, as it has been contemptuously named, so antagonistical to *the Church*, that *one or the other must die*—that it amounts to the noblest charity to pluck them as brands from the fire? Do our church friends fear God in truth? So do we. Do they love the Lord Jesus, and daily look for his promised coming? So do we. Have they the comfortable communion and fellowship of the Spirit? So have we. Are they dying to the world, daily, as their Bishop has so often taught them? So, we trust, are we. Have they the spirit itself bearing witness with their spirits? So, we trust, have we. Have they received the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry Abba Father? So have we. Do they bring forth the fruits of the spirit? So, we trust, we do, in some tolerable degree. Do they carry out their baptismal vow to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil? So, the Lord being our helper, we have intended, and do still intend to do. Do they believe that to love God with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves, is better than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices? So do we. Have they been regenerated and born anew, as well by the spirit of God as by water? So, we trust, have we. Have they been confirmed in the hopes and promises of the Gospel? So have we, daily, by the renewed application of the blood of sprinkling, purging our hearts from an evil conscience, to serve the living God. Have they a good hope, through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, so freely shed for our sins, that they will come to heaven? Bless God for it! so have we. And it maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. Where, then, is the ground of mutual jealousy and hostility? Do they love the Scriptures, and read, and learn, and mark, and inwardly digest them? So do we; interpreting them, not according to our *vagaries*, but restrained by the common rules of interpretation—by reason and common sense, aided by the best lights of ancient exposition, and the spirit of God that inspired them; reserving

to ourselves the right to appeal from all Fathers, Councils, œcumenical or provincial, all convocations of Bishops or individual interpretation of Bishops, when they contradict the plain letter of Scripture, outrage the rules of just criticism, and common sense interpretation; and when, by torturing and twisting obscure and isolated passages, they find out conditions of salvation other than those which are so clearly, unequivocally and constantly revealed. Do they allow to others while they claim for themselves liberty of conscience? So do we;—as individuals, responsible only to God for the use or abuse of the powers and privileges he bestows; as christians, holding ourselves responsible to all other christians, so far as their charity and amity are concerned, for our opinions and practices; as members of the Church, holding ourselves responsible to the society to which we belong—whatever our private judgment may be, not to inveigh against her doctrines and discipline, or otherwise disturb the peace of the Church or society to which we belong, so long as our connexion lasts. Do they honor and respect their Bishops and other clergy, and pray for them? So do we; and we can do so for all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, *in sincerity*. Do they fear the reproofs and censures of their Bishops and clergy who oversee them? So do we; as dutiful children we would not offend them, unnecessarily, for any consideration. Do they tremble at the *axe and sword of excommunication, which is more terrible to the soul than death?* So do we, when our guilty hearts condemn us as apostates from the faith of the blessed Lord Jesus. But while we retain a conscience void of offence, the indwelling testimony that we please God, with the comfort of his holy spirit to sustain us, we have as little regard for the bulls of Popes and the thundering anathemas of the Vatican, as we have for the peacock's plume that any spiritual fop may stick in his official cap. What then, we ask again, is it that separates us from our Episcopal brethren, who, from our hearts we can say, are in all respects as good as we are by natural inheritance, and better, for all we know, by more abounding gifts of the Holy Spirit working in them energetically that renovation which constitutes their virtue here on earth, and prepares them for glory in heaven? To this repeated interrogatory, we have but one answer—it is this: We cannot see how a personal succession of ministerial character can come down unpolluted, through a race of moral monsters—from whom, in the time of the *Pious King EDWARD VI*, the Reformers taught the people to pray to be delivered on account of “detestable

enormities"—when the homilies of the Church, unannulled to this day, declare the Church of Rome to be not only a harlot, but also "*a foul, filthy, old, withered Harlot.*"

If for the sake of such a succession, Protestant Episcopalians close their Churches against our ministrations;—if they turn from us with horror, as sacrilegious intruders into the work of the ministry;—if they withhold even the common courtesies and civilities of life from us, sooner than give up this figment which the purest men and best writers in the Church of England never did believe;—they may have all the glory which the present or the future may bestow upon them. We are willing to take the shame of being contumacious toward priestly dignity in the exercise of our private judgement, and will endeavor to pursue *the even tenor of our way*, as we have hitherto done; doing our work in the way which to us seems most according to God's holy word, to the times, and circumstances around us.

In what we have written, we have endeavored most zealously and faithfully so to write as to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; rightly dividing the words of truth and giving to each his portion in due season. Such as we had we have endeavored to give. It may be coarse, but yet wholesome. It certainly will not suit those whose *tastes* are refined above the standard of the old homilies;—but it may have this effect, at least, to show our Church friends it is easier to provoke an assault than it is to repel one, and where neither can gain any thing in the contest, we had better let strife alone before it is meddled with; that in "*carrying the war into Africa,*" as an Episcopal writer has it, success mainly depends on their having a *Roman General*—otherwise, they will run back to Rome much faster than they marched out of it. Some are already gone back in England; some in the United States; some in North-Carolina! The position in which high-churchmen place the Protestant Episcopal Church, is by no means an enviable one—between the fires of Roman schismatics and American dissent. If she can find nothing else to assail—if there are no unoccupied wastes in the vales and hills of the Canaanites nor the plains of Sodom—she had better put off her aggressive character, fix down her stakes, and tarry on this side of Jordan. But if she will enter the league with us against sin and wickedness, which abound in *the world at large*;—if she will aid us in beating down the strong holds of Satan, either in the Church or in the world;—we say, Give us your hand, we will never fall out about your Epis-

copy; we will reverence your prayer book, as a monument of the learning and piety of our Fathers; we will hold the ancient Creed inviolate, as a sacred treasure gathered from the exhaustless mine of unmixed truth; and when we have, in the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, and the Lord Jesus, the captain of our salvation, beat down our mutual foes—ignorance, vice, and profligacy—we will calmly wait the Second Advent of our Lord to shew to us how, by his most miraculous power, he has transmitted his pure Word, and, by an uninterrupted succession of spiritual ministers, brought about the glory of these latter days; when many are running to and fro, and knowledge is increasing even unto the ends of the earth. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; and let the world be filled with thy glory. AMEN.

☞ On the 6th page, in the 16th line from the top, for the word "*mixed*" read *evinced*.

A

PASTORAL LETTER,

FROM THE

SYNOD OF NORTH CAROLINA,

TO THE

CHURCHES UNDER ITS CARE,

ADOPTED AT

CHARLOTTE,

10th November, 1845.

FAYETTEVILLE :

PRINTED BY EDWARD J. HALE.

1846.



PASTORAL LETTER.



The Synod of North Carolina to the churches under their care. Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

BELOVED BRETHREN IN THE LORD:

You are, no doubt, aware, that one of the primary objects of the annual meetings of your Synod, composed, as it is, of the Pastors and representatives of your churches, is, carefully to inquire into the condition of our beloved Zion; and to devise and propose measures for her improvement and enlargement. Remembering our high responsibility, as watchman on the walls of Zion, we feel constrained to communicate to you, the results and conclusions at which we have arrived, in an affectionate but faithful Pastoral Letter. Regard it, we beseech you, not as an ordinary official document, but as a special communication upon matters of practical and vital importance to yourselves, to your children, to our common country, and to the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And, at the very out-set, truth requires us to state, that the general aspect of our Zion, at present, is unusually discouraging and humiliating; that feebleness and decline are the leading features of *many*, whilst coldness, inactivity, and barrenness, are the most prominent characteristics of nearly all our churches;—a very few only *appearing* to be *prosperous*. Death and emigration are steadily, and with increasing rapidity, thinning our ranks, and diminishing our numbers. Very many of our venerable Fathers, both in the ministry and among the laity, who have been, during the last half-century, so prompt to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty, have no longer a place, either in our churches or in our church judicatories. Nor have any of our churches, of late, been refreshed and strengthened by revivals of religion, as in former years. The Fathers have fallen asleep; but their sons, to an alarming extent, continue in the course of this world. The spirit of revivals, those precious harvest seasons for the souls of men and for the church of God, seems to

have departed from among us. With very few exceptions, the number of deaths and removals, in our churches, has exceeded the number of additions. From our statistical reports, it appears, that, within the past year, the number of our ministers has been diminished, by six, and of our candidates for the ministry, by ten. In addition to all this, the frequent, and, as it appears to us, unwise breaking up of Pastoral relations, of late, the rapid increase of vacant churches, and the manifest want of unity, energy, and cheerful liberality in the support of the gospel, are evils already of enormous magnitude, and fearfully ominous of a still darker day approaching. This state of decline, moreover, has been going on, for several years. We have, now, within the bounds and under the jurisdiction of our Synod, 27 vacant churches;—6 more than we had five years ago; and some of them, churches that have been heretofore regarded as among the strongest and most flourishing among us. And what is still more alarming, whilst this state of things not only continues among us, but steadily increases, our people seem to be recklessly and fearfully indifferent to it; and neither ministers nor people have hearts to pray about it. Nor is this all: For some six or eight years past, the number of revivals of religion within our bounds, the additions to our churches, the success of the Sabbath-school cause, attendance upon Bible class and Catechetical instruction, the amount of benevolent contributions, the disposition of our young men to devote themselves to the service of God and his church in the work of the ministry, the disposition of the people to sustain indigent candidates for the sacred office, and the zeal manifested by both ministers and people in the Temperance reform, instead of increasing, as the growth of our population and the indications of Divine Providence have loudly demanded, have, with very few exceptions, been steadily retrograding. Already, some of our feebler churches have a mere nominal existence; whilst others have become vacant, from their inability to support their Pastors: and, in some of the rest, there is either such a state of disaffection towards the Pastors, such an enervating indulgence in personal animosities and family quarrels, or, from some other causes, such an increasing difficulty to secure the stipulated ministerial support, as to render the prospects of their Pastors exceedingly discouraging and precarious. Under such circumstances, neither ministers nor people know what to expect; nor do they feel the right sort of stimulus, either to pray or to labour for the building up of the church. On the contrary, they are both disheartened, and disposed to criminate each other. This work of decay and mortification, though slow and often imperceptible, is, nevertheless, progressive and certain. Let the present state of things continue a little longer, and the weaker of our churches will become extinct; whilst the stronger will continue to decline and dwindle, until they become as weak as the weakest.

Beloved brethren: We cannot witness such things, and contemplate such prospects respecting our beloved Zion, without sounding an alarm;—without stating distinctly, so far as we can ascertain them, not only the languishing state of the church, but the causes and the remedy.

We know, indeed, that *every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;* and that, without the divine blessing,

all our efforts to build up his kingdom amongst men must be fruitless. We cannot, however, charge the decline of religion and the barrenness of ordinances to the Author of all good. We are assured, that *His arm is not shortened that he cannot save; neither is His ear heavy that he cannot hear*; but that sin produces a separation between Him and his people. The fault is ours;—chargeable either to the ministers or to the people;—most probably to both.

We have most solemnly asked ourselves, as we now inquire of you, —Is the present languishing state of religion among us, and declining condition of our churches, owing to a want of faithfulness in the exhibition and application of appropriate Bible truth, from the pulpit, or in Pastoral visitations? Or, Is it owing to scandal, or gross inconsistencies, in the lives of your ministers? As to our professional performances, we are conscious of much imperfection. This, and any want of entire exemplariness of life, is, undoubtedly, too often, the legitimate result of the want of a sufficiently ardent, absorbing, and controlling piety, in our own hearts. Your ministers, then, need to be revived,—to have the Holy Spirit poured out, copiously, upon them: and, usually, when the people are revived, the preachers, as well as the people, feel it, and manifest it, as much as any.

But, it sometimes occurs, that, when we would otherwise feel stirred up to greater zeal and activity in our professional work, we are discouraged and disqualified, by the fatigue and perplexing cares of employments that are utterly foreign from our sacred functions. To such employments, we are, not unfrequently, absolutely driven, in order to secure a bare competent support, for ourselves and our families. It is utterly impossible for us to be in a suitable frame, either intellectually or spiritually, to preach the gospel, either in the pulpit or in the family, when our bodies are worn down by secularizing employments, or our minds are jaded and harassed by the pressure of debt, and the knowledge, staring us in the face, that that debt is enlarging, our liabilities increasing, our families unprovided for, our children growing up in ignorance, and that a large part of what little we do receive is paid either grudgingly or as a mere charity. We affectionately suggest, then, Dear brethren, that fervent prayers be offered to the Head of the church, and that appropriate efforts be made by both ministers and people, that the Lord would revive and encourage the hearts of your Pastors, and place them, in every respect, in a situation, as far as possible, free from worldly care, and favourable to their official usefulness.

Again: We would affectionately inquire,—Is there no delinquency in duty among our Ruling-Elders,—in maintaining a wholesome discipline in the church, for the preservation of its purity; and in keeping up and encouraging weekly prayer-meetings, for the comfort of the saints, and the special benefit of the rising race? Are they sufficiently careful, to see that such meetings are attended, and conducted in an interesting and edifying manner? Are they doing all they can, to shield their Pastors from the shafts of wicked men; to hold up their hands, to second their efforts, and to carry out their plans for doing good;—for promoting the intelligence and spirituality of the people? Surely, we can never reasonably expect religion to be revived, or the church to flourish,

where there is little or none of the spirit of prayer. Our God is both able and willing, to cause his Zion, though ever so desolate and waste, to become as the garden of Eden: But He saith himself that He *will yet for this be inquired of*, by his people, *to do it for them*. And, are not the Elders of the church, men selected for their zeal and piety as well as for their wisdom and prudence, expected to be leaders and examples, in this most important and delightful exercise? If, therefore, they are not throwing their experience, practical skill, and personal influence, into zealous efforts to maintain weekly prayer-meetings, and to render them interesting and useful, they are not doing what the people expect them to do, what they might do, and what their office requires them to do, as co-workers with their Pastors, in fostering the impressions, which are often produced by the public and Parochial labours of their Pastors, by the Providences of God, and by the common influences of the Spirit. It is seriously feared, that the church is suffering, for want of more social prayer;—which always encourages family worship, and closet devotions. There are, probably, not less than four hundred and thirty Ruling Elders, within our bounds. How many weekly prayer-meetings are there? If every Elder had the spirit of prayer, and exerted himself to keep up a well conducted prayer-meeting, might we not confidently expect good results soon to appear? Would not their Pastors preach and pray more and better? Would not the people attend both Church and prayer-meetings better, and hear the gospel to better purpose? Would not sinners be converted, christians be more consistent, and our churches be more flourishing?

But dear brethren,—Have our private church members no share in the guilt of bringing about the present languishing state of our Zion? Is there nothing like corruption, or mere nominal religion, in our churches? If a large proportion, or any considerable number of our church members are mere professors of religion, though ever so zealous for an orthodox creed, whilst they are strangers to experimental religion, having never been born again;—if they attend ever so punctiliously upon the outward and popular forms of christianity, whilst they are ignorant and destitute of its vital power, and neglect its practical duties,—can we expect the Church to flourish? If family worship be generally, or to any considerable extent, neglected;—if secret prayer be but rarely practised;—if personal, family, or neighborhood grudges and quarrels be allowed,—so that individuals and families of the same communion, who are brethren by profession, can say nothing but evil of each other, and never even speak to one another;—is it any wonder that the church is in a languishing state? If such be the state of things among us, (and we most heartily wish there was no evidence of such being the state of things in any part of our bounds;) has not the church the very elements of destruction, in her own bosom? It is not a novel thing in the History of the church, that her prospects are beclouded, and her friends dismayed by defeat and sore chastisements, on account of some sin indulged in by only a portion of her members, and sometimes only by a single individual. As memorable instances of this, and solemn warnings to us, we need only refer you to the golden calf, the murmuring of the people of Israel in Kadish, the iniquity of Peor, and the sin of Achan, in meddling with the accursed thing. We must ferret out, and

put away sin, if we would have the Lord to prosper the work of our hands.

In this connexion, we feel constrained to specify some two or three prominent and growing evils, which, we fear, have already obtained a strong hold; and are exerting a most withering influence, in the church.

1. In the first place, we mention, the indulgence of a wordly spirit, in the form of selfishness, avarice, and cupidity. We are aware, that it is difficult, in many cases, to distinguish between the operation of this spirit and dire necessity. Let every one scrutinize his own motives on this subject. But, whenever it is as obviously true of professing christians as of others, that every man seeketh his own, irrespective of his neighbour's wealth; that the constant and predominant current of their thoughts and desires is in the pursuit of wordly emolument; that their objects of pursuit, and plans of action, as evinced by their daily conversation and conduct, tend exclusively to the same end, viz: to the acquisition and hoarding up of property, for their own sensual enjoyment; and that it is with manifest reluctance that they contribute even a pittance—(a mere mite in comparison with the amount of their resources)—for the support of the gospel, or for benevolent purposes;—is it any wonder that religion languishes, or that the church dwindles? The influence of such a spirit, not only shuts out from the soul the claims of benevolence; but it freezes up the channels of charity, excludes God and religion from the mind; keeps men too busy to attend either upon family worship or the social prayer-meeting; prepares them to disregard the law of the Sabbath; disqualifies them for the devotions of the sanctuary; disposes them to take unlawful advantages in trade; and to extort, from their fellow-men, in direct proportion to the pressure of their necessities. Those who possess such a spirit, not only fail to be *the salt of the earth and the light of the world*; but they are *spots in our feasts of charity, clouds without water, trees whose fruit withereth, raging waves of the sea, wandering stars, to whom is reserved, the blackness of darkness for ever*. Dearly beloved,—*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free; but Christ is all, and in all. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And, above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father, by him.*

2. Secondly: We have reason to fear, that the preaching of the blessed gospel, and the ordinances and privileges of God's house, are beginning to be greatly undervalued by our people. Already, it is but too evident, that the people feel no serious alarm when their house of worship is closed up, the candlestick of the sanctuary removed from among them, and the preaching of the gospel, which God has ordained as the principal means of salvation, is no longer enjoyed by them. For the same reason, in too many instances, vacant churches,—although they are scattering and becoming weaker every day,—seem to be constantly becoming less zealous and less united in effort, to procure, for themselves, an adequate supply of gospel ministrations. Hence, too many who enjoy the ordinances of the gospel and the privileges of the church,—persons, moreover, who are in far more affluent circumstances,—regard it as an intolerable tax,—a burden too heavy to be borne,—to have to pay, even a tythe of what their forefathers paid, for the planting of the church, and the support of the gospel. Perhaps, they have enjoyed such privileges so long, that they have become surfeited with them. Let them visit a new country, and there witness the lamentable effects of a destitution of the means of grace, and begin to feel pinched with hunger for the bread of life: then, feeling as if they cannot do without it, they will be glad to get that gospel which they now undervalue, even by paying ten times the amount, which, at present, it costs them. In direct proportion, moreover, to our valuation of gospel privileges, will our desires and cries be poured out to God, for his blessing to attend the ordinances of his house. Although the gift of the Holy Spirit cannot be purchased with money; yet, so long as professing christians love their money or property more than they love the means of grace, or the souls of their fellow-men, they need not expect the Holy Spirit to give efficiency to those means of grace, either in comforting their hearts, or in enlarging the church. As you value, therefore, the souls of men, your own true happiness, the salvation of your children, and the best interests of our beloved country, beware of undervaluing the gospel and its ordinances; guard, most sedulously, against even a temporary privation of the healthful influences of a stated gospel ministry; and, if you are already deprived of them, spare no pains to regain them; and cease not your prayers to God, both publicly and privately, till he shall send unto you, a shepherd after his own heart.

3. Thirdly: The love of novelty and change, instability and vacillation of mind, in regard to the doctrines, institutions, and ministry of the church, must be mentioned, as another growing evil, of disastrous tendency. We fear, the scripture is about to be fulfilled, even among us, which says, *the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts, having itching ears, they shall heap to themselves teachers, turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned into fables.* This spirit has already begun to do its work among us; and, men, under its influence, whenever there is a protracted meeting, or a strange preacher within reach, will leave the most faithful Pastor to preach to vacant seats and empty walls. And what is still worse, this spirit will drive from their homes, however comfortable, and from their

fields of labour, however important and inviting, the best of men, however eminent for piety, sound in doctrine, and indefatigable in duty; for no other cause than the desire of change, the love of novelty, or the hope of having the ear tickled by the popularity of a new preacher. This disposition to set aside the Pastoral office at pleasure, and to prefer an itinerating ministry, is diametrically opposed to one of the most prominent, distinctive, and vitally important features in our Presbyterian system, and to the great design of the Pastoral office, as instituted by Christ; and fraught with most dangerous consequences. It has already begun to threaten our churches; and while it continues among us, we need expect little else than desolation.

Upon this subject, we cannot forbear giving you, in full, the views and cautions of the American Home Missionary Society, as the result of their long experience and extended information, as published in the Annual report of the Central Agency, in the State of New York, May 1837.

'We consider,' say that Society, 'the *frequent changing of ministers* so destructive an evil, that we are constrained to invite the attention of our Missionaries and churches to the following considerations, in the hope that they will ponder the subject thoroughly; and, by the grace of God, be guided in the path of duty.

1. We will mention a few of the ways, in which a *minister*, who means to be a Pastor, is injured by frequently changing his field of labour.

1. *It increases the expenses of his family.* None of our ministers receive more for their services than enough to meet the necessary expenses of the year. Every removal, by loss of time and consumption of property, increases his expenses, from fifty to a hundred dollars. This must embarrass him, and diminish his usefulness.

2. *Neglect of study* is another evil tendency of a changing ministry. In this day of commotion and reading of ephemeral productions, there are but few ministers of sufficient self-command to pursue a course of Theological research, which requires mental agony, but which is indispensable, would they grow in knowledge and be able to feed their flock,—so long as they can depend upon the labours of former years. We are aware, that some churches prefer to have their ministers spend the whole year in visiting. Experience, however, proves, that, with few exceptions, a people never know the worth of their minister, until the last old sermon is used up, or burnt up; and he begins to draw afresh, from the stores of eternal truth, *things new and old*. Such a people may know what they have got; but they never can know what they have lost.

3. *It diminishes a minister's consciousness of responsibility; and makes him indifferent about the distant results of his labour.* A minister is a man of like passions with others; and needs every possible influence, to induce him to seek the path of duty, and hold him in it. We cannot doubt, that the perpetually recurring thought,—*'I shall probably remain here but a year,'* will tend to make him reckless. How is it possible to avoid it? A man, were he as pure as an angel, needs the hope of success, as well as the love of doing good, to kindle his zeal, and prompt him to watchfulness, forethought, and industry. But often, he is a mere

annual hireling, with but a few months at most, to begin and close up all his labours, in a given place. And the agreement which holds him there, has, on the face of it, evidence, that his people regard him with very little confidence; and his prospects are withering, rather than refreshing. We need not wonder, if a man held by the church in such circumstances, should do, or neglect to do, what would render him unpopular, or his labours unproductive.

4. *It prevents a minister from carrying into effect any important plan for gathering and building up a congregation.* Would he accomplish, what a minister, by the grace of God, may do, all the various circumstances and wants of the whole church and congregation are to be sought out;—the children and youth are to be gathered around him and taught to remember their Creator;—parents are to be instructed how to command their children and households to keep the way of the Lord;—the church is to be purified by discipline; her understanding enlightened; her affections directed; her energies combined; and all her powers enlisted in the enterprize of the world's conversion. Who can accomplish such a work, in one year,—or two years,—or five years? How is it possible for a man, even the best, to clear and prepare the soil, sow the seed, and bring in the ripe harvest, short of ten or fifteen years? He may do something, yea much, but can he shew what a faithful Pastor is capable of doing? Can he carry a church *through* the school of Christ? Can he *train* a generation for the service of God?

5. *It prevents a minister from acquiring the habit of patient endurance, which is so important to an Ambassador of Christ.* A minister, who would exert a solid, holy, and lasting influence in the world, may depend upon being severely tried. He cannot escape trials by changing places. They must and will come. If he attempt to run away from them, and be overtaken at last, he will be likely to imbibe a petulant and fault-finding spirit. If he meet them manfully, and endure them patiently, it will chasten his spirit, and increase his meekness. The easiest way to dispose of ministerial trials, whatever be their nature or magnitude, is to endure them. The habit of endurance, which this course will strengthen, greatly diminishes the severity of trials; and, in the apprehension of the subject, it will probably diminish their number. But, what is of more importance still, trials, well endured, raise a minister vastly in the estimation of his people, while they increase his confidence in the grace of God; and thus, the way is prepared for his exerting a more powerful, salutary, and permanent influence.

11. We will now name a few of the ways, in which a church is injured, by frequently changing their minister.

1. *It will, almost invariably, lead to the neglect of discipline.* This is one of the most important and painful duties a minister has to perform. When he supposes his residence with a people is merely temporary, it has often presented a fatal temptation to pass over this self-denying duty. His successor takes the same course, until that church, which might have been united, flourishing, and strong, is alienated, few and feeble.

2. *It tends to divide and distract a church.* Some churches seem to imagine, that the most safe and certain way to dispose of the great

mass of their parish difficulties, is to dismiss their minister, especially if any serious opposition appears against him. But the people of God may never hope to get a minister who will build them up, without *they* are tried and proved, as well as their minister. They must be *will* him, and *heartily* with him. They must labour with him, and suffer with him; or the cause of christ must suffer, and languish, and die. Now, suppose that a congregation has secured a minister, and a faithful one: Suppose that congregation is in the habit of dismissing their minister as often as any serious difficulty arises; and suppose the truth of God has chafed the consciences of some of the people, so that they feel uneasy: What is the consequence? These restless spirits know, what has been done, more than once, in similar circumstances: By a little artful manœuvring, the minister has been dismissed. Their course is plain; and their work is easy. They know the church will not *endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ*; but will shrink from opposition raised against their minister; and though they profess to love him, will part with him, rather than do their duty. Some of the church, however, are willing to hazard any thing necessary to retain him: but, he must go, leaving the church to contend about him. When such a scene has been acted over, again and again, and another, and still another party is formed in a church, their affections, instead of being united and settled upon one, are divided among nearly as many ministers, as there are members in the church.

3. *It makes them fastidious and fault-finding.* Called as often as some of our churches are, to hear candidates, (not for settlement, but to be *hired* for a year or two,) they unconsciously acquire the habit of criticizing every thing they see a minister do, or hear him say. And as one great object of changing is, to get something new,—something that will arrest attention, they are led to attach an undue importance to novelty; and this begets a disposition not to be satisfied with any thing. This habit, aside from its destructive influence in neutralizing the truth: has led the way to numerous complaints, which have been the cause of bitter regret to the authors of them; and have injured the reputation and wrung the heart of many an affectionate minister.

4. *It prevents a church from acquiring that confidence in her minister, which, next to the truth of God, is one of the most powerful and delightful instruments of Pastoral usefulness.* When a minister has been in a congregation for a course of years; has often wept with those that weep, and rejoiced with those that rejoice; mingled in all their families; and sympathized with them in the various circumstances through which they have passed; the people then begin to know him, and love him, and confide in him, as their Pastor. When he has followed the child from the Baptismal font, with the instructions and counsels, warnings and entreaties of a yearning Father; been with him when convicted; answered his inquiry,—*What shall I do to be saved?*—led him in prayer when he knew not how to pray; and mingled his tears of joy with the penitent before the mercy seat;—that youth will never forget his Pastor. He knows his Pastor loves him. No voice is more sweet to him, than the one which taught him how to be saved. When a congregation has been thus educated by their Pastor; when they have tried him and proved

him; when they have laboured with him, and wept with him, and rejoiced with him; when they have seen and felt his salutary influence on their own souls, in every family and every department of society;—they reverence and love him as children do an affectionate Father; and are prepared to follow him, as their spiritual guide. But frequent changes forbid the formation of this endearing bond; and shut out a people from its benign influence.

'5. *It destroys the character of a church.* It is not yet to be learned, that a church has a character, as well as a minister. It is not unfrequently that we hear the following inquiries, when persuading a minister to go to a particular church,—*Have they ever had a settled Pastor? Do they often change ministers? Do you know whether they wish to hire by the year, or to settle?* These, and similar inquiries, are made, to decide one question; viz: CAN I BE USEFUL THERE? If a minister, especially one of the better sort, get the impression, that the people are slow to settle a Pastor, and rather contemplate changing once in a year or two, he will be likely to pity the people; but, despairing of success, he will pass on.'

Dear Brethren: We cannot close this communication, without solemnly cautioning you against all those forms and systems of error, that are beginning to be propagated among us, which either exclude or undervalue the old-fashioned, but fundamental scriptural doctrines of Original sin; total depravity; the absolute necessity of a change of heart; regeneration by the Holy Spirit; justification by the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; and good works, as the indispensable evidence of a man's being in a state of grace:—which set forth Baptismal regeneration, sacerdotal forgiveness of sin, Baptismal justification; and sacramental confirmation, as an easier and more fashionable way of salvation; which lay claim to Apostolic succession in office, and the exclusive right of interpreting, if not of reading the holy scriptures, as well as of administering divine ordinances; and which urge men, as the step of paramount importance, to join the church, as a means of grace;—or, as the only way of safety, to come into *the church*, by Prelatical Baptism and Confirmation, irrespective of their principles and of their lives. Think not, we beseech you, that there is, or can be any easier way of salvation than that which the meek and lowly Jesus hath taught us, by newness and holiness of life, through faith in his name. Guard against these, and their kindred errors, however arrogantly and pompously they may be urged upon you, by men, enrobed in bigotry, and of exclusive pretensions. They are the abominations of Rome, in Puseyite dress; and they are propagated; with all the zeal and dexterity of primitive proselytism.

Finally, Brethren,—If you would be joyful in the Lord; if you would see your children and servants growing up around you, as fruitful plants in his vineyard; if you would have the candlestick of the sanctuary to continue its light, and to shine more and more brightly among you; if you would have the church of God revived, enlarged, encouraged, and efficient;—the salt of the earth,—the light of the world; if you would have the world, which lieth in wickedness, converted to God;—we solemnly charge you, to seek, with all diligence, a more elevated and active grade of piety: Be more frequently and more importunate in your closets; let

the holy scriptures be, more scrupulously, the daily lamp to your feet, and light to your path; let brotherly *love be without dissimulation*; associate yourselves more frequently together, for social prayer and solemn praise; maintain a higher standard of family religion; pay special attention to the religious instruction of your children and servants; drill them, more thoroughly, after the example of our fore-fathers, in the excellent standards and catechisms of our church; maintain a constant and strict observance of the Sabbath; and especially, give the honour which is due to the Holy Spirit, and to Him alone;—recognise Him, distinctly and habitually, in his divinity, personality, and appropriate work;—cherish an abiding sense of absolute dependence upon his agency;—and seek, most fervently, in the diligent use of the means of grace, a speedy and a mighty effusion of his sacred influences.

And now, may that God who hath all hearts in his hand, and who conducteth them whithersoever he will, as the rivers of water are turned, incline your hearts, to the cheerful, willing, and habitual exercise of every grace and virtue which adorns the character of his own children; and may *He make you perfect in every good-work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through JESUS CHRIST, to whom be glory for ever and ever. AMEN.*

By order of the Synod.

SAMUEL WILLIAMSON, Moderator.

Charlotte, N. C. Nov. 10th, 1845.







10-
A

THANKSGIVING DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

RALEIGH N. C.,

ON THURSDAY, THE 27th NOVEMBER, 1851,

BY

REV. DRURY LACY, PASTOR.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

RALEIGH, N. C.

Printed by Seaton Gales. "Register" Office.
1851.

CORRESPONDENCE:

RALEIGH, Nov. 29, 1851.

REV. DRURY LACY:

Dear Sir:—The undersigned listened with great gratification and pleasure to your eloquent and excellent discourse, delivered in the Presbyterian Church, on Thursday last, Thanksgiving Day.

They take an early occasion to express to you their conviction of the great good it is calculated to accomplish, in arousing the people to a fuller sense of their obligations to perpetuate that priceless legacy of our forefathers—THE UNION; and to beg that you will furnish a copy for publication.

With great respect,

Your ob't serv'ts,

SEATON GALES,
JOHN PRIMROSE,
L. E. HEARTT,
ALEX. M. M'PHEETERS,
W. R. MILLER,

DABNEY COSBY,
JAMES M. TOWLES,
R. E. MADDOX,
J. BROWN,
R. H. BATTLE.

MANSE OF THE PRES. CHURCH, }
29th Nov., 1851. }

GENTLEMEN: I submit to your disposal, the discourse which you request for publication. If it should be the means of arousing our people, in any degree, to a sense of their obligations to the Ruler of Nations, and increasing their value of the inestimable blessings of the UNION, it will fully answer the end which I aimed to accomplish. I am not insensible to the favorable opinion you have expressed, in thinking it at all adequate to this purpose, and yield to your judgment rather than to my own, in furnishing you a copy for the press.

I am, very respectfully
and truly, your friend and servant,

DRURY LACY.

To Messrs Gales, Cosby, Primrose, Towles, Heartt, Maddox, McPheeters, Brown, Miller and Battle.

D I S C O U R S E .

* In pursuance of a resolution passed by the General Assembly at the Session of 1848-9, I do by this, my Proclamation, set apart Thursday, the 27th of November next, to be observed throughout the State as a day of solemn and public THANKSGIVING; and I do earnestly recommend that all secular employments be suspended during the day; that Ministers of the Gospel of the respective denominations assemble their congregations for public worship, that the people of the State may, with united hearts and voices, render thanks to Almighty God for past blessings, and supplicate a continuance of his cares and kindness towards us as a People, as a State, and as a Republic.

[SEAL.] Given under my hand, and the Great Seal of the State, at the Executive Office in the city of Raleigh, this the 15th day of October, A. D. 1851, and the 76th of American Independence. DAVID S. REID."

[Governor's Proclamation.]

WE are happy in the privilege of meeting you to-day, my Brethren, summoned as we are by this Proclamation of his Excellency, our Governor, to contemplate the blessings of our lot, and to give thanks to God our benefactor. And we are happy in the thought, that nearly every State in the Union, by a previous arrangement made between its chief Executive officer, has fixed on this day for the purpose; and that our country now presents the delightful—the sublime spectacle, of assembling before the Maker of Heaven and earth, to lift up their hearts and voices to Him, in thanksgiving and praise.

The year which has elapsed since we were last convened for a similar purpose, has been distinguished, not only by the continuance to us of our ordinary mercies, and by the increase of our national prosperity, but by peculiar tokens of the favor of Heaven. Although, throughout a large section of our country, the labors of the husbandman have not met with their usual returns, nor have the windows of heaven opened, as in former years, and poured a

profusion into our dwellings; yet, for the absence of suffering for the necessaries of life, and for the possession of the means of comfortable subsistence,—for the possession of health throughout our borders,—for the blessings of domestic and social life, and of a free and enlightened Government,—for our spiritual privileges and hopes,—for these things we are bound to render thanks to Him from whom we have received them. And frozen must be our hearts, if these blessings, enjoyed in so high a degree by us, do not awaken in our bosoms some suitable sense of the Divine Goodness, and excite us to pour forth our praises to the God of our mercies.

There is no nation on earth, for which God has done so much in so short a time, as he has done for these United States. From its earliest history to the present day,—in every season of danger, whether from an enemy without, or from dissensions within, “God has been our refuge and Defence, our Glory, and the Lifter up of our head.” In every foreign war in which we have been engaged, he has crowned our arms with victories the most signal and decisive. He has kept us from the confusion and tumults and miseries of civil strife. He has preserved us from being involved in the broils and bloodshed of Europe. He has sweetened all these mercies by fixing us in the secure enjoyment of every privilege our hearts can wish. He has given us the everlasting Gospel, we trust, in its purity, and has been inviting us by the allurements of his love, to the enjoyment of his rest. Behold the Divine clemency with which he has distinguished us from other nations! Several countries on the eastern shores of the Atlantic have scarcely time to breathe, much less to recruit from the wounds and sufferings of one revolution, before they are plunged into another. It is a foul stain on the civilization of Europe, as well as an awful judgment for her sins, that she is almost continually weltering in blood. Her infatuated sons fly to arms, and slaughter each other as the caprice or politics of their tyrants ordain. Torn with intes-

tine faction,—heaving with convulsions and revolutions like the throes of an earthquake, how many of these terrible eruptions have, more generally or partially, flooded their curses on Europe, within our memory. How enviable our condition in the comparison! How gentle the dispensations of God towards us! Why do we prosper, while other lands are rent with fightings without and fears within? Why does not the sword thin our families, and hew down our gallant youth? Why are we permitted to till our grounds without molestation, and to eat the fruit of our industry? Why, through the medium of commerce, to keep up an amicable and lucrative intercourse with distant places? Why to dot the land all over with establishments of labor-saving machinery? Why to “speed the car, and stretch the whispering wires” over land and sea, and build our cities and dig our gold? Why to foster the arts of peace, which refine the manners, and improve the mind? Why to assemble, without interruption or fear, in the house of God, to sing His praises, to supplicate His favor, to learn the words of everlasting life? Is it because we are better than they? No! in no wise. It is undeserved mercy,—it is because “the *Lord* has shown his favor unto us.”

Without dwelling on many of these things, which, however worthy of our thankful acknowledgement, occupy only a middle or inferior place in the scale of national benefits, allow me to direct your attention to one distinguishing blessing, which cannot be passed over, without fixing upon us the stigma of base ingratitude;—I mean our deliverance from civil discord.

Since our last day of Thanksgiving, the nation has been in a state of agitation, and of the most anxious expectation as to the result of events then in progress. Need I remind you that this dreadful plague was at our doors? Have you forgotten the chilling anticipations which but lately obtruded themselves unsought, on your minds? Already did the phrenzied imagination display those scenes of horror, at the bare thought of which the heart shudders. Al-

ready did we hear the burst of hostile thunder :—already did we see members of the same family arraying themselves against each other in murderous strife :—our cities and our dwellings sinking in flames, and our families fugitives from the smouldering ruins. But the storm has blown over and done no harm. The sound of alarm has died away on the ear. All is serene, all secure. This day is witness that peace—*domestic* peace dwells in our land, and enjoys the quiet exercise of her confirmed reign. Give glory to Him who hath commanded deliverance. “O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard, who holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.”

Tremendous as foreign war is, it is infinitely preferable to domestic discord. Internal union is the bond of social strength. When mutual confidence has fled, and coldness, and jealousies, and criminations, and menaces come in its place ; when professed anxieties for the public welfare degenerate into the strife of sectional policies ; and unanimity of measures gives way to the violence of faction, the firmest sinews of the national energy are cut, and the richest veins of national prosperity sluiced.

It was a serious, it was an awful thing, to behold in one direction, a large extent of our country, including great numbers of inhabitants, throw off submission to the law, and rise in the contumacy of a determined resistance to rightful authority ; and to behold in another an entire state vexed and goaded, as they allege, by unjust encroachments and oppressive exactions on their sovereign and independent rights, deliberately planning an organised dismemberment of these States. Nor was it easy to calculate what would be the extent of the calamity, or what its issue. Men of similar habits and in similar circumstances readily unite in similar undertakings. But here, we beheld extremes meeting in the same nefarious work of ruin, men of the most opposite interests and views, materials the most discordant and heterogeneous harmonizing in the same dark

designs. "Herod and Pontius Pilate made friends!" Cherished by the wicked assiduity of those sons of Belial who had been industrious in creating it, the dissension, spreading like a flame through the dried leaves of Autumn, might have divided the children of the same great brotherhood, not into the parties of opinion, but into the armies of civil war. Oh, how would despots have exulted in this consequence, as the ruin of the fairest experiment, which the sun ever beheld,—of a government reared on the equal rights of man! But to their confusion and our triumph, the tumult has subsided. The voice of the people, "like the sound of many waters," has proclaimed, *We love this UNION*; while the temperate, yet firm, the vigorous, yet unbloody manner in which this most unnatural treason was subdued, and is still kept down, is fraught with delight to ourselves, and has filled the whole nation with admiration and applause. To those patriots of every political creed, to those judicial officers, whose unflinching firmness and unblenched dignity, have enforced the sovereignty of law, in the very face of reckless mobs, and the unsparing abuse of fanatics, the tribute due to their spirited exertions is cheerfully paid. Above all, whatever may be our prejudices or predilections, our eyes involuntarily turn and fasten on *that man*, whom "God has made strong for himself" to meet the appalling exigency; on *that man* whom God has raised up and honored to be the instrument of so rich a blessing to this land, and whose name will live, and whose memory will be revered, with the names and memories of his renowned predecessors.

A greater, a more useful political lesson was never taught. It is the victory of principle over passion, of order over confusion, of laws over licentiousness. What a lesson to our country—a lesson which will remain to the end of time inscribed upon their hearts. What a lesson to the nations of the earth, to behold our country, passing safely through the severest trials that ever tested the attachment of a nation to its institutions, without shedding one drop of

blood, gathering fresh strength at every step of its mighty progress, and enthroning itself more steadfastly in the confidence and affections of its people! What precious proofs that the nation means to act, not only well, but nobly; so that they who see that parties and leaders, as such, are to a deplorable extent corrupt, are obliged to admit, that the mass of our people of all parties love their country, and are worthy of their liberties.

The facts now mentioned are luminous events, which, at present, absorb in their lustre all other political incidents relating to us. "Fools make a mock at fear," and may disregard the danger and the deliverance, "but the wise will ponder them in their hearts," and never forget them. They cannot but fix in astonishment the gaze of the most careless, and impress the hearts of the most hardened. How powerful obligations of gratitude to our God are created by such an interposition, will appear from contemplating the singular mercies of that providential dispensation from which they flowed. Sources of illustration on this topic, are numerous and fruitful. You will all acknowledge,

That the *imminent danger* in which we lately were, highly exalts the mercy of our deliverance.

However imagination might depict the horrors of a disunion before they had a real existence, yet the strong apprehension of their approach was not chimerical. Affairs in the north and in the south were fast verging to a dreadful crisis. I need not repeat the causes of their apprehension—of their dreadful foreboding. They are familiar to you all, for they were not done in a corner, but in the open light of day, and are known and read of all men. But in order that you may realize the danger, you must contemplate the actual state of the public mind, wrought up to frenzy by the unruly and turbulent passions of men. Besides the ringleaders and instigators of such scenes, there are in every community multitudes who have a much greater share of good intention than discernment. Their honest credulity, unguided by judgment and untempered

with caution, draws them into the plots of others whose less upright principles take an eager advantage of their simplicity. An appeal to popular prejudice—to a fanatical philanthropy on the one hand, and to sectional jealousies and State pride on the other, each calculated to influence popular passion—is an engine which the crafty demagogue is ever ready to employ, and generally finds effectual, for enlisting both under the banners of treasonable resistance. Unhappily, this engine was used by both sections with consummate skill and prodigious effect; and it was this drawing in of such immense masses of pliant, unsuspecting, but well-intentioned citizens, that gave so fearful an aspect to the threatening danger. Besides this, there will ever be some in all parts of the country, to whom, from natural unhappiness of mind, from a restless, discontented temper, or from less venial causes, order will be imprisonment, and peace a torture; some, who sicken to see the gallant vessel of State riding securely at anchor, or flitting before the favoring gale, and who watch with eagerness for an adverse blast to dash her on the reef, that while the crew perish in the waters, they may pillage the wreck. The mischievous projects of such as these, aided by the imprudent zeal of others, one would think, might of themselves be sufficient to bring on the dreaded catastrophe. But when we add to their machinations, all the exasperating circumstances that gave strength to their counsels, and color to their pretexts, it seems little short of a miracle that we have escaped. We stand astonished at the precipice over which we were nearly hurried, a precipice that would have plunged us into evils for which their immediate authors could never have atoned; no, not with their lives. It was God's unspeakable mercy that interfered to save us; and the greater our danger, the more beneficent was the interference, and the more precious the salvation. Surely "He hath not dealt so with any other nation." "Praise ye the Lord."

Again; *the complicated evils which attend any war, but*

especially a war between brethren, show, in a most affecting light, the mercy which has prevented them. These evils both political and moral, it would require a volume fully to enumerate and to display. Nor, were it possible, would I now undertake to unfold them. But horrid as foreign war is, it is infinitely to be preferred to domestic discord. War among brethren has peculiar miseries. Experience, that faithful teacher, has shown that the wounds inflicted by civil strife are far deeper, and of more difficult cure, than any that can be received from the hand of foreign violence. *“A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.”* The murderous tempers which, in other wars, are indulged, in this, are wrought up to the height of fury. Resentments are more keen, revenge more implacable, and hatred more lasting. The aggressor is more injurious, and the injured more unforgiving. Amidst mutual reproaches and accusations of violating the most solemn compact, the most sacred ties that can bind men together, they appear to each other, wretches unworthy of esteem, and incapable of faith. Reconciliation is hard to be effected. and when effected, is scarcely ever sincere. The body politic may, indeed, re-assume its healthful complexion, but the poison, rankling within, is ready to burst out with renewed violence; for we find, in fact, that, when men have once broken the cords of amity, they are easily impelled to repeat the sacrilege. It is, moreover, a melancholy reflection, that it makes but little difference to the community at large, how the quarrels of contending parties are decided. Whoever is victorious, or whoever is vanquished, all suffer. While they struggle against each other, they rend the vital system by which all are nourished; and the triumph of any over the rest, is but the success of a mad conspiracy against themselves. Pregnant with these great futurities, the phenomena of God’s providence bid us prepare for their awful development; and each succeeding day, bringing with it new discouragements, led us to contemplate an issue as terrible

as it was near. But while at a distance the thunders muttered ; while our heavens blackened, and the clouds fraught with wo stretched over our heads ; while our citizens, the most of them in utter carelessness—some in trembling anxiety,—some in their closets on their knees,—some in sullen suspense, were expecting their fate, God—for surely it was the work of no created wisdom or power—God sent help from his holy hill. The arm of vengeance raised by brother against brother, to hurl the wrathful bolt, he has arrested. Through the opening gloom, the light of his deliverance beamed, and so brilliant was the interposition, that nothing but atheistic impiety could forbear exclaiming : “*This salvation is from the Lord.*” That heart which is not, in any degree, melted by such goodness, must lie under the curse of triple hardness. “The Lord hath not dealt so with any other nation.” Other nations have perished by the frown of the Eternal, and their memorial blotted from under heaven. But *we* are spared, are protected, are prospered. This lenity is divine. Because the Lord delighteth to do us good, is he thus indulgent. “Praise ye the Lord.”

And now, my Brethren, since “the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad,” how shall we express our gratitude ? What shall we “render to Him for all his benefits ?” Taking that “cup of salvation” which his own hand hath tendered to us, let us “call upon his name.” This, beyond controversy, is an immediate and essential part of our duty,—to *pay Him explicit and public homage ; to recognise, by devout and marked acknowledgment, our dependence on his favor, and the blessings we have reaped from his protection.*

There is a religion of society, as such ; a tribute of reverence which it owes the living God. Formed under his auspices, and nurtured by his care, preserved by his power, and replenished with his bounty, he requires from us, on these accounts, social worship and the social vow. The honor of his sovereign rule he cannot relinquish, and the

confession of it we may not withhold. It is true that our excellent Chief Magistrate, in the critical circumstances in which he was thrown, has displayed in a conspicuous manner, those governmental virtues which are at once the duty and glory of his official pre-eminence. The other Magistrates, too, both executive and judicial, who acted in concert with him, have imbibed the spirit of their station, and showed themselves a "terror to evil-doers." And the great mass of our public men and fellow citizens, whose patriotic efforts have aided in quieting the public agitation, and restoring good order, have brought into splendid action the principles of men who enjoy true liberty, and know how to value and defend it. They have all deserved well of their country; but their exertions, laborious, disinterested, sublime as they are, would have been utterly fruitless, without the countenance of Him, who is "Governor among all the nations." Let us not, therefore, rest in second causes, nor limit our praises to human instruments. Let us not disregard them, but look beyond them. Let us make our boast in God, who, in the day of trouble, covered us with the shield of his omnipotence. "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,"—now may our countrymen say,—"if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: then the proud waves had gone over our soul. Blessed be the name of the Lord, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Therefore, "give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts with thanksgiving. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear before him, all ye people!"

Another becoming expression of our gratitude to God, for the goodness which he has shown is, *to do all in our power for the preservation and perpetuity of this glorious republic, for ourselves, for our children, and for the world.* God has not given us this great inheritance, either to be undervalued or thrown away. The history of our nation from the earliest dawn of its existence to the present day, is indicative of some great design to be accomplished by it. It is a history of perils and deliverances, and of strength ordained out of weakness. No nation on earth, out of weakness, ever became so strong, nor was ever guided through so many perils to so lofty an eminence. But in the whole history of the world, God has not been accustomed to grant such signal deliverances, without ends of corresponding magnitude to be answered by them. Indeed, if it had been the design of heaven to establish a powerful nation, in the full enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, where all the energies of man might find scope and full development, on purpose to show to the world by experiment, of what man is capable; and to shed light on the darkness, which should awake the slumbering eye, rouse the torpid mind, and nerve the palsied arm of millions;—where could such an experiment have been made, but in this country, and by what means so well adapted to that end, as by our institutions? Who can doubt, from the course now adopted and prosecuted by Christians of every name to support and extend at home and abroad, religious and moral influences, that it is the purpose of God to render this nation, to a wide extent, the almoners of his bounty to the world? Behold the means which he has committed to us for this purpose. He has given us a model government,—the envy and the admiration of mankind. He has given us perfect liberty of conscience,—“freedom to worship God.” He has given us two great national institutions—the one to disseminate his Word,—the other, to scatter the messages of salvation like leaves of the forest,—the glory of our land. Besides which, every denomination of Chris-

tians has its own distinctive organizations, that make it their business to see that every family has a Bible, and every church a pastor, and every child a catechism, so that our nation may not outgrow the means of religious instruction. And while these means of moral culture are supplied, this great nation, from her eminence, begins to look abroad with compassion upon a world sitting in darkness, and to put forth her mighty arm to disenthral the nations, and elevate the family of man. And when we contemplate the unexampled resources of this country in men, soil, climate, sea-coast, rivers, lakes, canals, railroads, agriculture, manufactures, commerce, arts and wealth, and all these in connexion with the influence of republican and religious institutions, is it too much to be hoped, that God will accept this powerful instrumentality, and make it effectual for the renovation of the world?

Nor is this all. The world is already looking to us, and feeling the *power of our example*. There is now a public opinion of the world—a moral sense of nations. Our example is even now telling with mighty influence on the destiny of the human race. If we consider the immense extent of our territorial possessions,—the vastness of our country, washed as it now is, by the two great oceans on the east and west, and stretching from the lakes of the north to the Gulf of the south,—if we consider, also, our proximity to the South American States, and the close imitation they are disposed to make of our civil and literary institutions, who can doubt that the light of our example will yet illumine this entire continent? And when the light of such a hemisphere shall go up to heaven, it will throw its broad beams beyond the waves,—it will shine in the darkness there, and be comprehended,—it will awaken desire, and hope, and effort, and produce revolutions and overturnings, until the world is free. Behold what is already done! From our revolutionary struggle, proceeded the great revolution in France, and all which have followed in Spain and Greece, and Sardinia, and Italy, and

Hungary. And what though the bolt of every chain has been again riveted, and clenched? They can no more hold down the heaving mass, than the chains of Xerxes could hold the Hellespont, vexed with storms. What though floods have been poured upon the rising flame? They can no more extinguish it, than they can extinguish the fires of *Ætna*. Still it burns, and still the mountain heaves and murmurs; and soon it will explode with voices, and thunders and great earthquakes. Then will the trumpet of jubilee sound, and earth's down-trodden, debased millions will leap from the dust, and shake off their chains, and cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

But to accomplish these changes in the civil and religious condition of the world, revolutions and convulsions are indispensable—nay, as man is, are inevitable. Tyrants will not let go their hold of power, without a desperate effort to retain it. The usurpation by the few, of the rights and privileges of the many, will not be spontaneously or willingly relinquished, nor the chains knocked off from the body and the soul of man, by the hands which, for ages, have done nothing but rivet them. "He that sitteth upon the throne, must overturn, and overturn, and overturn," before his rights and the rights of man will be restored. Revolution must come, of course, and such, too, as shall veil the sun, and turn the moon into blood, and shake the earth with the violence of nation dashing against nation,—until every despotic government shall be thrown down, and chaos resume its pristine reign,—until the Spirit of God shall move again upon the face of the deep, and bring out a new creation. The day of vengeance is in his heart, and is no doubt begun, and will no doubt continue, until "He that sitteth upon the throne shall have made all things new."

My hearers! we indulge in no idle visions of the future,—we dare not presume to scan the purposes of Deity. We can only speak of the future from the past; but judging from the past, are we not right in saying that God would

have us take courage from the events of his providence we have been reviewing this day, and that he has taught us by these events, and his signal interposition in our behalf, to repose a more unreserved confidence in the purity and stability of our institutions than ever before?—and that he has, as it were, re-committed them again to us, in trust for the benefit of man? But suppose we are mistaken?—suppose the scenes through which we have passed, are but the precursors of others still more terrible to come?—or suppose, that in the long lapse of ages, the pillars of our glorious fabric shall fall and crumble in the dust;—for, remember, we cannot blunt the iron tooth of time, nor break his leaden sceptre, under which all former States, and all possible institutions have been broken and consumed, and to which all that shall yet arise *may* be obliged to pay the same fearful tribute.—What then? There is a mighty influence which time itself cannot weaken—which long ages, as they pass, hardly dilute. Generation sweeps after generation in its brief career, as wave chases wave on the bosom of the deep, and when each dashes on the shore, it is lost forever. But the spirit that pervades these fleeting and nameless generations perishes not in those whose breasts it ruled, nor passes away with the monuments erected to illustrate and enlarge its reign. Here our work for good is immense,—is almost immortal. The laws of Solon are laws no longer; his people have for ages scarcely known his name, and for twenty centuries the principles of his polity have been banished from his native city. Yet the spirit of the Athenian people,—of their laws, their liberty, their institutions, and their literature, has influenced every succeeding generation, and at this hour, burns more brightly, and warms the heart more intensely than in the freest and most glorious days of Greece. So, too, shall it be with this great Republic. The names of its wise and virtuous citizens, except a very few, must be forgotten; the details of its thrilling and romantic history may perish, leaving behind only the

grand outline of its origin, its struggles, and its triumphs; its simple and noble monuments may all decay—nay, even its glory may be obscured, its strength depart, its sacred principles be all subverted, and the plough-share of ruin be driven deep and wide through its sacred bosom. Alas! that were, indeed, a sad day for man. But supposing all this—supposing the worst; even then, we shall not have lived in vain. There is one name which shall ever live. The name of Washington will electrify all coming ages, and in the shock of battle nerve the arm, and in the day of triumph rule the evil passions of all who struggle for liberty. The light of our glorious career will forever illuminate the path that leads the weak and the oppressed to freedom, strength and boundless prosperity. The spirit of our laws and institutions will abide upon earth, the redeeming spirit of succeeding times, resisting all the efforts of ignorance, barbarism and tyranny—living in the very core of the world's heart, and defying all attempts to extirpate it; until the whole mass shall be warmed and enlightened, and the flame, like that the Ancients fabled, shall break forth at once in ten thousand places, and fill the earth with brightness. Our times, our country, our institutions alike call us to this glorious destiny. Let us fulfil it. We are hereditary freemen. The blood of the Angles, the Normans, the unconquered Saxons before whom Cæsar and Charlemagne alike recoiled, mingle their heroic currents in our veins, along with that great barbaric stream which Rome herself could not withstand. These are our primeval sires. After them, the founders of English liberty in the glorious Commonwealth. And then the men of '76—their immediate sons. Heritage—descent—destiny, alike glorious. Yes, we tell it thankfully, firmly, joyfully; we are the great inheritors of human freedom, and we intend to transmit the sacred treasure to our children's children, untarnished by a single blot, undiminished by a single particle. We revere our fathers' memory, we cherish the deeds of our great ancestors, we love this UNION, the purchase of their toils

and prayers, and tears, and cemented by their blood; we look upon it as the Sun in the Zodiac, or rather as "the blue sky which bendeth over all;" we know the day of our visitation; we thank God for his boundless mercies, and by his grace, we mean to be faithful to our lot, just to the glorious past, true to the still more glorious future. This is the deep, indwelling, unalterable purpose of twenty millions of souls. Thirty-one republics into which they are scattered, are but so many dispersed centres to preserve and perpetuate this high sentiment. The great nation which these unitedly form, has for its mission the public exhibition and illustration—in the presence and for the benefit of universal man—of the excellence, the strength, and the blessedness of freedom. And even now, one continent is redeemed to suffering, struggling humanity; redeemed from the common lot of down-trodden man, and set forth in impregnable strength and ravishing beauty, the first fruits of a world rousing itself up from the stupor of sixty centuries.

11 -

POLITICS AND THE PULPIT:

A DISCOURSE

PREACHED IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NORFOLK, VA.,

ON

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1856.

BY

GEO. D. ARMSTRONG, D.D., PASTOR.

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1856.

DISCOURSE.

“I WILL WASH MY HANDS IN INNOENCY: SO WILL I COMPASS
THINE ALTAR, O LORD: THAT I MAY PUBLISH WITH THE VOICE
OF THANKSGIVING, AND TELL OF ALL THY WONDROUS WORKS.”—
Psalm xxvi. 6, 7.

WE are gathered in God's house to-day, that we may render thanks to him for the mercies of the passing year.

How widely different the circumstances in which we assembled here, a year ago; at the close of “the summer of the Pestilence.” The Chief Magistrate of this good old Commonwealth had then recommended the observance of a day of thanksgiving throughout our borders. In every other part of the State, the heart of man—the Christian man—was attuned for the service. No enemy at home, or abroad, threatened our peace. The seasonable alternation of shower and sunshine had caused the earth to yield abundantly, an increase of the seed sown. The harvest had been gathered in, and the barns were

full. Shielded by the good providence of God, and blessed of him, the patriarch father might gather around him, in the old homestead, his children and his children's children:—and only here and there, would there be a vacant seat,—only now and then, would one return, with sad step and slow, to tell of bereavement.

Such was not our lot. We had occasion to thank God that we were not consumed. In honesty, we were constrained to confess, that even in our sore chastisement, "God had not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." Yet the language of thanksgiving, in view of God's dealings with us during the year, was not the language of our hearts. Judah will not fail to praise God, even in a strange land. As she sits down, in her captivity, by the rivers of Babylon, she will sing,—but not the glad songs of Zion. "How can she sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" She will sing,—but not the jubilant psalm her lips were wont to utter as she entered the Temple, at Jerusalem,—'tis a plaintive melody which falls upon the ear. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem," is the burden of her song. In the strong and simple faith in God, his goodness and his grace, which angels feel; which the spirits of just men made perfect feel, we may, and doubtless will, "rejoice always." But here, on

earth, the song of thanksgiving grates upon the ear of him who sits beside his desolate hearth-stone:—Tears will fill even the eye of faith, as it rests upon the new-made graves of the household. Abraham, that mighty man of faith, “mourned for Sarah and wept for her,” as he stood at the cave of Machpelah.

In what contrast with all this, the circumstances in which we assemble to-day. Not, that we have forgotten, or would forget, those whose loss we mourned a year ago. But, blessed be God! it is a law of our nature, that time shall assuage the poignancy of mortal grief. It is a law of God’s spiritual kingdom too, that, as tears wash out the natural eye, and cleanse its vision, so shall they also cleanse the vision of “the eye of faith.”

The present, is a period of unexampled health in this our city. In the three months last passed, I have been called to bury no member of this church:—And in all the families connected with the congregation, there has been but one death, that of a child seven years old. Never, before, since I have been pastor of this church, have I been able to tell of such mercy as this.

Our city, too, in its commercial interests, seems to have recovered from the shock it received a year ago. Our harbor, has been sought by as many

sail,—our wharves have been as crowded,—and, our streets as thronged, as in former years. The eye, sees but little if any difference between the Norfolk of to-day, and the Norfolk of two years ago. Whilst some foreboded ruin for us, as the inevitable consequence of the ravages of the pestilence,—many of us, more hopeful, had confidence in the recuperative powers of our city:—But did any of us, as we beheld the desolations made in our midst, anticipate so rapid a recovery as that we see? The tornado sweeps o'er a forest-land; and a scene of wreck and ruin marks its track. The tall oak, of a hundred summers, lies, shattered, beside the shoot of a single season, crushed in its fall. But the dews of heaven descend, and God's showers are poured upon this ruin. The riven trunk clothes itself in verdure anew; the undergrowth, bent and bruised, springs back to its natural position again,—and in the period of one short "circle of the seasons," so changed is the scene, that the eye of the stranger detects no trace of the tornado. In the memory of the past, alone, does it live as a reality. The scarred heart, alone, now, bears marks of the pestilence.

In view of all these mercies—this good providence of the Lord our God—should not we, his people, "compass his altars" this day, and "publish with

the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all his wondrous works?"

The blessings bestowed upon us, as a city, are not the only blessings, for which we have occasion to render thanksgiving to God, to-day. During the past summer, our country has passed safely through a political struggle—perhaps the most threatening—certainly, the most bitter, any of us have ever seen.

A threatening struggle,—threatening the Confederacy of these our States. It is not my purpose, standing in the pulpit, to discuss the nature or the value of that Confederacy. Such themes as these befit not the place. Granting, as every reflecting man must grant, that circumstances may arise, in which the patriot, and the Christian, as a choice between evils, will rather give up our Union, than encounter the yet greater evils at the cost of which it may be possible, alone, to preserve it,—yet, I speak, I know, the thought of every one of you, when I say, that the severance of this Union, in itself considered, is an evil which he must be infatuated who would make light of. The ties which bind us, North and South, together, God forbid that we should ever learn their strength in the breaking! Our Confederation, the deep foundations of which were laid “in days of old,”—the convulsions which

will be mighty enough to overturn it, will shake this land to its very centre.

The summer is passed—and the glorious old banner of the Stars and Stripes, given to the breeze amid the prayers and sacrifices of men who loved their country well and wisely—blessed be God! yet floats before the eyes of the nations. No star has been blotted from its azure field. No hostile shot has torn a stripe of the old bunting. No foeman's hand has trailed its glories in the dust. We were born under its shadow; and under that shadow would we die, and there would we be buried. It sheltered our childhood's helplessness; and we would have our children, and our children's children sheltered there too.

Through this threatening struggle we have safely passed:—perhaps, I ought rather to say, having an eye to the possibilities of the future—through this one act of a threatening struggle, we have safely passed. This one battle—it may be in a “thirty years' war”—has been won. And when I speak thus, I mean, won, not for this or that political party, —but won for our country; our whole country. And we would gladly take it as an omen and earnest of what is yet in store for us, in God's providence, in the future.

A bitter struggle.—The bitterest political struggle

we have ever known. No little of this bitterness has arisen, from the mingling of religious elements with the political issues involved. Religious elements—using that term religious in its widest sense—when mingling with other elements in civil and political strife, as all history testifies, have ever given rise to the deadliest conflicts earth has witnessed. Saul of Tarsus, takes the lead in the first Christian persecution; and whilst other Scribes remain, reviling the name of Jesus, in Jerusalem, he follows his victims unto strange cities.—And he does so, as he himself tells us, because, with conscience misinformed, “he verily thinks that he ought to do many things against the name of Jesus.” The Inquisition, is the bloodiest and most merciless of human tribunals, because, in its court, a fanatic priest sits “at the top of judgment.”

So, in our own land, and during the summer just past, we have had one of the bitterest political struggles ever known, in large part, because the religious feelings of men have been evoked,—men have been made to feel that in promoting the interest of a party, they were, verily, doing God’s service:—because, not the Statesman or the Politician alone, but the Preacher also, has become an active partisan,—in some instances, “mounting the stump,”—in others, doing what is far worse, prostituting the pulpit and

profaning the Sabbath, by preaching politics instead of the Gospel of Christ.

That all this is wrong, radically wrong, will be, I believe, the conclusion of every ingenuous Christian man, under the guidance of his religious instincts alone; even though he may not be able to give a reason distinctly for this his conclusion. As already intimated, that which we have witnessed, may be but one act in a protracted strife, stretching far into the future. Would it not be well for us then, as Christian men, to examine the ground on which we stand, in repudiating and condemning all interference of the Church and the Preacher in political strife; not only, that we may be able to give a reason for our faith to him that asketh it; but also, that in time to come, we may “wash our hands in innocency; and so compass the altars of our God.”

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH, AND THE PROMISE OF THE PREACHER, AS SET FORTH IN THE WORD OF GOD, is the subject to which I ask your attention to-day.

The church of God is not—as seems to be taken for granted by many—an institution intended to do all the good which needs to be done in the world, and to wage war upon every form of human ill. There are other institutions, intended to do good and alleviate the ills of life, to enable men to “live in all

godliness and honesty," that are as truly institutions of God as the Church itself. For each of these, severally, God, their common author, has assigned its proper sphere of operation, and beyond its limits, no one of them may safely or rightfully go.

Civil government is one of these institutions. "The powers that be are *ordained* of *God*. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the *ordinance* of *God*.—He (i. e. the civil ruler) is the *minister* of *God* to thee for good."—(Rom. xiii. 1-4) "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men; For kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all *godliness* and *honesty*. *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour*."—(1 Tim. ii. 1-4.)

According to the plain representation of Scripture, the State is as truly an institution of God as the Church:—And a great deal of the good which needs to be done in the world, is, by God's appointment, to be done through its agency; and a great many of the ills of life are to be alleviated in the same way. Is "a quiet and peaceable life" to be secured for man, it is the immediate business of the State to secure it. Is the evil-doer to be terrified, the civil ruler "bear-eth not the sword in vain." In his own proper

sphere, the civil ruler is as truly "the minister of God to thee for good," as is the minister of the Gospel. In securing to the Christian man, "a life in all godliness and honesty," the civil ruler has a part assigned him of God, as truly as has the minister of the Church;—And he who would "keep a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man"—"would wash his hands in innocency, and so compass God's altar," is bound to regard these appointments of God. The Church may no more rightfully intrude itself into the province of the State, than the State may itself into the province of the Church. The forum and the court, and all that properly appertain to them, have been given of God to the civil ruler,—the Church and the pulpit, to the minister of the Gospel.

The fact, if fact it be, that the State may not be accomplishing all the good it ought,—that civil or political evils are suffered under its administration,—that it needs reforming, does not authorize the Church to step in and supply these deficiencies, or reform these abuses, any more than a similar state of things in the Church, would authorize the State to interfere. All human institutions—human, in that they are administered by men, though ordained of God—are imperfect in their operation:—and this, not because the ordinance of God is imperfect; but, because sin has introduced disorder into the working

of all earthly things; has put man's nature out of joint. The harp of David gives forth many a wailing note, because sin, with rough hand, has swept the strings. The rose of Sharon, will open with blasted petals, if the hot winds of the desert breathe upon it in the bud. The Church, the State, the Family, we discover evils in the practical working of them all. And such, we believe, will be the case, so long as man, but partially sanctified at best, is "God's minister" in their administration.

"We freely grant, and sincerely rejoice in the truth, that the healthful operations of the Church, in its own appropriate sphere, re-act upon all the interests of man, and contribute to the progress and prosperity of society. But we are far from admitting, either, that it is the purpose of God, that under this present dispensation of religion, all evil shall be banished from this sublunary state, and earth be converted into a paradise; or, that the proper end of the Church is the direct promotion of universal good."

—(*Synod of South Carolina, 1848.*)

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in so far as his conduct was ministerial, appeared on earth, as a minister of the Church. As the universal sovereign of all, he might, had he seen fit so to do, have rightfully exercised civil rule, as well as ecclesiastical authority,—have appeared as a temporal king, as well as a spiritual ruler. But such was not his choice; such was not the

purpose of his life among men. Hence, when on a certain occasion, he perceived that the multitude “would come, and take him by force to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.”—(John. vi. 15.) Hence also, when asked of Pilate—“Art thou the King of the Jews?—Jesus answered him, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now, is my kingdom not from hence.”—(John. xviii. 33, 36.) As a minister of the Church the example of Christ is a perfect example, and of binding authority upon the minister of the Church in every age.

Notice now—and I shall quote but two, from among the instances which the gospel record presents—how carefully Christ observed the distinction between Church and State,—and as a minister of the Church, avoided all interference with the civil government, within its own proper sphere.

“And they (the chief priests and scribes) sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor. And they asked him, saying, master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly: Is it lawful for us

“to give tribute unto Cæsar or no? But he perceived
“their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt
“ye me? Shew me a penny. Whose image
“and superscription hath it? They answered and
“said, Cæsar’s. And he said unto them, Render
“therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar’s,
“and unto God the things which be God’s.”—(Luke
xx. 20–25).

To say, that our Lord, in this instance, avoided a direct decision of the question proposed, through fear of the Roman governor, is to do him greater injustice than did these Jews who sought to entangle him in his speech. He who hurled at the hypocritical scribes and pharisees—*rulers in the Church*—his terrible anathemas—“Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.—For ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.—Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”—He who, at Jerusalem, when “he found in the *temple*, those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting; made a scourge of small cords, and drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the

oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise,"—if we do him common justice, judging of him as we would of any man, cannot be supposed to have avoided a decision of this question, through any fear of the consequences. The course he pursued, was chosen from higher motives than such as these.

The Jews, in our Lord's day, were a conquered people. The government under which they lived was in many respects an oppressive one. Their rulers were often tyrannical, wicked men. In these circumstances, they come to Jesus with the question—"Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no?" By "lawful," they did not mean—in accordance with the existing law of the land:—but, is it right in itself? Ought we to submit to such a government? Instead of directly answering this question, Christ calls their attention to the fact, that in using money bearing the image and superscription of Cæsar, they admitted that Cæsar was the supreme civil ruler, to whom God in his providence has subjected them. And then, as a minister of the Church, carefully avoiding all interference with the State, and on the principle that "the powers that be are ordained of God," he says—"Render therefore unto

Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's"—he refuses to take any notice of the question of civil right which had been proposed to him—and adds—"and unto God, the things which be God's." This our Lord does, not upon the principles of "passive obedience," as that doctrine has been taught in by-gone days; but as observing carefully the distinction which God has established between the Church and the State.

On another occasion—"One of the company said "unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he "divide the inheritance with me. And he said "unto him—Man, who made me a judge or divider "over you."—(Luke xii. 13, 14.)

Here was a case of alleged injustice, of wrong done; and probably a very clear case, or the appeal would not have been made to Jesus in the manner it was. A case too, in which the civil magistrate had failed—at least, up to the time it was brought to Jesus—to administer justice. How easy would it have been for our Lord, knowing all things, as he did, to have rendered an infallible decision in the case. How easy would it have been for him, armed with the power of a God, to have executed his righteous decree. Does he do this? Not at all. He who never sent away the ignorant—ignorant of God's truth—without instruction; the sick, the maimed, the blind, without healing; the possessed of the

devil, without deliverance,—refuses to entertain this case even for a moment. His prompt reply is—“Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?” Your case is one which falls within the province of the State.—To the civil court must you carry your cause. “My kingdom is not of this world.”

The conduct of Christ's inspired Apostles, was always in conformity with the example he set them, in this matter. They lived, and preached, and labored; they planted the church and nurtured it, in countries, where the civil government was oppressive, and greatly needed reforming,—when the State failed in the accomplishment of much of the good which God designed the State to do,—when many of the ills of life, which civil government is intended to correct, were suffered to prevail unchecked,—where person and property were insecure,—where the administration of the finances was a very thriftless and often an iniquitous one,—where the judges took bribes, and the rulers oppressed the people; and the Apostles suffered, in their own persons, in all these various ways. Yet never do we find these heaven-guided ministers of the Church, any more than Christ himself, intermeddling with the affairs of State. Never do we see them taking the lead in political agitation. Never did they, on the Sabbath, lay aside the Gospel, that they might preach civil, or

even legal reform. True to their character of "ambassadors for Christ," they know nothing among those to whom they go "save Jesus Christ and him crucified."—"They teach men publicly and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."—(1 Cor. ii. 2; Acts xx. 20, 21.) Having received a specific commission from the Lord Jesus, their Lord and ours,—“Go ye therefore and disciple all nations,—*teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,*” (Matt. xxviii.) they abide by their commission, to the letter; never transgressing it, by adding anything to, or taking anything from what Christ hath commanded.

In the life of the inspired Apostles, the Church appears, if possible, more clearly than in the general declarations of God's word, a peculiar institution,—and her ministers, a peculiar order of men.

As thus set forth, the Church appears as “a society, voluntary, in the sense that all its members become so, not by constraint, but willingly, but not in the sense that its doctrines, discipline, and order, are the creatures of human will, deriving their authority and obligation from the consent of the members. On the contrary; it has a fixed and unalterable constitution; and that constitution is the word of God.

The Church is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is enthroned in it as sovereign. It can hear no voice but His, obey no command but His, pursue no end but His. Its officers are His servants, bound to execute only His will. Its doctrines are His teachings, which He, as a prophet, has given from God; its discipline, His law, which He as a king has ordained. The power of the Church, accordingly, is only ministerial and declarative. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is her rule of faith and practice. She can announce what it teaches; enjoin what it commands; prohibit what it condemns; and enforce her testimonies by spiritual sanctions. Beyond the Bible, she can never go; and apart from the Bible, she can never speak. 'To the law and to the testimony,' and to them alone, she must always appeal; and when they are silent, it is her duty to put her hand upon her lips."—(*Synod of South Carolina*, 1848.)

Let us apply these principles,—Or, rather, Let us see how Christ and his Apostles applied them—in the matter which has involved the Church so largely, in the bitter political contest we have been called upon to witness during the summer just passed. It has been through the agency of the "slavery question," the preacher, in some instances, has quitted the pulpit and "mounted the stump;" in others, has

desecrated the pulpit and profaned the Sabbath, by preaching politics instead of the Gospel of Christ—and in one instance, within God's house, a contribution has been taken up in "Sharp's rifles"—a Reverend Minister standing up to keep the tally.

The institution of slavery is not something new and peculiar to our day. We know not just when it began to exist among men. As far back as the days of Abraham, when "the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things," we have an inventory of his possessions, given by "the eldest servant in his house," in the words—"And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great; and he hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and *men-servants* and *maid-servants*, and camels and asses."—(Gen. xxiv. 35.) And we know that when God first gave his visible Church a distinct and formal existence among men, He recognized the relation as existing in Abraham's family, and enforced the discharge of the duties growing out of it, by church sanctions. "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in thy house, or *he that is bought with money of any stranger*, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and *he that is bought with thy money*, must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall

“be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.”—(Gen. xvii. 12, 13.) And we know further, that when on the top of Sinai, God, with his own finger, wrote the moral law upon tables of stone, instead of writing a prohibition of slavery, as he did of things sinful in themselves, he treats the relation of master and servant as a lawful relation, and in one particular, regulates it accordingly. “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it, thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy *man-servant*, nor thy *maid-servant*, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates.”—(Ex. xx. 8-10.)

In the days of Christ and his Apostles, slavery existed, not in Judea only, but in every country in which they either preached the Gospel or founded a Christian Church. In Judea, under the operation of Moses' law, many of the incidental evils of slavery were carefully provided against, and the condition of the slaves was far better than among other nations. Yet even among the Jews, almost every one of the incidental evils of slavery existed, on the ground of which so much objection is made to slavery, at the present day, as it exists in our southern States. Amongst the Greeks and Romans,

even the most prejudiced judges cannot but admit that the condition of the slave was greatly worse, than it now is, anywhere in the civilized world.¹

¹ *Among the Jews.*—"Both the food and the clothing of those, who, for any cause, whatever it might be, had lost their freedom, were of the poorest description. All their earnings went to their masters. They commonly had the consent of their masters to marry, or rather to connect themselves with a woman, in the way which is denominated by a Latin law-term *contubernium*. ("The *contubernium* was the matrimony of slaves, a permitted cohabitation; not partaking of lawful marriage, which they could not contract."—*Cooper's Justinian*, p. 420.) The children that proceeded from this sort of marriage, were the property, not of the parents, but of their owners. Slaves were expected to perform any labor which their master deemed it expedient to require of them. The maid-servants were generally employed in domestic concerns, though not unfrequently, they were compelled to engage in those duties, which, from their nature, were more befitting the other sex."—(*Jahn's Biblical Archeology*. Andover Ed. 1832, pp. 180, 181.)

Among the Romans.—"Slaves were held *pro nullis: pro mortuis: pro quadrupedibus*: nay, were in a much worse state than any cattle whatsoever. They had no head in the state, no name, title, or register: they were not capable of being injured: nor could they take by purchase or descent: they had no heirs, and therefore could make no will: exclusive of what was called their *peculium*, whatever they acquired was their master's: they could not plead nor be pleaded for, but were excluded from all civil concerns whatever; they could not claim the indulgence of absence *reipublicæ causâ*: they were not entitled to the rights and considerations of matrimony, and therefore had no relief in case of adultery: nor were they proper objects of cognation or affinity, but of quasi-cognation only: they

With slavery, in one or other of these forms, the Apostles met at every turn. How do they deal with it? Do they denounce slave-holding as *a sin*, and require the master to free his slave, before they admit him to the Church, as a worthy member?—Never—There is not the most distant allusion to slavery, in all the preaching of Christ and his Apostles, as recorded in the Gospels and the Book of Acts. There is not one word that looks to the freeing of the slave, on the part of the master, as a condition of that master's admission to the Church, in the whole New Testament.

could be sold, transferred or pawned, as goods or personal estate; for goods they were, and as such they were esteemed: they might be tortured for evidence: punished at the discretion of their lord, or even put to death by his authority: together with many other civil incapacities which I have not room to enumerate.”—(*Taylor's Elem. of Civil Law*, as quoted in the Notes to Cooper's Justinian, p. 411.) In addition to this—“As the seller was bound to promise for the soundness of his slaves, and not to conceal their faults, they were commonly exposed to sale naked: and they carried a scroll hanging at their necks, on which their good and bad qualities were specified.—The lash was the common punishment; but for certain crimes they used to be burned in the forehead, and sometimes were forced to carry a piece of wood around their necks, wherever they went.—When slaves were beaten, they used to be suspended with a weight tied to their feet, and when punished capitally, were commonly crucified.”—(*Adam's Roman Antiquities. New York Ed. 1819. pp. 49, 51.*)

But what do they?—when God has blessed their preaching of his Gospel, and men are hopefully converted, they receive them, master and servant, into the same Church, baptizing them with the same water,—just as we are accustomed to do, at the South, at the present day. And when the Church is gathered at the Lord's table, masters and servants, they eat of the same bread and drink of the same cup,—just as you and I, Christian hearer, have done, many a time, feeling that “in Christ Jesus, there is neither bond nor free.”

The scriptural proof of these statements is abundant—“Let as many servants' as are under the yoke, “count their own masters worthy of all honor, that “the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have *believing masters*, “let them not despise them because they are *brethren*; but rather do them service, because they are “*faithful*” (*pistoi*, believers,) and “*beloved*, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and “exhort. If any man teach otherwise, and consent

¹ The Greek word here translated *servant*—and the same is true of most other instances in which that word occurs in our English New Testament—is *doulos*. Of this word Robinson in his N. T. Lexicon gives this definition—“In a family, the *doulos* was one bound to serve, a *slave*, and was the property of his master, ‘a living possession,’ as Aristotle calls him; and never a *hired servant*, the latter being called *misthios* or *misthotos*.”

“not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud.”—(1 Tim. vi. 1-3.)¹ Here Paul not only directs the course to be pursued,—but also, distinctly and explicitly affirms, that such are “the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness.” For further proof, see Eph. vi. 5-9; Col. iii. 22, 25; iv. 1; and the Epistle to Philemon.

In the Apostolic Epistle, we have, in several instances, extended catalogues of the sins of heathendom given us, (see Rom. i. 29-31; and 1 Cor. vi.

¹ McKnight's paraphrase of vs. 3, 4, is,—and I quote McKnight, in part, because of his acknowledged ability as a critical expositor of Scripture; but mainly, because, himself a Scotchman, and writing before any angry controversy on the subject of slavery had arisen in the Church, (his work on the Epistles was published in 1795,) he cannot be suspected of pro-slavery prejudices—“And those Christian slaves who have believing masters, let them not despise them, fancying that they are their equals, because they are their brethren in Christ; for though all Christians are equal as to religious privileges, slaves are inferior to their masters in station. Wherefore let them serve their masters the more diligently, because they who enjoy the benefit of their services, are believers and beloved of God. These things teach, and exhort the brethren to practise them. If any teach differently, by affirming that, under the Gospel, slaves are not bound to serve their masters, but ought to be made free, and do not consent to the wholesome commandments which are our Lord Jesus Christ's, and to the doctrine of the Gospel, which in all points is conformable to true morality, he is——” (*McKnight on the Epistles.*)

9, 10,) and also catalogues of disciplinable offences, (see 1 Cor. v. 11, and 1 Tim. i. 9, 10), and never, in one single instance, extended as the catalogue may be, does slaveholding appear among the sins which they condemn.

The only statement which can be tortured into anything of the kind, is the specification of "men-stealers" in 1 Tim. i. 10. A moment's reflection must satisfy every ingenuous person, that slaveholding, as practised among us now, is as different from "men-stealing," as is land-holding, under the peaceable tenure of law, from the land-getting by fraud and violence, often practised in the early settlement of all parts of the United States, New England included.¹

The nearest that any statement in the New Testament comes to modern abolition doctrine, is—"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant (*doulos*), care not for it; *but if thou mayest be free use it rather.* For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman."—(1 Cor. vii.

¹ On 1 Tim. i. 10, McKnight has this note. "They who make war for the inhuman purpose of selling the vanquished as slaves, as is the practice of the African princes, are really *men-stealers*. And they, who, like the African traders, encourage that unchristian traffic, by purchasing the slaves which they know to be unjustly acquired."

20-22.) The doctrine of this text is held everywhere, by Christian men at the South, and on all proper occasions preached from our pulpits. Would that it were so in all parts of the country!

This conduct of Christ, and the Apostles, invested by him with authority, and endued with wisdom to complete the organization of the Church, is irreconcilable with the idea that slave-holding is a sin, and the relation of a master, one which a Christian man may not hold with a good conscience before God. Any other view than that we take, involves the idea, that Christ and his Apostles, in their uniform avoidance of this subject, were guilty of an unholy truckling to the prejudices of men, of a jesuitical accommodation of the Church of God to the passions and interests of wicked men. The State, by passing a law, prohibiting slave-holding, may make it a civil offence. The political economist may prove it to be a political evil. But a *sin* no man, nor body of men,

¹ McKnight paraphrases this passage,—“Since the Gospel makes no alteration in men’s *political state*, let every Christian remain in the same *political state* in which he was called. Agreeably to this rule, Wast thou called, being a bondman? Be not thou solicitous to be made free, fancying that a bondman is less the object of God’s favor than a freeman. Yet, if thou canst even be made free by any *lawful method*, rather obtain thy freedom. But if disappointed, grieve not: For a bondman who is called by the Lord, possesses the greatest of all dignities; he is the Lord’s free-man.”

can ever make it, so long as God's Word is the ultimate authority in questions of right and wrong.

I may be asked—Does slavery so alter the relations between a man and his fellow-man, that the one, because he is a master, may, without sin, oppress, or cruelly lash, or even take the life of the other, because that other is a slave? Certainly not. The fact that civil government is an ordinance of God, does not make it right for the civil Ruler, having the power, to harass the subject, or to take bribes in the administration of the law. These are abuses, incidental evils, and not part and parcel of the institution itself, either in the one case or the other:—And in both alike, in so far as they are violations of the moral law, they are sins in God's account, and in the account of his Church:—and so the Apostles always treated them.

No book defines more clearly, than the Bible, the relative duties of master and servant; or enforces the faithful discharge of those duties by more solemn sanctions—"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh: not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth

“wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he had done: and there is no respect of persons. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven.”—(Col. iii. 22–25; iv. 1.)

“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in Heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him.”—(Eph. vi. 5–9.)

According to God’s word, the Christian Minister is bound to teach the relative duties of masters and servants, just as he teaches the duties of Rulers and Subjects, Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, for this is a part of what Christ hath commanded:—And if, in any instance, these obligations are violated by members of the Church, he is bound to enforce the discipline of the Church against the offender. This is just what the Apostles did. More than this

the Preacher has no commission to teach. Beyond this, the Minister has no authority to go.

What was the practical result of such a course, in the days of the Apostles? And what, have we good reason to believe, will be the practical result of such a course now? Not to destroy the relation of master and servant,—but to remedy the incidental evils which attach to it, existing, as it does, among sinful men. Supposing that the Church could succeed, universally, in enforcing what Christ hath commanded in this case,—so that all servants become “obedient to their masters—with good-will doing service as to the Lord and not to men,” and all masters “give unto their servants that which is just and equal,”—All the incidental evils of slavery disappear. The institution itself remains. But the servant, placed in God’s providence in the condition of a servant, can as completely fulfill all the conditions of his being on earth; can as well, and thoroughly prepare himself for heaven, as he could if he sustained no such relation to another, as is implied in his being a servant. Christianity, has never yet had full control of the hearts of all men, in any country: and hence, we see less or more of incidental evil attaching to all the relations of life. But that the conclusion just stated is not a mere speculation, is proven, by the fact, that the Church has, at this time, a

larger proportion of *the laboring population* among its members, in the slave-holding, than it has in the non-slaveholding States of our Union.

Wherever the religion of Jesus has gone, it has always corrected, just as far as it has had power, the incidental evils attaching to all the relations of life. It has ameliorated the condition of the Wife—in heathen lands, the condition of the Wife is that of a menial; the condition of the Child—in Old Rome, the father might take the life of his child as well as his slave; and the condition of the slave also. By teaching the true nature of the relation in which the parties, severally, stand one to another, and enforcing the discharge of their relative duties one to another, it has done all, of substantial benefit, that ever has been done, towards raising the down-trodden, or relieving the oppressed.

But will not Christianity, eventually, put an end to the existence of Slavery among men? I may be asked. On this point, I have an opinion; as I suppose every reflecting man must have:—and that opinion, on a proper occasion, and in a proper place, I hold myself ready to express; and if need be, give my reasons, therefor. In the pulpit, the only answer I can give, is—On this point I can teach nothing, for here, Christ hath given me no command:—“My hand is upon my lips.”

Notice, now, the position in which the conduct and teaching of Christ and his Apostles, places this subject of Slavery. They decide, positively, that *slaveholding is not a sin*. They decide further; that this, like all other civil institutions, is liable to abuse, on the part both of the slave and of the master; that in their day, there were incidental evils attaching to it, in its practical working among men, and that it is the province of the Preacher, in so far as his teaching will go; and of the Church, in so far as her authority over her members will go; to reform these abuses and correct these incidental evils. And there the duty of the Preacher and the authority of the Church, ends.

Slavery itself, they treat as a civil institution; and they never meddle with it. The question of the continuance of slavery, as a political question; and they never discuss it—they never utter one word on the subject. The moment you decide that slaveholding is not a sin, all pretext for the Preacher or the Church intermeddling with such questions as those which have agitated our country during the summer past, is taken away. The Kansas question, the question respecting the extension of slavery, is a purely political question; and the discussion of it, in the pulpit and on the Sabbath, is as much a desecration of holy place and holy time, as would be a discussion of the

“tariff question,” or “the distribution of the public land.”

I may be told—slavery is a civil evil, and a political curse. Very well—supposing this be so? What then? Let the State remedy the evil; Let the Civil Ruler remove the curse: And as in this our land—the freest under heaven—the ultimate authority is with the people—Let the people see to it that their Civil Rulers do their duty:—And let all this be done in the same way, and by means of the same lawful agencies, used in other cases of like nature.

But, the Preacher in our country is a *Citizen* in the State, as well as a *Minister* in the Church. May he not, in his character of a citizen, discuss civil and political questions, like other men? The answer to be given to this question, will be determined by the views we take of the nature and extent of a minister's ordination vows. All, I presume, will admit that *the better course* for the minister, having been set apart for holy things, is, to follow Paul's advice, and “give himself wholly to them.”—(1. Tim. iv. 15.) But if any minister, decide for himself, that it is right for him in his character of a *Citizen*, to enter the arena of political strife—let him remember, that it is as a *Citizen* he enters that arena, and let him act accordingly. Does he feel called to fight Cæsar's battles, let him put Cæsar's livery on,—and not wear the

livery of the Court of Heaven, to do Cæsar service in.

For the Minister of the Church, to lay aside, for the time, his character of a Minister, and, acting simply as a Citizen, to engage in political discussion, *is one thing*. For him, retaining the position of a Minister of Christ, to occupy the pulpit, on the Lord's day, preaching politics, *is a very different thing*. The one, *may be right* in certain circumstances. The other, *never can be right* in any circumstances:—It is a desecration of the pulpit, a profanation of the holy Sabbath.

The anti-slavery Preacher, is not a peculiarity of this our age, a “new thing under the sun,” as some seem to imagine. As far back as the days of Paul, such preachers existed, and they troubled the Church then as now:—And with the authority of an Apostle of Jesus, and under inspiration of God, Paul gives Timothy instruction as to the course he ought to pursue with them. “Let as many servants as are under
“the yoke count their own masters worthy of all
“honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be
“not blasphemed. And they that have believing
“masters, let them not despise them, because they
“are brethren; but rather do them service, because
“they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the be-
“nefit. These things teach and exhort. *If any man*

“teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: *From such withdraw thyself.*”—(1. Tim. vi. 1-5.)

Notice, the character of this preacher, as Paul gives it—“*He is proud*”—literally puffed up with pride—wiser in his own conceit than seven men who can render a reason—“*knowing nothing*”—although he dogmatizes as if he knew everything—“*but doting*”—*i. e.*, like an old man when second childhood has come upon him, repeating again and again, the stale sophisms which have been exposed a hundred times—“*doting about questions and strifes of words*”—such, I suppose, as “taking service without compensation,”¹ “property in human flesh,” &c.—

¹ “*The slave does all the work, the master takes all the pay!*” Does he, indeed? “Whence, then, another plea? viz.: that free labor is more profitable than slave labor—because, forsooth, the slave gets a greater share of the pay than the freeman—more pay for less labor: his own maintenance, with that of his children and parents, and security for the future to boot. In truth, if the needs of the slave are duly cared for, the master does not ‘withhold the earnings of the slave.’”—(Samuel Nott.) In every Southern State,

“*Whereof cometh envy, strife, railings—blasphamiai, i. e., malicious railings—“evil surmisings”—uponoiarai ponarai, i. e., wicked suspicions—“perverse disputings (gallings one of another, marginal), of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth.”* Can we not find, now, those who, had they been living then, might have sat for this portrait, painted 1800 years ago?

Do Paul’s words—“railings, wicked suspicions, “gallings one of another—destitute of the truth,” seem sharp and harsh? Let me read you a part of an article, published a few weeks ago, in the “N. Y. Independent,” a paper—religious, they call it—edited by three Rev’d D. D.’s. “The mass of the population of the Atlantic coast of the slave-region of the South, are descended from the transported convicts and outcasts of Great Britain. For a century previous to the Revolution, thousands of those offscourings of the jails and hulks of England, were poured out on the shores of Maryland and Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia—and nowhere else. THOSE WERE THE PENAL COLONIES OF GREAT BRITAIN. O glorious chivalry and hereditary aristocracy of the South! Peerless first families of Virginia and Carolina! ‘Look unto the rock whence ye were the law compels the master to provide for his slave, not in health only, but in sickness and old age.

“hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were
 “digged.’ Progeny of the highwayman, and horse-
 “thieves, and sheep-stealers, and pick-pockets of old
 “England! ‘Go, vilest of the vile,’ out of all union
 “with communities of decent origin, and following
 “your true natural and moral affinities, seek your
 “real kindred and political fraternities with those
 “whose ancestors were turned from the ocean-path
 “which yours took, and founded their ‘chivalrous’
 “colonies in New South Wales and Van Dieman’s
 “Land.”

In copying this, for the purposes of exhibiting “the
 “spirit of the press,” the Editors of the “N. Y. Ob-
 “server” remark: “The annals of scurrility may be
 “searched in vain, to find language more unbecom-
 “ing a decent press, not to say, a religious newspaper,
 “conducted by ministers of Him who when he was
 “reviled, reviled not again.” “*Scurrilous, unbecom-
 ing a decent press*”—true—but not half so discrimi-
 “nating—not half so true to the life as Paul’s words—
 “*railings, wicked suspicions, gallings one of another
 —destitute of the truth.*”

What shall we do in such a case as this?—Indig-
 “nantly hurl back the denunciations uttered against
 us?—“fight the Devil with fire?”—God forbid!
 “Michael the archangel contended with the Devil”
 once; but he fought not with fire,—his lips uttered no

“railing accusation.”—(Jude 9.) ’Twill be an evil day for the Church when the tongue of David learns to rival that of cursing Shimei. Far wiser, the direction of Paul: “*From such withdraw thyself.*” Art thou a minister of Christ?—“From such withdraw thyself.” Stand not thou in the company of the “railing” Priest, lest the judgment of God come upon thee, and “thou pierce thyself with many sorrows.”—(1 Tim. vi. 10.) Art thou a member of the Church of Christ—“From such withdraw thyself.” Be not thou a partaker in their sins.

“*From such withdraw thyself.* Let them alone. It is God’s command they are disobeying. And God’s Priest may not long disobey God’s command, without being known by all as “a raging wave of the sea, foaming out his own shame.” The “railing” priest of fifteen years ago, “who would not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness,” is the ranting, open-mouthed Infidel and Atheist of to-day. The Bible, and the popular *isms* of the day—the progeny of a pseudo-science and pseudo-religion—are so irreconcilably at variance, that the latter can no more tolerate the former, than the former the latter. Though they may be hatched and brooded within the walls of the Church, they can-

not long stand the blaze of truth which the Word of God sheds around it.

The strife and political agitation of the day—with these the Church, by God's appointment, has nothing to do:—And if she will but follow Heaven's direction, they can never injure her. Her range of operation is higher; far above the storms which gather and rage on earth surface, "of the earth, earthy." They cannot cast even a shadow upon the sun-lit field which God has assigned her as her portion. 'Tis one of the marks of the divine parentage of the Church, that the inheritance assigned her, is so near Heaven.

Man of God—"From all such withdraw thyself,"—"Wash thine hands in innocency and so compass God's altar," and it shall ever be thy blessed privilege "to publish" God's good providence "with the voice of thanksgiving, and to tell of all his wondrous works."



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LETTERS

TO

A Man Bewildered Among Many Counsellors.

BY THE

REV. HENRY C. LAY,
A PRESBYTER OF ALABAMA.

REVISED AND ENLARGED.

THIRD EDITION.

The old is better.—*Luke v. 39.*

Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?—*Acts viii. 30, 31.*

New York :

GEN. PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION,

DANIEL DANA, JR., AGENT,

DEPOSITORY No. 20 JOHN STREET.

1853.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1853, by

JOHN W. MITCHELL,

(as Treasurer of the General Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Union,)

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New York.

PREFATORY NOTE TO SECOND EDITION.

A NEW edition of this Tract having been called for, the Author has carefully revised it, and has, he would fain hope, rendered it more complete, by the introduction of two additional Letters.

He acknowledges his indebtedness for many of the most valuable thoughts in the Letters now added, to one set over him in the Lord; whose judgment, at least in matters of experimental religion, no Churchman will fail to respect. This circumstance encourages the Author to hope that his humble effort to set the great doctrines of the Gospel in a clear and distinct point of view, may not be altogether unavailing.

HUNTSVILLE, *Alabama*.

Advent, 1852.

LETTER I.

MY GOOD FRIEND,

WE often hear it said, "It makes no difference what a man believes, so his heart is right." Your case most forcibly reminds me how false that maxim is. How can I doubt your sincerity when you tell me that you are anxious to do what is right? that whenever you can find out the truth, you are ready to embrace it; whenever you can see your duty, you will perform it at every hazard? But you are tossed upon the sea of conflicting opinions, and cannot for the life of you tell which way to go.

Now see what a difference it *does* make with you. You have never become a regular member of any denomination of Christians. You have no particular religious attachments, and of course have no regular habits of worship; you are all things by turns, and nothing long. You feel no special interest in any one congregation or religious society; so that it is the business of no one in particular to look after you; and your contributions to good objects are too much scattered to produce any decided effect, or to let you see the good fruit thereof. Your children are growing up around you without any decided religious views, or any intelligent understanding

of the Gospel, and its privileges and obligations. You are restless, uncomfortable, and turned about by every wind of doctrine. You are a mechanic without a trade, a soldier in the army, belonging to no regiment or company, with no uniform on, without special claim on any one in particular for guidance, rations, or medical attendance

Verily, my friend, I believe the worst choice you could make is better than no choice at all, and I dare not conceal my fears, that if you try to get to heaven all alone, you will starve to death, or break down by the way, and so meet with bitter disappointment. "The journey is too great for thee," my brother. God himself tells you so, and has provided a variety of helps and means to keep up your strength and to prevent you from going astray.

Believing that your comfort, your usefulness in life, and your safety too, depend greatly upon your taking a decided stand, and that very shortly, "I also will show my opinion," and beg that you will give it value just so far as it commends itself to your own good judgment and sober reflection. I must remind you too, that God must help us, or we cannot even see the truth, and beseech you to lay aside for a moment what you have in hand, that you may ask for his Holy Spirit to clear away the mists of error and prejudice from your eyes, and to enable you to say most heartily, "That which I see not, teach Thou me."

I proceed then to state as distinctly as I can, what I understand to be the difficulties which lie in your way.

You say, that *you have been reading the Bible all your life, and understand it no better than you did at first ; that almost*

every doctrine has some text to support it ; that the last man you talk to, puts you to silence if he does not convince you ; that it is a hopeless task for a plain man like you to compare the merits of all the various religious denominations ; and that you have tried your very best to become converted, and have never been able to succeed. And your conclusion is, that one way is as good as another ; that you will wish well to all, do the best you know how, and entreat the Lord Jesus to be very merciful to a bewildered and frail creature.

Now, if I undertake to guide you out of this tangled wilderness, I must be allowed to do it in my own way. I must ask you to have patience with me, and to hear me out before you say my opinion is worth no more than any other man's. As *mine*, it is worth just nothing at all ; but if it be supported by plain, sensible reasons, it may be worth a good deal. Let us then look at this matter of denominational controversies.

Suppose I were to tell you that you, even you, not a book-learned man, ought to acquaint yourself with the disputed points, and to draw a conclusion of your own, you would, doubtless, think me very extravagant in my requirements. But let me ask, can you tell, without putting yourself to some little pains, that success is so hopeless ? You remember that case which excited so much attention at our last Circuit Court. You were on the jury. There were some thirty or forty witnesses examined. Some told the truth as they believed it, others plainly leaned to one side ; and others again were generally believed to have lied outright. They contradicted each other about the facts of the case, and as for their opinions, who could reconcile them ? Half

a dozen lawyers wrangled over the merits, and thick was the dust of controversy. At one time it appeared to me hopeless to see through the mist. But you were sworn, with eleven other plain men, to decide the matter justly; and in the end you did very confidently render a verdict, affecting in no small degree the character and interest of the parties. And how did you come to your conclusion? Why, first of all, you perceived that a great deal that was said was without special importance, and you threw all that on one side as *rubbish*. You found something agreed to on all hands, and you put that in a safe place as true. When the case came to be argued, you saw, by the help of the lawyers, that its merits hinged upon two or three questions; and to these you gave your chief attention. Although no lawyer, your own good sense, and the Judge's charge, supplied you with some sound rules of judging, by which you could be guided. And thus *you made up your mind*.

Now, all the conflicting parties in religion have their representatives; the chief arguments are contained in books or tracts that are cheap, accessible, and that do not require a very long time to read. And upon examination you would find that there are many points of agreement, and that the controversy is capable of being narrowed down far more than one might suppose.

Indeed, you plain men are too modest; too diffident of your abilities. I see you constantly examining and deciding questions that are very profound, while you do but peep into this and draw back in alarm. You, for instance, are very decided in your political opinions; and although some of the

most eminent men in our country have held the opposite opinion, you do yet stoutly deny the constitutionality of a United States Bank; you do not scruple to bring your neighbors to your way of thinking, and you act upon it at the polls by your vote.

Are we not in danger, then, of making too much of the difficulties in the way of religious inquiry? May it not be that if men would bring to these inquiries just that honest, attentive, candid spirit which they carry into the jury-box, they would arrive at just and satisfactory conclusions?

Indeed, I do not fear to affirm, that the time spent in one year in reading the political newspapers, if devoted to the serious and attentive perusal of but a few standard authors, would put a man of ordinary intelligence, in possession of clear and distinct views as to the points usually controverted, and enable him to form a judgment thereon. Religion, like other things, must be studied in order to be understood. Time, patience, and a willing mind must be brought to its investigation. Men must take trouble, if they would find out any thing worth knowing.

“He that by the plough would thrive,
Himself must either hold or drive.”

1*

LETTER II.

MY WORTHY FRIEND,

I NOW proceed to consider what you urge about the difficulty of understanding the Scriptures, and about the ease with which very opposite doctrines are proved out of the same books and passages; and here let us take care not to state these points too strongly, nor to leave out those limitations necessary to make your positions strictly true. I will grant most freely that an ingenious and plausible man can make any thing out of any thing, whether in politics, law, or religion; for the difficulty is in no way peculiar to religion; *provided, however, that you permit him to select his own points, to put his own meaning upon words, and to put his own notions into other people's mouths.* But if you require him to give you reasons, instead of assertions, and try what he says by certain common-sense principles, which are in everyday use, he may puzzle you a little, but you can plainly see that the case is not proved. In other words, if you do, besides listening, turn things over in your mind, and take the trouble to measure and weigh what is said to you, you will be able to find good and substantial reasons why some things are to be believed and some to be rejected.

Let me mention some of these principles by which you may try what you hear. One text must not be explained so as flatly to contradict another text ; it must not be taken out of its proper connection ; nor must we forget the times when and the circumstances under which it was written. We must not build up an important doctrine upon one single text, and that of obscure meaning ; and if a man propounds a new doctrine,—one that all the fathers and martyrs and wise and holy men of past ages knew nothing of,—we need pay him no attention, unless he presents the most powerful and convincing reasons to show that all the world has been wrong, and that he is the man to whom wisdom appertains. You are not bound to follow every man through the fog in which he has involved himself. For instance, you sit down and read, in your Bible, how Cornelius, a Gentile, prayed to God ; that God said, his prayers and alms had come up before him ; that he sent Peter to him, who acquainted him with the Gospel and baptized him. Now, should your neighbor ply you for hours with his new doctrine, that an unbaptized man must not pray, and bring up the finest arguments in the world, your own good sense should lead you to say, Your arguments must be wrong ; for here is a plain case in which an unbaptized man prayed, and God heard his prayers. I do insist that if you will *think* as well as read—*judge* as well as hear—make men give you good reasons why you should suppose that a text means something entirely different from what it seems to say—you would not be so perplexed, and with some security could reach the conclusion,—**this man speaks truth, and that one is mistaken.**

In truth, laziness is a besetting sin of nearly all of us ; we do not like to take trouble, especially in the way of thinking. To hear a man talk, and to fall in with what he says, is easy ; to reflect upon it is labor. And I must remind you, very seriously, that you are just as much responsible to God for your opinions as for your practice. Nobody's judgment can excuse you for not using your own.

And now let me ask, Is it strictly true that you have learned nothing certain and definite from reading the Bible ? I candidly admit that it contains many things hard to be understood, and capable of being perverted ; that it is not easy to derive from it a scheme of Divinity ; and that many of its topics are so mysterious that men will always differ about them. When we remember that the Bible is a collection of books written by many individuals, at various periods of the world, and in languages now disused ; when we consider how many allusions there are to things and customs unknown in our day, and that it treats of the sublimest and most awful subjects known to man ; it would be strange that a man could understand it thoroughly by merely reading it. You need a teacher ; and I shall endeavor to show, by and by, that God has appointed you a teacher, and that it is a dangerous thing for a man to think that any notion or impression which he may have got by reading the Bible, as people generally read it, is what the Bible teaches us, as God's truth.

Besides mysterious doctrines, however, the Bible relates *facts*, and enjoins *duties* ; and I do not hesitate to affirm that, in relation to these, you need be at very little loss ; and

moreover, that you have already tolerably distinct and clear views about them. You have no doubt upon your mind that the Bible reveals to you God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. It declares, as distinctly as human language can express the truth, that Jesus Christ, his Son, and our Lord, was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried; that the third day he rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven; that he sitteth on the right hand of God, and from thence shall come to judge the quick and dead. You do not doubt that there is a Holy Ghost; that Christ established a Holy Universal Church; that he revealed to us the Remission of sin, the Resurrection of our bodies, and Life everlasting.

There is not one of these propositions but what is capable of being proved beyond all doubt or controversy. Of this much, at least, you yourself, I believe, are thoroughly persuaded. And these very propositions were collected together before there was any division between the Eastern and Western branches of the Church, fifteen hundred years or more ago, into what is called the *Creed*, and were declared by the Church to constitute all that is absolutely necessary for a Christian man to believe. Bear this Creed in mind, for we must come back to it after a while.

I think we have found this much, at least, that is not to be disputed. Let us turn our thoughts to the *precepts*. Do you doubt at all that the Bible teaches the necessity of Repentance, Faith, Charity, and Holiness? I do not see how you can entertain even a suspicion on these points. The Ten

Commandments are not hard to understand. The duties of being baptized and of receiving the Holy Communion are most expressly enjoined, and are not mentioned in any dark or mysterious way.

If you cannot understand all of a man's speech, you can hardly misunderstand the general purport of it, unless he is trying on purpose to bewilder you. And so you can hardly have failed to catch the one great idea of Scripture, the general strain and spirit and design of it ; viz., that man is very guilty and very sinful; that Christ, to remove our guilt, stood in our place and suffered in our stead ; that to remove our sinfulness and make us holy, he sent his Holy Spirit to convert us and change our sinful natures ; that we must own our guilt and be sorry for it, must put our case into the hands of Christ and trust in him for pardon ; that we must pray for the help of his Spirit, walk in his laws, and forsake our sins.

Is the Bible, then, a book of riddles, when you can see in it a uniform and glorious plan for saving sinners ? When its historical outline, its great facts, are told with the utmost simplicity, and precepts given which apply to every circumstance of life ?

My good friend, you see that you have learned a great deal, you believe a great deal. You already know enough to make it your plain duty to live soberly, righteously, and godly ; to be diligent in prayer ; to restrain your sinful appetites ; to guard against the love of money ; and, in fine, to make it your chief study to find out the will of God, and your great business to perform it. Acknowledge then frankly

to yourself that you have learned much from your Bible; and continue diligently and prayerfully to read in it by day and meditate therein by night; nor let the difficulty of understanding what is darkly spoken, be an excuse for neglecting that which is written as with a sunbeam. Scripture has shallows in which a lamb may wade, as well as depths in which an elephant may swim. An earnest spirit can readily learn enough to place itself within the limits of pardon; for "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved;" rescued from the condemnation and the power of sin. To find out all the duties binding upon you in the new relation of God's child and friend, is, indeed, a life-long business, a matter requiring thought and effort and anxiety. Do first what you know you ought to do, and what you know how to do, and having thus been faithful even in a very little, more light and knowledge shall be given you.

LETTER III.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I FEAR that by this time you are ready to consider me one of Job's comforters ; and to conclude that I do not appreciate your honest difficulties. But indeed I do appreciate them, and having showed wherein they were overrated, I shall now acknowledge that, to a certain extent, they are real grounds of complaint.

The general spirit of the Bible, and a knowledge of the chief facts and duties therein contained, are not enough to satisfy a sincere inquirer after eternal life ; he desires most naturally an acquaintance with all its holy teachings ; and in order to secure his religious peace and progress, he must leave the first principles and go on to perfection, exchanging the sincere milk of the word for its more substantial nourishment. The question about *the Church* must be settled, and he must have his place in it, and reasons to repose confidence in it, or he cannot be a contented, useful, growing Christian. Indeed, he cannot fulfil one of the great terms of pardon, confessing Christ before men, without being baptized, and so becoming a member of the Church.

I have said heretofore that you needed a reliable teacher,

and now renew the assertion. Lock up a smart, good boy with a Latin grammar, a dictionary, and a few Roman authors. He may learn Latin ; some have done so under these circumstances ; but in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the experiment would fail ; even if success followed in the hundredth case, it would be under great disadvantages, and the child would be months in finding out what a good teacher could have told him in five minutes. So a man may make himself a lawyer, by studying without any comment the volumes containing the law of his country, but it would be a very painful, laborious, and uncertain undertaking.

Now we have no reason to think that God ever designed that the world should be converted only, or chiefly, by reading the Bible. And I cannot agree with my neighbors who say, that all a man need do in order to be saved, is to read his Bible and pray. I would tell him to read and pray, and lay great stress upon those duties, but I could not let my advice stop there. Some think that to scatter Bibles is the greatest and most urgent business of Christians ; and indeed it is a glorious thing to place the word of life in the hands of man ; it does not follow, however, that because men have a Bible, they will read it ; nor because they read it, that they will understand it, and obey its teachings. I repeat, man wants not only a Bible, but a reliable teacher to explain it, to enforce it, and to keep it before his mind. And while I do not know of any infallible teacher, who will not only instruct you, but do all your thinking for you, I do know a safe one, and shall, before I end, direct you to her.

When our Lord Jesus Christ went away into heaven, he

left to us his truth to make us free. Now, I think you may plainly see that three great means were devised in order that this truth may avail to our salvation. First of all, it was committed to writing, that there might be no mistake about it ; in the next place, a ministry was appointed to hold it up before the eyes of men, that it might not be forgotten ; and lastly, the Holy Spirit was sent to open our hearts, so that we may love it and embrace it. When the Ethiopian Eunuch was reading his Bible and trying hard to understand a difficult part of it, he felt that he needed some man to guide him, and God did send him a guide. I trust you will find your case like his.

Your general acquaintance with Holy Scripture assures you that Christ did establish a society called *the Church*, and set officers over it, and required every man to become a member of it. Let me ask you to notice some plain statements about this matter.

We do find Christian people exhorted to search the Scriptures ; it was called "noble" to do so ; they were told to prove all things ; to count all Scripture profitable ; and not to believe an angel from heaven who should contradict the word revealed. But the idea of converting men by putting in their hands copies of the Bible is no where found. *Preaching* was to be the great instrument of convincing and teaching men : "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The living voice was to utter the words of life, and mortal hands to dispense its benefits.

And who was to preach ? Every body ? Our Saviour appeared to more than five hundred brethren at once, after

his resurrection, but did not tell them to preach. No ; he assembled the Eleven Apostles, and said, "Go ye and preach the Gospel to all nations." "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." So that preaching is a privilege and a duty assigned, not to all, but to a certain class of men. These Apostles were not only to teach men, but to baptize them, and thus receive them into God's family ; they were to feed them, and admonish them, and to watch for their souls. We are directly told "*God hath set* some (officers) in his Church—first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers ;" and the people are enjoined, "Now we beseech you, brethren, know them that are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake ;" "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." Thus, there are, you see, religious teachers to whose advice you must listen, and whose lawful admonitions you are even bound to obey.

I would have you observe, again, that the Scripture has not a word to make us think that there was to be any other than this one Church of Christ. The Apostles were told to teach all nations ; and they did teach them by nations, and gave to each nation the Church in its integrity. There was in the Apostles' days no division in the Church, except this necessary one of place. In one sense of the word, there were many Churches—the Church at Rome, the Church at Corinth, the Church at Jerusalem. But in the strict and proper sense, there was only *one* Church—the Catholic or Universal Church of Christ—and he who was a member of

it at Rome was a member of it at Corinth. Rival sects and names, like those we now have, were unknown in those holy days, and those who would make divisions and name themselves after men, were most sternly reprov'd.

Now, if you can find that Church which was planted by the Apostles among *your* nation, and which has stood in her place age after age, is it not, in the highest degree, probable that she is your teacher? And unless you have some reason to suspect her goodness, ought you not to listen first of all to what she has to say?

And now, methinks you are almost dispos'd to give me up; but bear with me a while. I promise, as an honest man, not to puzzle you, or to entice you into water deep enough to drown you. Let us look boldly at this question—What society of Christians is to me the true and lawful descendant of that Church spoken of in the Bible?

Do not say to me here, as sufficient to make me forbear any further speech, that there are two hundred denominations of Christians in the United States, and that it is hopeless to examine the merits of each. I am well aware that our country is divided up into a large number of sects and parties in religion, and were we to attempt to examine each and every one by itself, it would be an endless task. I propose, therefore, to simplify the matter by arranging them in what may be called groups, so that out of the two hundred some one hundred and ninety-seven or eight shall stand together. I do this without intending any disparagement to any body of Christians, and without meaning in any wise to confound them all together, as if all were equally near or

equally far off from primitive truth and order. That would be not only unjust but ungenerous and unchristian to a high degree. The truth is, that some of these many denominations are very near the truth, as held by the early Church ; very many are heretical in several points ; and some are sunk in the grossest and vilest heresies and denials of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. For some of the manifold denominations about us, I have, then, great respect ; for others, none whatever.

Let us arrange them thus, if you will : 1st, the Roman Catholic Church ; 2d, the Protestant Episcopal Church ; and 3d, the numerous Protestant sects or denominations. There are a few principles by which the Church of Rome is very plainly distinguished from the Episcopal Church, and a few others by which the Episcopal Church is distinguished from Rome and from all the Protestant denominations. This attitude of our Church is expressed in the name she has adopted to suit the state of things in our country. As Protestant, she is widely removed from Rome ; as Episcopal, she differs essentially from all the societies with which you are acquainted.

I do not find that you, or those persons generally among whom my duty calls me, are much embarrassed by the claims of the Church of Rome ; so that I need not dwell long upon them. I will, however, suggest a few reasons why we may suffer her pretensions to pass, for the present at least, unnoticed.

1. She is the *Roman* or *Latin* Church. Let *Romans* listen to her if they will. She is their mother, but none of

ours ; and though she boasts that she is *the* Catholic Church, she has no more claim on us than the Greek Church or the Nestorian.

2. She does not, to say the least, encourage the reading or studying of the Bible, and so justly incurs the suspicion that her teachings are not conformed to it. It is all right for a Judge to say, "Gentlemen of the Jury—in deciding what this statute means, pray give attention to what I say, and mark well these decisions and authorities ;" but I should much suspect that Judge who should forbid the Jury to take the law with them, and look at it for themselves.

3. She requires me to discredit the evidence of my eyes, my ears, my taste and smell, whereas Christ has expressly authorized me to trust my senses. Said he to the doubting disciples, "Handle me, and see that it is I myself." If handling Christ's body proved it to be his body, the same evidence proves that a piece of consecrated bread is not his body.

4. Her religious system does not accord with the general strain and purport of Scripture, of which at least we are competent judges.

5. Poverty, ignorance, and degradation, such as prevail in Italy and Spain, where Rome has had uninterrupted sway for centuries, cannot result from that pure form of godliness which has the promise of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come.

Passing by these claims, then, let us contrast the Protestant Episcopal Church with the Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and other denominations, and see why she has the first claim on your reverence. I shall endeavor to do this

with entire courtesy, and with unaffected good will to the persons of those whose opinions I deem, however sound in some things, to be wide of the truth in others.

Now, as you are not a Roman, or a Greek by nation, but an Anglo-Saxon, let us ask, *Where is the old Anglo-Saxon Church?*

The Church of England alone claims to have preserved an unbroken constitution from the days of the Apostles down to the present hour. The birth-day of all these other societies is fresh in the memory of man. Not one of them pretends to be the mother who nourished and brought up for ages upon ages successive generations of Englishmen.

The Church of England was founded, some say, by St. Paul himself; certainly by apostolic men. It has never changed its constitution; it has never died out; it has never lost its name and place in England. And the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country is a shoot planted here by her hands, to take care of her children who crossed the mighty deep.

It is true that, for a season, she was forced, not without earnest remonstrance, into submission to the Pope, and, in common with the rest of the Church, soiled her white robes; but it is equally true that in God's good time she was led to renounce the Pope, and she washed her vestments in the pure waters of truth. She was sick awhile, but never died. Samson slumbered, and the Philistines bound him, and sported with him; but he was Samson yet; and when his locks grew out again, he possessed all his former might. The Church of England is now, in form and constitution, what she always

was. She has been reformed, but never revolutionized ; she has cast off Romish corruptions and errors, but has never lost her essential connection with the great Head of the Church ; and her authority has been handed down, in regular order, from the very earliest days, without any break or violation of her essential and constituent principles. If, indeed, the "old is better," why leave that which has been the Church of your fathers, for sixty generations it may be, to try a new society ?

The Providence then which caused us to be born of an Anglo-Saxon race, does also invest the Anglo-Saxon Church with the character and rights of our natural Guardian ; and unless she has done something to forfeit that claim, we need go no further, but here stop and offer up our sacrifice.

I acknowledge, however, that if our mother Church becomes in name a Church, but in fact a synagogue of Satan, then a man's situation is one of serious embarrassment ; and a Church which bears the symbols of authority, and has natural claims upon us, can no longer be confided in, when she either

1. Throws the Scriptures aside ;
2. Ceases, in her teachings, to breathe the spirit of the Gospel ;
3. Fails to bring forth the fruits of piety ;
4. Abridges the true liberty of her children ; or
5. Imposes unlawful or unreasonable terms of communion.

Let us examine these several points.

1. *Is ours a Scripture-loving Church ?*

Church articles have been well compared to bank notes ;

they are perfectly good so long as she pays cash on demand. Now, while the Church of Rome expects her notes to pass upon her sole credit, our Church is always ready with the pure gold. Listen to her doctrine; "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the Faith." When a priest is ordained, he must answer *aye* to this question: "Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain all doctrine required as necessary for eternal salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined out of the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing as necessary to eternal salvation but that which you are persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture?"

Moreover, so much love has the Church for the Bible, and so much confidence in the power of the Divine Word, that none of us, not even a Bishop, can preach upon a Sunday morning without there being read, first of all, several of the Psalms, two full chapters, one from either Testament, and a portion of one of the Epistles and of one of the Gospels. In fine, she uses every means to acquaint the people with the Bible, and distinctly avows her willingness for all her teachings to be tried by it.

2. *Does she carry out the Gospel in her Teachings?*

Just listen to that service. Adam Clarke, the Methodist, said that the Prayer-Book was, next to the Bible, "the book of his understanding and of his heart." I could quote numerous such testimonies. Take that Prayer-Book, and

show me the sentence which will not stand the three great tests of Gospel truth : viz., does it humble the sinner ? exalt the Saviour ? promote holiness ? Is not the service full of heart religion ? “ O God, make clean our hearts within us.” “ Create and make in us new and contrite hearts.” “ May it please thee to give us true repentance ; to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances, and to endue us with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to amend our lives according to thy holy laws.” The Prayer-Book is full of Christ ; everywhere it says to sinners, “ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.”

3. *Has the Church brought forth the Fruits of Piety ?*

Mr. Barnes, a Presbyterian clergyman, shall answer this question for us. I quote his words :—

“ We remember the name of Cranmer—Cranmer, first in many respects among the reformers ; that it was by his steady and unerring hand, that, under God, the pure Church of the Saviour was conducted through the agitating and distressing times of Henry VIII. We remember that God watched over that wonderful man ; that he gave this distinguished prelate access to the heart of one of the most capricious, cruel, inexorable, bloodthirsty, licentious monarchs that has disgraced the world ; that God, for the sake of Cranmer, and his Church, conducted Henry, as ‘ by a hook in the nose,’ and made him faithful to the Archbishop of Canterbury, when faithful to none else ; so that, perhaps, the only redeeming trait in the character of Henry, is his fidelity to this first British prelate under the Reformation. The world will not soon forget the names of Latimer, and Ridley, and

Rogers, and Bradford ; names associated in the feelings of Christians with the long list of ancient confessors, ' of whom the world was not worthy,' and who did honor to entire ages of mankind, by sealing their attachment to the Son of God on the rack, or amid the flames.

“ Nor can we forget that we owe to episcopacy, that which fills our minds with gratitude and praise, when we look for examples of consecrated talent, and elegant literature, and humble devoted piety. While men honor elevated Christian feeling ; while they revere sound learning ; while they render tribute to clear and profound reasoning, they will not forget the names of Barrow and Taylor, of Tillotson, and Hooker, and Butler ; and when they think of humble, pure, sweet, heavenly piety, their minds will recur instantly to the name of Leighton. Such names, with a host of others, do honor to the world. When we think of them, we have it not in our hearts to utter one word against a Church which has thus done honor to our race, and to our common Christianity.

* * * * We have never doubted that many of the purest flames of devotion that rise from the earth, ascend from the altars of the Episcopal Church, and that many of the purest spirits that the earth contains, minister at those altars, or breathe forth their prayers and praises in language consecrated by the use of piety for centuries.”

4. *Does the Church protect the Rights of her Children ?*

In this respect she is far more careful than any religious society known to you. In the parish, the vestry (elected every year by the people) have entire control in all that relates to the property of the Church and the affairs of the

congregation. The people thus elect their own minister. They can appeal from his decision to the Bishop in cases of difficulty. In making laws and in electing officers, the people, by their chosen representatives from the various parishes, have exactly the same voice as the ministry ; and that, in the State Conventions, and in the General Convention of the whole Church. In these bodies private Christians are often the most influential men ; and without the concurrence of the laity, all the Bishops, and all the Clergy together, cannot pass any measure.

5. *Is the Church Liberal, or has she imposed Unreasonable terms of Communion ?*

Listen to her own language : “What is required of those who come to the Lord’s Supper ? To examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life ; have a lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death, and be in charity with all men.” Again : “Dearly Beloved, on Sunday next I purpose, through God’s assistance, to administer to all such as shall be religiously and devoutly disposed, the most comfortable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ ;” &c. And again : “Ye who truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, draw near with faith,” &c.

Is any truly converted man excluded here ? any sincerely pious man refused a participation in the holy Sacrament ?

Suppose now you are persuaded that you are a poor

sinner, with no hope but in the mercy of Christ, and desire to give yourself up to him in baptism. You wish to know what will satisfy me in point of doctrine. You suppose, probably, that I would ask you whether you believe all that is in the Prayer-Book; what your notions are about election, free-agency, and such deep matters. But I am not at liberty to do any thing of the kind. "Dost thou believe the articles of the Christian Faith, as contained in the Apostles' Creed?" This is the question to which you must answer. You have seen before that this Creed is a summary of the chief truths of the Gospel, used in the Church from the earliest days. If you believe thus much, and come forward with a simple trust in Christ, you are at once entitled to the privileges of the Church, and she will teach you day by day all else you ought to know.

Let us dwell upon this for a moment, and we may see why it is, that our Church occupies the ground on which all must stand when our present divisions cease. Our Saviour knew that men would differ much in their opinions. We see that this difference happened at the very beginning of the Church. But men need not part because they differ. So our Saviour said, "Baptize all nations in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." He made belief in the doctrine of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the only condition (conversion, being, of course, supposed,) of baptism. The early Church set out this doctrine in the Creed, and said all men may come in who believe thus much. But now the Church of Rome says, this will not suffice; you must avow your faith in Transubstantiation, for instance. Our friends

of various names require you to acknowledge your faith in Calvinism, in Immersion, or in some peculiar set of opinions. Now, if we ever are to get together again, it must be by giving up all these and similar tests, allowing liberty of opinion about them, and allowing all to embrace the privileges of the Church who hold the fundamental truths of the Gospel, as set forth in the Creed.

Let me in this connection call your attention to the *stability* of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

It is a very remarkable fact that this Church has never been divided, either in England or in this country. Our other friends divide on questions of expediency and of politics, as well as of religion. They even dig a deep trench all along Mason and Dixon's line. Episcopalians, however, regard that man as a traitor and an enemy who would attempt to rend the Church in twain. Is it a mere chance, that while one religious body after another has been convulsed and rent asunder, threatening even the perpetuity of the social compact, this Church, notwithstanding differences of opinion within her pale, is quiet and at rest, upon the great and essential doctrines of the Gospel? Is it an accident, that while every other society, within a brief period, has been split into fragments, this Church preserves her integrity, and presents from age to age an unbroken and unshaken front to the hosts of Satan?

Now, my good friend, I have set before you a venerable Apostolic Church: the Church of your fathers, and of your race, from which the sects have from time to time severed themselves. A Church that loves the Bible, reads more of

it at one service than our other friends do in six, and that authorizes you to try all her teachings by Scripture. A steadfast Church, that holds together, and whose constant aim is to cultivate love and brotherly kindness when the fiercest passions are raging around her ; and that never has been split. A Church that utters no other language than the earnest, gentle, soul-subduing language of the Gospel; that offers the privilege of her courts to all humble-minded believers without any exacting demands about deep and disputed points. A Church that has been adorned with Martyrs and Saints whose praise is known in heaven and on earth. A Church that is so arranged in its government as most carefully to guard her children from oppression. Is not she the Mother whom you seek ? May you not with safety nestle by her altar, and rear your young children in her courts ? I do not abuse those who differ from me, and love new things, but while I live will I maintain, **THE OLD IS BETTER.**

LETTER IV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

SUPPOSING that your mind is at rest upon the subjects thus far discussed, another difficulty is in your way. You say that you see no prospect of being able to come into the Church, because you have tried most honestly, and so far with no success whatever, to *get through*.* Your case is not peculiar : I find very many persons who agree in saying, that they are anxious to be Christians ; that they have attended on many "revivals," were the very first to go up to be prayed for, saw others converted by their side, but failed to *obtain a hope*.

I must here profess my solemn and abiding conviction of the truth, that "except ye be converted and become as little children, ye can in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." And by conversion I understand, not a mere improvement in morals, not a mere outward conformity to the duties of religion, *but a decided change of heart, life and character,*

* This expression is peculiar to the south and southwest, amongst those who favor what are popularly known as "revivals." It is equivalent to what is meant by getting religion, sudden, instantaneous conversion, or the like, in other sections of our country.

effected by the *Holy Spirit*, under the influence of divine truth and Gospel ordinances. Whenever I deny, forget, conceal, or disparage this great doctrine ; whenever I cease to assert its necessity with zeal and distinctness ; then may the Lord in mercy to his people make my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. But as for this phrase which is now in every body's mouth, in these parts, and the thing intended by it, I do enter my most earnest protest against them, and maintain that they are productive of the most serious and lasting evils.

I protest against the phrase because it is *unscriptural* ; not one such expression is to be found anywhere in the Bible ; because it is *indefinite*. " Father," said a little boy to a friend of mine, " what is it that they get through ?" and who shall answer the child's question ? because it is unbecoming and *inconsistent* with the respect we owe to holy things : how intolerable to describe a man's rescue from death to life as *getting through* !

Nor is the idea intended to be conveyed less false, unscriptural, and dishonorable to God. The process intended is just this : a man awakened to the importance of religion, must come forward before a large audience, and kneel or sit in a conspicuous place ; the good people gather around him, some exhort, some pray, some sing. He is now a mourner, and if all is right, presently becomes very miserable : his friends now redouble their efforts : Don't you see a ray of light ? don't you feel better ? they inquire. After a certain lapse of time, if all goes well, the mourner begins to take comfort ; he experiences the natural relief of tears, his heart

feels lighter ; he rises to his feet and gives glory to God, and then he is said to have *gotten religion*, or to have *got through!* Is not this a fair picture of what commonly obtains in our country ? and can any mark or trace of such a process be found in the Bible, or in the early Church ?

There is here no serious deliberate choice ; for many who have gone through this process assure me that reflection was impossible : there are here no deliberate resolutions against special sins, no opportunity to repair injuries, to become reconciled to enemies, and to do such other acts as are absolutely essential before a man has a right to consider himself pardoned. *Bodily exercise* is the most striking feature of the whole proceeding ; the man seems to be endeavoring, with the assistance of others, to carry himself through a certain set of feelings, and to reach in the end a certain degree of joy and gladness.

This system hides Christ ; for a man loses sight of Christ whenever he trusts in anything of his own ; and if a man thinks he has to appease God, he had as well do so by prayers, fastings, alms, and stripes, as by prayers, groans, sighs, and lamentable exclamations.

A friend once asked me to converse with a servant who was in great trouble. He was very honest and upright, and for two years seemed to be absorbed in prayer all the time. I said to him after a little, " I think I can explain what you consider to be the way of being saved. You know you are a great sinner, and deserve to meet the wrath of God, and that he is now angry with you ; but if you try to mend your ways and to do right, and keep on praying and striving, after

a while God will say, 'This is a sinner indeed, but then he is so sorry and so troubled, and tries so hard to do right, that it will not do for me to stay angry with him.' The poor fellow's eyes sparkled as he said, "That is just what I am looking for ; and when the Lord sees that is the way with me, he will let me through." Are these notions peculiar to the ignorant ? are they not commonly entertained ? And yet there is no Christ here : the sinner pleads his own case, and succeeds by his own efforts.

The consequences of this system are as bad as its theory. Of these converts, it is notorious that a large proportion soon sink into the mire ; and others remain in the society to which they have attached themselves, while hypocrisy is attributed to them by the world. Some, indeed many, are sincere and do well, not because they *got through* ; that was a disadvantage ; but because they were led, by God's Spirit, to make in secret that serious, deliberate surrender of themselves to Christ, in which consists the reality of religion.

As a man put in charge of the Gospel, and deeply realizing the strict account I must render to the Judge of quick and dead, I earnestly advise you *not to get through* ; not to fall in for one moment with these human inventions, but to be converted in the scriptural sense of that word.

In order to bring out this matter, I will ask you to consider three things.

1. What is it that hinders a sinner from being at peace with God ?

2. What must he do to overcome that hindrance, and so to be at peace with him ?

3. How shall he know that his peace is made with God? These questions comprehend the whole matter.

1. Now, as to the first, there was once a fearful difficulty. Man was guilty; the law demanded his life; and God was angry with him. But look you; Christ has come to stand in our place. He has atoned for our sin, suffered death in our stead, fulfilled and satisfied the law, and reconciled God to the whole world. If this were all, there would be no more to do; for God has not *now* to be appeased; no *new* sacrifice is demanded; there is not a shadow of unwillingness on the part of God to be at peace with us all.

Where is the difficulty then? We answer, in the *sinner's will*. The trouble is, not that he has done wrong, but that he justifies his wrong, and intends to renew it; that he despises mercy, and asks for justice; that he hates the Judge and Law, will not accept a pardon, and, even were he pardoned, would go forth only to incur a greater condemnation. Now, as Christ, by his death, removed every difficulty that existed on the part of God, so the Holy Spirit comes to remove those which are entirely our own. And if we can only be so persuaded of our guilt and danger, and of God's goodwill in Christ, that we will agree to accept pardon upon his terms and to do his will, the controversy is at an end, and we are reconciled to God. But this we would never be disposed to do, without the Spirit working in us and with us from first to last.

2. What, then, must a sinner do, in order to make his peace with God?

In a word, I would answer that he must *accept freely the*

offer of mercy made to him in Christ, embracing its provisions, and acceding to its conditions.

He must acknowledge the guilt of which he stands charged, and sincerely deplore it and repent of it. He must own his weakness, and, with humble prayers for help, set himself to amend his life. He must accept Christ as his only and all-sufficient Saviour, and plead nothing save his merits as a reason why he should be spared punishment. He must profess the faith of Christ, and make to him a solemn vow of love and service in the sacrament of Baptism, which is, besides, a means of imparting heavenly grace to his soul, and the appointed ordinance in which God pronounces his sins forgiven. In other words, religion consists not in emotion or excitement, however these may attend upon it; but it is, in the main, a *choice*—a solemn, grave, and deliberate choice—of mercy as our portion, and God's favor as alone able to make us happy. It is a change of views, affections, hopes, purposes, and desires.

If you will take the pains to examine the different instances of conversion recorded in the New Testament, you will find they all agree in this. Faith, an honest acceptance of Christ, preceded and accompanied by godly sorrow, and issuing in a religious profession and a holy life, is the great condition ever insisted on. Thus we find Paul suddenly arrested; for conviction is often sudden, and this was a miracle besides. First, arrested; secondly, inquiring Who art thou, Lord? and what wilt thou have me to do? thirdly, sorrowing for sin, for he was three days blind and fasting; and fourthly, he gives himself to Christ, and washes away his

sins in holy Baptism. Not one word is here about exhilaration or any *getting through*, but all is calm, deliberate, and serious.

Look at the case of the Ethiopian : 1st, inquiring the way of safety ; 2d, hearing of Christ crucified ; 3d, desiring to accept him as his Saviour ; and 4th, baptized by Philip. What doth hinder me to be baptized ? said he. Philip does not ask, in reply, whether he “felt comfortable,” or “was happy.” If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest, was his answer ; and that answer is as good now as it ever was.

Look at Lydia : 1st, her heart is opened, and she attends to the preached word ; 2d, she believes, “was judged faithful ;” 3d, she is baptized and her family ; 4th, she begins to work for Christ, and help his servants.

From all this, I conclude that the Bible does not require any extravagant emotions or experience ; but requires, chiefly, faith, an honest, serious, humble, and cheerful acceptance of the offer of mercy made us in Christ.

3. The third inquiry is, what is the evidence of conversion ?

I answer, the change itself is a witness. There is all the difference in the world between a dead and a living man. If you are born again, you may know it by the spiritual life imparted to you. The question is, in my view, a simple one. You are, at this moment, either a carnal man or a spiritual man ; you cannot be any thing between these characters. If you have a carnal mind, you may know it in this way : the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to his

law ; and, therefore, if you set up your will against God's, and do not honestly strive to keep his law, you are carnal.

On the contrary, the renewed or spiritual mind loves God, and makes it its chief study to please him ; it lives for God, and its affections go out after God. If this be your character, you are not under the curse.

Again, if a converted man, you have the witness of the Spirit ; not that he talks with you or tells you in words that you are a Christian. How does God witness that he is in the world ? By his works—by the wisdom, goodness, power, and over-ruling providence he displays and exercises all around us. And thus the Spirit bears witness within us, by the fear of sin he cherishes ; the grateful thoughts of Christ he gives us ; the earnest breathings after holiness he inspires ; the strength, which we dare not call our own, and which we yet feel and know is within us, by which we are enabled to keep down sinful thoughts, to curb angry passions, to do and to forbear, for Christ's sake, what we dislike to do or to forbear. Thus the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God.

I know how hard it is for you to break away from opinions so generally maintained around you. But if I have made clear my points, I beg you to dismiss for ever this idea of *getting through* ; of manufacturing a glorious experience wherewith to appease God, when already Christ is your peace. And if you have these marks of conversion, a godly sorrow for sin with a determination to forsake it ; a willingness to commit a lost and ruined soul into the hands of Christ, making mention of his righteousness and his alone ;

a strong determination, though he slay you, yet you will trust in him and keep his holy commandments ; then you need no longer delay to seek a home in his Church ; to subscribe yourself by his name, to avail yourself of his Holy Sacraments, and to take to yourself the sweet assurance, “Be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee.”

Thus, my dear friend and brother, have I tried to show you, that God is not unreasonable—that there is a plain path, and a safe guide to aid you if you will return to him. If you will be honest and earnest, you will find good in this way. May God enable you soon to come to a decision, to say first of all, “As for me and my house we will serve the Lord,” and then to say, “The Church of the Fathers shall be my choice.”

LETTER V.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It may be, that by this time you are satisfied in your own mind, that it is high time for you to act : that every consideration of duty and of interest does earnestly require of you to take a decided and unequivocal stand upon the side of God and of his Church.

But will you act out these solemn convictions? Will your present inquiries result in any thing? Or will you act the part of one, who examines carefully a business offer, ascertains that his best course is to accede to it, and at last gets out of heart when the writings are all drawn up, and one tells him *now sign the bond?* I have not unfrequently seen men act in this latter way, unwise as it is ; and I should be distressed no little, should you thus waver, and leave the great question unsettled. Sometimes a man is held back by the consciousness that *he lacks honesty of purpose.* If he accepts the offers of the Gospel, it must be upon the terms of the Gospel. If he takes Christ as his Master, he must first renounce all that is unchristian. He feels that however he may acquiesce in the general plan of redemption, and however purposed he may be to lead what is called a religious

life, there is yet some one practice or habit clearly forbidden in God's law, which he is not willing to abandon : some one duty plainly enjoined, which he is not willing to discharge—observe, I do not say that he is *unable*, but that he is *unwilling* to do and to forbear. The thing disputed may be the veriest trifle : something which he would blush to own : but his hesitancy about it suffices to destroy all confidence in his own sincerity, and forms an impenetrable barrier to his further progress. Ah ! how we do see men stop, and talk, and grumble ; pretending this trouble and that, when the secret is that *they feel they are not honest* : they know in themselves that there is some one particular in which they are heeding the voice of inclination rather than that of duty.

The time would fail me were I to endeavor to show how disingenuous is such a course—how ungrateful it is when Christ gave you all, and shrank from no pain or sacrifice for you, that you should begrudge him a trifle—how hopeless it is for a man thus to dispute, as if the Great God was to yield to him, and to alter that unchangeable condition of pardon, viz., obedience and submission, prompt, universal, and without exception. The man who comes to the Sacraments without this purpose of keeping all the commandments, does but utter a solemn falsehood. And if there be any such difficulty in your way, you must first of all pray for grace to conquer your stubborn will in this particular. So that you shall count it a privilege to take the thing that most you love, the indulgence that most you cherish, and to offer it upon the altar of God, as a poor and unworthy acknowledgment of his undeserved goodness and mercy.

If, however, your heart does not thus condemn you, and you are not conscious of any such half-way purpose, you may yet have difficulties. Let me mention two.

FIRST.—*I am not good enough to come into the Church.*

If a holy character acquired were the condition of Church-membership, I cannot imagine where any members could be procured. Never yet have I seen any who thought themselves *good enough* to be in the Church, save those whose conduct sadly evidenced that their minds were unrenewed; and if we could find any who had this holy character, they would have no need of a Church; for sound men need no physic. We send patients to a hospital because they are sick, and desire to get well; we send children to school because they are ignorant, not because they are educated; and Christ calls poor sinners into his Church, because they *are* sinners. The condition is not that they are holy, but that they earnestly *desire* to be holy, and feel their need of divine grace, in order to escape the dominion of sin.

No man can come without profanation to the sacraments of our blessed religion, who is willingly indulging himself in any known transgression. No religious convictions are genuine which do not lead a man to contend with his evil nature, and to commence in earnest the work of reformation; but if one must be assured that he is a *good and worthy* man in the sight of God before he is baptized, confirmed, or approaches the holy table, then he can never come. You will say, however, that the Scripture uses very strong expressions to denote the spiritual change,—“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;” and such like. Perhaps of all these ex-

pressions, none is more formidable than that which represents the Christian as being "*born again.*" It is asked, how can I, poor, weak creature that I am, come forward to Baptism, and hear the minister tell the people that I have been "*born again*" of God's holy Spirit, while I am so painfully conscious of indwelling sin?

So far from alarming you, this comparison of the spiritual to the natural birth ought greatly to encourage you. What is man when first born into this material world? A babe. He has life indeed, but little else; he is feeble, helpless, dependent. He can neither walk about nor feed himself; and the flame of life burns so feebly, that a rude blast would at once extinguish it, or if neglected, it would flicker and die of itself.

For this helpless being God provides a mother. She protects, and clothes, and feeds it. Away from the mother it must die. God might sustain its life by other means, but in the usual order of his providence, it must draw strength from its mother's breast.

Now here is a little sickly babe; its vitality is chiefly expressed by signs of suffering and cries of want. Shall we lay it down to die? Oh, no. A healthy child might bear neglect for a brief season; but as for this one, pity demands that we seek its mother. And, mother! guard it with a special care; keep it from the wintry blast; give it the support it needs, and let it be most gently dealt with.

And are we to be born *full-grown men* into the spiritual world, and to begin where St. Paul left off? Are we to be at once teachers, examples, giants in the faith? Is there no

nursing-mother needed for us? Think of it then in this light ;—we can be born again only as *babes in Christ*, and the Church is our mother appointed to train us up to manhood.

If that soul of yours is dead indeed, if there appear no pulsation of a heart alive with penitence and faith, no breath of prayer, no hungering and thirsting after righteousness, it were mockery indeed to lay it on the mother's breast. The sacraments are worse than useless to a man unawakened to a sense of sin and misery.

But if that soul be alive, yet feeble,—if it cry, and cry piteously for help—if it hunger and thirst after righteousness—oh, cast it not out into the open field to die. Mother Church opens wide her arms, and is anxious to feed it with her word and sacraments ; to keep it safe within her sacred pale ; to warm it with her prayers ; and to soothe its sorrows with the comfortable words of Christ.

Our goodness is not the qualification God has laid down for admission into his Church. Our sense of need—our conviction that we are lost without Christ—our desire to be pardoned—our willingness to be reformed—our confidence in the power and love of God in and through Christ—these, and these alone, are God's conditions. I am to notice, however, another difficulty.

SECONDLY.—*You distrust your ability to maintain a Christian walk and conversation.*

“I am willing now,” one says, “to accept God's mercy upon his own terms ; so far as I know myself I think I want to be a Christian. But then I may be mistaken : and if it

should so turn out, what an increased guilt and responsibility I will have incurred ! what a scandal to the Church will have been sustained ! Had I not better *try myself* a while longer, before I take a stand from which I can retire only in shame and dishonor ?”

I must here remind you, that *willingness* to do God's will does not mean *ability* to do it. Our present willingness is something which we may find out by prayerful self-examination—our future ability is altogether contingent upon God's help and grace. It is the former of these that we alone profess in Baptism—“I renounce them all, and *will endeavor by God's help* not to follow nor be led by them”—is the modest promise you must make as you turn away from the world, the flesh and the devil. And more than this no man *dares* promise who knows aright the plague of his heart, and the power of temptation.

It well becomes fallible man to distrust his own heart, by which he has been so often deceived. But when we have duly weighed the whole matter : when we have earnestly sought heavenly direction and spiritual aid, and conscience assures us that we are not trifling with God or endeavoring to elude his just demands, then have we all the evidence of our own sincerity we can ever hope to have. St. Paul tells us that he “knew nothing of himself,” that is, he was not aware of any secret dishonesty towards God—but then adds with singular modesty, “yet am I not hereby justified : he that judgeth me is the Lord ;” and in another place, “we *trust* we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.” May the time never come when you shall lay

claim to more sincerity than this blessed apostle. Remember that God is not laying traps and snares for us ; he is not seeking excuses to condemn us. He has expressly promised to assist our endeavors to know our own mind and purpose, and authorizes us to believe that if, after invoking his aid, our conscience affirms that we are honest, we may safely go on. " If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God."

The reputation and sanctity of his Church is dearer to God than it is to us ; I may add, than it is to the devil, who so often strives to make us repress our religious convictions, by suggesting to us that in avowing our faith we shall do an injury to the cause of religion. And if God sees fit to invite sinners into his Church, and proposes to make use of such poor creatures as we, I see not how we can hang back. Let us do our duty, and Christ who loved the Church and gave himself for it, will evermore protect its interests.

But you wish to *try yourself*, and to have better evidence of your ability to lead a godly life—one would think you had *tried yourself* long enough already. All your experience testifies that you cannot walk uprightly without the restraint of a religious profession, and the help of Gospel ordinances. Our Lord testifies the same thing ; for if men could do well without a Church, he would have never established and perpetuated such an institution. You may *try yourself* to the end of all time, and the result will be still the same. You cannot unassisted live up even to your own very defective and inadequate standard of Christian duty.

But suppose it otherwise: suppose that for the six months next ensuing you satisfy yourself, and maintain a Christian temper, what would then be your great reliance, your ground of confidence, in promising to keep God's law? Would it be the promise of his grace, or would it be your own integrity?

Suffer me to show by illustration, what is the spirit in which every one should come to the ordinances and sacraments of religion.

I would instance the case of an undutiful child, who has despised his father's authority, and pained a mother's heart. He has left his home, and pleased with the idea of independence, flushed with the hope of gain, has sought that land of California, whose glittering treasures have attracted so many eyes. His associations there are low and debasing, and he daily feels the contamination of the evil natures around him—he experiences disappointment too—the gold eludes his search—sickness lays hold upon him, and grim famine seems to await him. Now conscience reproaches him for his unfilial conduct, and the memory of happier days stealing upon his soul embitters, by the contrast, the miseries of the scene around him.

In his desolation there comes a letter: it is written by his father's hand. It tells him: "Come back to us; come back, if you are truly sorry for the past, and disposed to do your duty; we will take you to our arms again, and do all we can to make you happy." And this letter moreover tells him how to come, and says if he will *come at once*, he shall find no difficulty; and it adds, "Much as we love you, my

child, we are afraid to trust you with much money—we know by experience that it is not good for you to be independent. But your passage is provided for all along the way, and with the little that we send you now, you can make your way to the nearest sea-port, and thus beginning your journey, you will find every necessary arrangement made at the successive points along your route.”

Now if that son were truly sorry for his fault—if he really intended to go home—if he had full confidence in his father’s foresight, truth and kindness, I can hardly suppose he would tarry for a moment; he would commence his journey in full confidence, although the particulars of its arrangement might not be made known to him.

The son may answer his father’s letter on this wise—he is very penitent, very anxious to return, but he has no money; he is afraid to undertake such a journey without a larger amount of means in his possession, and thinks he had better tarry awhile, until, by patient industry, he has accumulated something upon which he may fall back in case of accident. Could his father fail to discern, beneath all this fair speech, a lurking pride, a dissatisfaction at being thus treated like a little child, a secret want of confidence in the prudence and foresight of his parent?

Perchance the son may take this view of the subject—that it is but a short time since he has begun to have better thoughts, and he is very much afraid his good impressions may prove but transient; that if he should now go home, promising to cease from his evil ways, and to be a dutiful son, and should afterwards break this promise and disappoint

the expectations he had excited, it would be a great injury to him, and a lasting disgrace to his family. He thinks it best to *try himself* awhile, and see whether he is a truly reformed man, before he seeks again the parental roof.

Now what does this amount to? He hopes to be a better son, and he begins by express disobedience to his father's injunction, which was to return at once and without the least delay. He wishes to reform, and, instead of placing himself under the hallowing influences of home, remains among rude, depraved, vicious men, the weight of whose influence is altogether upon the side of self-indulgence. By failing to act when his heart is softened by the workings of memory, and the dispensations of Providence, and the effect of kindly words wafted to him from afar, he exposes himself to the fearful danger of becoming once more indifferent to home, and of being bound by new and stronger ties to his sinful habits, and to his debasing associations.

You, my friend, are just such a wanderer. You are thus lovingly called and invited to return, and that without delay, for there is no promise if you linger. In making an open and formal profession of your faith, without any capital of past experience to rely on, you do as that son would do, in committing himself to a long and perilous journey, with no money in his hands, and with no other dependence than what he should find provided for him along the way. Christ bids you promise to be a Christian; he gives you just grace enough to serve your present need, (for, according to Flavel, "the desire for grace is grace begun,") and adds his

promise that, as occasion shall require, he will come to your aid. And if, while men shall say that you have no religion, and the devil whispers that you will disgrace the Church, and your own experience testifies that you are not able to do right, you prefer to believe God rather than all these, and throw yourself on his promise ; you do then indeed exercise faith ; you renounce your own righteousness ; you declare most impressively, "*In thy word is my trust.*"

It is a grave question for you to consider, whether you are willing to trust God thus far ; to come when he calleth, and not when you think you are ready. It is a grave question, whether you will strike out into the wilderness without chart or compass, without food or water, and with the certainty before you that you must perish, unless God be ever near. I trust you may have the courage to do so, and may build your hopes of perseverance and final victory, not on any fancied attainments of your own, but on God's sole word and promise.

If, when so lovingly called and invited by God himself, while conscience declares you ought to go, you hesitate until you have *tried yourself*, you will, first of all, disobey the express injunction of your Lord, which is, not merely to come, but to come without the least delay. Your work of reformation, instead of being assisted by the kindly influences of Christian sympathy and holy teachings and heavenly grace, must be carried on in the chill atmosphere of worldliness and frivolity. You repress and stifle the generous emotions of a heart, softened by calamity, freshly impressed with the lessons of adversity, just beginning to thaw beneath

the beams of God's love and goodness. Beware, lest while you are lingering to *try yourself*, the heart become hard again, the precious lessons be forgotten, and cold, icy indifference shall prevail where once were contrition and gratitude and holy aspiration.

LETTER VI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It has often been my duty to persuade men, that they ought to profess the faith of Christ by coming forward to the sacraments of his appointment ; men, whose fitness consisted in this alone,—they felt themselves needy, helpless, perishing sinners ; they believed that Jesus Christ is both able and willing to save sinners ; and they were conscious of a serious purpose and desire to become partakers of this salvation, and to fulfil the conditions it imposes. I have encouraged them to come to Baptism, to Confirmation, and to the Holy Communion, albeit they were laden with infirmity, and felt that even the sin against which they struggled, continually got the mastery over them.

Not unfrequently I have noted in such persons a vague fear and suspicion of this teaching. It was evident that they suspected me of being led, through a mistaken kindness, to accommodate the doctrine to their weakness ; to lower the standard of duty, and to explain away that great truth of Holy Writ, “ Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”

It behoves me, then, in justice to you and to myself, to do

away such suspicions ; to show that this system of the Church promotes holiness in the largest sense of that word, and that as members of Christ's Church we have singular advantages for the attainment of this character.

The obscurity in this matter arises altogether from confounding two things that should always be kept separate, viz., the *conditions* on which we are pardoned, and our *duty* after we are pardoned. The truly awakened man, the earnest inquirer after eternal life, does indeed at once "cease to do evil, and learn to do well." We distrust the sincerity of any man who pretends to religious concern, without endeavoring to restrain his evil inclinations or practice the virtues inculcated in the Gospel.

But still, perfection of Christian character is not among the *terms of pardon* proposed to us in the Gospel. It is proposed to us as our rule of life ; it is that after which we must continually strive, and no man is safe, who, once pardoned and adopted into God's family, does not honestly endeavor to keep the law in its letter and in its spirit, and to attain "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

When a man is first awakened to a sense of his danger, and his mind is agitated by the agonies of remorse and self-loathing and anxiety and dread, it will not do to tell him a long story, or to set him upon any difficult investigation. Our speech must be brief and to the point. We find, then, the terms of pardon as proposed to us in the Gospel to be few and simple. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ;" "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised

him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." When the jailer asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" the Apostles answer, "What must you do? do nothing—believe, and be saved." They do not send that man off to practice reformation awhile, and to acquire a holy character. They tell him to fall in with a salvation already worked out for him: they take him untried as he was, and immediately upon his profession of being willing to trust his soul with Christ, they officially assure him of God's good will and pardon by baptizing him—so also with the thousands converted upon the day of Pentecost: upon repentance and faith, they were at once received into the Church.

But after the jailer's conversion and baptism, released from his despair and full of gratitude for a pardon which he had done nothing to deserve, another question must have arisen in his mind—What is my duty now? What course must I pursue in order that I may not forfeit this blessed pardon? How shall I testify to God and man that I am not insensible to the exceeding condescension and forbearance of my Lord? Now the Apostles could safely say, "Giving all diligence, *add to your faith* virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." And that pardoned man thus instructed in his duty might well resolve that by God's grace he would strive to gain all these heavenly tempers. Suppose, however, that the Apostles had thus answered his earnest question about the way of pardon: that instead of asking him, Can you trust Christ?

they had demanded whether he had virtue, and knowledge, and temperance, and charity, and godliness? The poor man would then have sunk in despair, for he had none of these graces and saw no way of acquiring them.

Now this provision of the Gospel is most reasonable. Man must be assured of pardon before he can try to be really holy. With Sinai's thunders in our ears, and God present to our thoughts as an angry, vindictive judge alone, and an amount of woe already accumulated sufficient to ensure our misery, we have no heart to attempt amendment; but when God blots out the past and says, I forgive it all—when he places us who were prone in the dust, at least upon our knees and upon the palms of our hands, and says in kindly voice, “My son, now try and do better—I intend to help you, and you must try to imitate the justice and the mercy and the purity which you see in me—if you do not this, it will be a sign that you do not love me, and I must of necessity disown you as a child,”—O! what new motives are supplied us! how ashamed must we feel not to do our best! how pleasant to do for love's sake with his help what we could never have done for fear without that help!

I will now venture to affirm, that the omission of a holy character acquired from the terms of pardon, *raises*, instead of lowering the standard of Christian character: for if we come to Christ empty, we receive of his fullness and magnify his grace: if we come full-handed, we rob him of his honor.

One man has been the subject of a bright conversion. He says, I am not afraid to come into the Church, because I am a different man from what I used to be. I have had

such precious evidences, such good feelings, and such powerful impressions made upon my mind, that I feel reasonably certain I shall not change my purpose nor turn back to the world. Here is self-righteousness ; self-complacency: here is an evident reliance on something apart from God's grace and promise. Is this man a better man than he who comes oppressed by a sense of his unworthiness, with no good feelings, but fairly driven to Christ by the clear conviction that to stay away is to die? who knows he cannot hold out, who is afraid that he will relapse into vice and sin, and says with fear and trembling, Lord, save me, I perish?

If we must be holy before we are pardoned, then Christianity is not very different from the religions of the Pagan world. They all said this, and because they said this, they ever failed to give comfort to the troubled conscience.

If we must be holy before we are pardoned, then the Romanist is right, and we are not forgiven for the alone merits and death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

If we must be holy before we are pardoned, then we reach this very strange conclusion, that a man before he has saving faith, can perform good works, pleasant and acceptable unto God.

The peculiar excellence of our blessed religion, the great principle therein, which has ever comforted the despondent and raised the fallen, is simply this,—*it first forgives, and then it sanctifies*. It uttereth no such mocking words in the ears of men as “Be holy, and you shall be forgiven;” but after pardoning freely, “without money and without price,” it crieth to us who are thus saved, not by works of righteousness

which we have done, but according to God's mercy, by the "washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," "Now, be holy, *because* you are pardoned."

Holiness is not then a requisite for pardon, but it is the high and indispensable duty of all those who have been pardoned. It is the evidence that we have passed from death unto life ; it is the condition on which depends the continuance of God's favor and goodness.

If now you come to the ordinances and sacraments of the Church, with the very humble qualifications which I have mentioned, think not that your work is done. On the contrary, you are just beginning it. You undertake to lead a sober, godly, and righteous life, and make a most solemn vow to this effect ; you choose for yourself no lower standard than that of our Lord's example ; and you must inevitably forfeit your pardon itself if you do not honestly endeavor to grow up from a babe to a full-grown man in Christ Jesus.

While the Church, following the teaching of Scripture, makes the terms of pardon very few and very moderate, she does also, according to the same Scripture, declare it to be the bounden duty of every man to aim at a progressive, warm-hearted, and consistent piety.

An adult is baptized. Before he is dismissed from the font, the Church admonishes him that he is now "the child of God and of the light ;" that he must "walk answerably to his Christian calling, and as becometh the children of light;" that he must "continually mortify all his evil and corrupt affections, and *daily proceed* in all virtue and godliness of living."

In Confirmation she prays for her children, "that they may daily increase in the Holy Spirit more and more." How instructive this! We must *increase* and grow, and that *every day*; and not only so, but *more and more* each day. In her form of Family Prayer she teaches us each morning to "dedicate both our souls and bodies to God in a sober, righteous, and godly life;" and then to pray him to "strengthen and confirm" us in this resolution, "that as we grow in age, we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour." Yet again, in Ordination, she solemnly warns her Priests, "See that ye never cease your labor, your care and diligence, until ye have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all committed to your charge to that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you either for error in doctrine or for viciousness in life."

The Church is faithful. Oh, that her children lived up to her teachings! Over and over again, in her exhortations and collects, does she press upon us the vast importance, the absolute necessity for our safety, of cherishing a warm and devotional spirit; of faithfully endeavoring to follow the example of the saints in all godly living, and of seeking after that mind which was in Christ Jesus.

While, then, I urge you not to wait until you are holy, in the full sense of that word, before you come into the Church, understand me not to say that holiness is a matter of indifference, or that you can be saved without it. Far from it; to attain that state, must be the great study of your life. **All**

your sins and failures should mortify and distress you, and lead you constantly to the throne of grace. And you are never to rest satisfied and contented with what you have done, but ever to press forward, and reach after completeness and perfection of Christian character.

I have ever thought that of all woes, that incurred by the formal, worldly-minded, ungodly Churchman, must be the greatest. What singular privileges he enjoys! On every occasion of public service, Mother Church says to him, My son, first of all bethink thyself; kneel down and confess thy sins, and do so with thine own lips and tongue. On holy days she, more than this, utters in his ear the precepts of the law one by one, and bids him ask pardon for the past, and grace for the future. She reads to him the Scripture, that he may not be dependent on man's exposition for his knowledge of God's will. She calls him at every Communion season to examine himself, to amend his ways, to reconsecrate himself to God. She admonishes him, if in doubt and disquietude, to seek his pastor and disclose his grief. She proposes to his consideration, in regular order, every great event of Gospel history, every grand mystery of the Gospel revelation.

Her whole system is instinct with life and warmth and glowing devotion; and it is with this spirit that she would imbue her children. "Praise ye the Lord," she cries. "Lift up your hearts." "Let us give thanks unto our Lord God." And as though we could not but be warmed and animated with the holy truths and the blessed hopes set before us in her service, she pauses, as it were, ever and anon, that we

may cry, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."

In the Psalms of David she furnishes us with a standard of religious experience, certified by Almighty God himself, as safe, reliable, and genuine; free alike from the coldness of the mere formalist, and from the extravagance of the fanatic. The Holy Communion, offered to us not at long and rare intervals, as a thing of terror and a dangerous ordeal, but frequently, and on every occasion of peculiar solemnity, becomes, in our estimation, a feast of love, a divine provision to sustain us in our weary pilgrimage. "Draw near with faith," she says, "and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort."

She follows us to our homes; she comes to us when stretched upon a bed of sickness, admonishing us to take our troubles patiently. She has provided prayers for the troubled in mind and conscience, and blessed words in which the parting spirit may be commended to the God from whom it came.

And if a man thus taught, thus constantly reminded of his duty, thus warned, encouraged, rebuked, and comforted; if he is unfaithful and unholy, idle, resentful, self-indulgent, worldly-minded, lucre-loving, devoid of life and spirituality, a dry and rotten branch upon the goodly tree, I shudder to think how the privileges he has neglected and abused will aggravate his final distress.

I have thus taken upon me, who am but dust and ashes, to write to you of high and holy things. I think I have uttered truth; for I have but echoed, in the main positions of

these letters, the distinct voice of Scripture, and of Mother Church.

And now, poor wanderer upon the bleak common of the world, ragged, weary, hungry, and diseased, come back to your father's house. In it there is room enough, and bread enough, and love enough for all. Wait not until you are restored to soundness, stay not for better clothes, tarry not until you have found something to bring with you, but come as you are to Christ in his Church ; and then, clad and fed, revived and restored by his kind hand, let gratitude impel you to aim after (I will not say angelic, but) divine purity and perfection.

POSTSCRIPT.

QUESTIONS

By which one may decide whether he is a truly converted, and a Christian man.

The Scriptures lay stress on these four principal things :

1. Repentance. 2. Faith. 3. Charity. 4. Holiness. *No unconverted man can possess these graces.*

REPENTANCE.

1. Do I realize that my heart is by nature deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, averse to God, unable and unwilling to keep his holy law ?

2. Do I feel that my transgressions are innumerable ? that they have been perpetrated deliberately, knowingly, repeatedly, and that eternal punishment is no more than they deserve ?

3. Am I truly grieved at their remembrance ? do I realize their hatefulness, and specially deplore their ingratitude ? Are they to me a grief, a burden and a thrall, from which I would make any sacrifice to be delivered ?

4. Am I sincerely desirous to be delivered from the power as well as from the punishment of them ?

FAITH.

1. Do I steadfastly believe the Gospel narrative ?
2. Do I receive the whole Bible as God's own word ?
3. Do I acknowledge Christ, as my substitute smitten in my stead—as my teacher whom I must heed—as my example whom I must imitate ?
4. Owning myself a vile sinner, without a shadow of a claim on God's justice, do I embrace the offer of his mercy made me in Christ, and do I rest the undivided burden of my soul, simply on the merits and intercession of my dear Lord ?

CHARITY.

1. Whereas I once loved not God, nor love him now but poorly, do I yet prefer him to wife, children, land, fame, and life itself ? Is his service my choice, his honor dear to me ; and do my chief pleasures flow from his approbation ?
2. Do I remember with thankfulness the exceeding love of my Master and only Saviour Jesus Christ in dying for me, and sending the Spirit to sanctify me, in providing his word to instruct me, and his Church to house me and feed me, and in going to prepare me a place in heaven ?
3. Do I heartily forgive all who have injured me by word or deed ? Do I pray for them, and desire to do them good ?
4. Do I count all men my brethren, and strive as I may to promote their welfare in body and in soul ? Am I specially drawn to all sincere and humble-minded followers of the Lord Jesus, and do I find pleasure in cultivating intercourse and

in exchanging offices of love with those who are of the household of faith ?

HOLINESS.

1. Do I honestly pray, meditate, search the Scriptures, attend to the Church's voice and use the Gospel ordinances, in order that I may discern my duty, and be enabled to discharge it ?

2. Do I indulge in no acknowledged, presumptuous sin, nor neglect any well-known duty ? Do I watch as well as pray ; and while I make many mistakes and commit grievous faults, can I appeal to God in sincerity that it is my earnest desire and effort to do my whole duty as a Christian ?

3. Do I render to God the service of my affections, and the reverence of my body ? Do I regard myself as his steward in my estate, honoring him with the first fruits and serving myself last, accounting it a privilege, not a hardship, to feed his poor, and to set forward his Church ?

4. Have I been baptized and confirmed ? And do I with reverence and self-examination, and with holy vows of amendment, receive from time to time the emblems of Christ's body and blood ?

Try yourself by these questions and such as these. Thus, instead of "keeping the manna of old experience by you until it corrupts in your hands," you shall have it fresh from heaven each day.



REVIEW

OF

DR. R. J. BRECKINRIDGE'S LETTERS,

ON

THE RIGHTS OF RULING ELDERS.

FROM THE

PRINCETON REVIEW,

APRIL, 1844.

PRINCETON, N. J.

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1844.



THE ELDER QUESTION.

It is truly mortifying that the Presbyterian Church, at this period of her history, instead of "leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and going on unto perfection," should be employed in the juvenile task of laying again the foundation of the "doctrine of laying on of hands." We are utter disbelievers in the vaunted efficacy of a perpetual recurrence in the spirit of sceptical inquiry, to the first principles of our organization. The distinctive features of the Presbyterian form of church government have been known and settled for ages; and yet there are some who would persuade us that all who have hitherto embraced this system have used it, as common people do their watches, without comprehending at all the true principles of its construction; and who seek therefore to divert the energy of the church from reaching forward unto those things that are before, and waste it in the re-examination of foundations that were long since well and securely laid.

It is a great evil, when a church, instead of acting with the genial vigour of a well settled faith in the established principles of her organization, is agitated with a perpetual inquiry as to what her principles really are. If the Presbyterian Church of this country after a century of well-defined practice under a written constitution, needs to be instructed in such elementary matters, as who ought to perform the work of ordination to the ministry, and what constitutes a quorum of her ecclesiastical courts, we see no reason to hope for any progress in all time to come. If these matters have not been already settled beyond a reasonable doubt, we see not how they can now be settled, so as to prevent them from becoming the means of future agitation.

It forms a part of the mortifying character of the present agitation of our church, that it should touch upon questions that are in themselves of such little moment. How many members shall be required to constitute a quorum of a Presbytery, and whether among the designated number there shall be one or more ruling elders are questions, that

involving no principle of abstract truth or necessary order, can be determined only by general considerations of expediency. We know not what incessant and powerful appeals to some of the worst principles of human nature may effect in the end, but we are sure that no calm and considerate argument will ever succeed in convincing the sober judgment of the ministers and elders of the Presbyterian church, that our fathers in establishing the quorum clause in our constitution, or their successors in their uniform practice under it, had any intention to encroach upon the rights of the elders, or diminish in any degree their importance. The notion that the intent or the effect of the rule, or of the practice under it, is to establish a hierarchy, or to take the initial step towards so monstrous a conclusion, is simply farcical; or at least it would be so, if no other means than dispassionate argument were employed in support of it. Nor do we suppose that an attempt to show that our fathers or ourselves in maintaining that ordination to the office of preaching the word, and administering the sacraments should be performed by those who have themselves been authorized to discharge these functions, did really disclose an implicit belief that ordination was a mystical charm, would be deemed worthy a serious thought, were this attempt made in the simple sincerity of honest argument. That the whole Presbyterian church of this and other lands have been for ages devoted to a superstitious belief, and need now to have some one, in the plenitude of his gifts, declare unto them the true meaning of that which they have ignorantly worshipped, is too preposterous for grave argument. It will be impossible by any ingenuity of argument to persuade the church, that the belief that ruling elders ought not to impose hands in ordination is a superstition, or that it involves the injurious intents and consequences which are charged upon it. The question is in itself of trifling moment. It is a matter merely of fitness and propriety. If any Presbytery had seen fit quietly to depart from presbyterian usage in this matter, no one we presume would have thought it expedient to call their conduct into question, for no one believes that the act of ordination is rendered invalid by the supererogatory addition of the hands of the ruling elders. But when it is claimed that all Presbyteries ought to, and shall ordain in this manner, upon the ground that there is no distinction of order between the bishop and the ruling elder, the question becomes one of principle, and we are called upon to vindicate the ancient faith

of the Presbyterian church when thus attacked through a proposed change in one of its ceremonial usages.

It is also worthy of consideration that the present agitation of these questions has arisen from no practical grievance under the operation of our system. No church has complained that its interests have been slighted at meetings of Presbytery held without the presence of ruling elders; no elders have complained that at such meetings advantage has been taken of their absence to encroach upon their rights and privileges; nor has any elder complained that having offered to take part in the ceremony of ordination he was hindered therein, and thus debarred from what he deemed a rightful exercise of his authority. If the germ of a hierarchical establishment is contained in the interpretation which the church has always given to the quorum clause in her constitution, it is strange that this germ should have remained so long undeveloped. If the hierarchy of this rule has continued to this day constructive only, it might have been permitted to slumber in its potential form until it had passed into actual existence. And if the confinement of the imposition of hands in the rite of ordination to preaching elders, has resulted as yet in no further encroachments of the spirit of priestly domination from which it is said to spring, it might, we think, be safely trusted a little longer. From the days of the Reformation until now, every Presbyterian church of which we have any knowledge has ordained its preachers by the hands of preaching elders; and though Milton, in the disordered times of the English commonwealth, complained that "new Presbyter was only old Priest writ large," it certainly is not among the Presbyterians of any age or land, that we are to look for the reign of priestly usurpation. The evils complained of in the practice of our church are purely abstract. They have never yet taken on a concrete form. Instead of the voice of complaint from parties who feel themselves to be aggrieved, we have only the voices of those who are endeavouring to make the ruling elders feel, that in their ignorant simplicity they have long been imposed upon without knowing it, and that this imposition is but the prelude to further strides of priestly power if it be not met with timely resistance. It is a singular feature in the championship of the cause of the ruling elders, that the most difficult part of the duty of the champion consists in persuading the body to be defended that they have been ill used and are likely to be still further trampled upon.

It remains to be seen whether the valour exhibited in such a cause will meet with its reward or not.

In the pamphlet, the title of which we have placed at the head of this article, we have the substance of two arguments upon the ordination and quorum question, delivered before the Synod of Philadelphia by Dr. R. J. Breckinridge, a conspicuous defender of what he deems the rights and privileges of Ruling Elders. It will be remembered that the General Assembly of 1842 decided by a unanimous vote that it was not within the intent of our constitutional rule upon that subject, that ruling elders should join in the imposition of hands in the rite of ordination. This vote was subsequently re-considered, and the subject was referred to the next Assembly. The last Assembly after a full argument of the case decided by a vote of 138 to 9 that the constitution of our church does not authorize ruling elders to impose hands in the ordination of ministers. This was the deliberate judgment of the church expressed through its highest court, upon a question not hastily brought before it, nor hastily decided. If the church is capable of forming its mind upon the meaning of its own elementary principles and methods of proceeding, we have that mind distinctly expressed in this decision. If the unanimous decision of one Assembly, and the nearly unanimous decision of another, after a year's reflection, ought not to be final, so as to be an end of controversy, we can discern no means by which such a question can ever be definitively settled; and for aught that we can see, our church must be reduced to the humiliating attitude of ever learning what her own simplest rudiments are, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth.

By the same Assembly it was decided that any three ministers regularly convened are a quorum competent to the transaction of all business. A resolution to this effect was adopted by a vote of 83 to 35, nearly three fourths of the body voting in the affirmative. Considering the true insignificance of the question at issue, affecting not in any sense the constitution of a presbytery, but only the definition of a competent quorum of the body, this vote was sufficiently decided to set the question at rest. We shall make ourselves a by-word among the churches, if our General Assembly is to consume its time year after year in discussing such minor points of order, and disgrace its character as a right-judging and stable court by the utterance of contradictory judgments concerning them. Should the next Assembly reverse the decision of the last, we see not why

the succeeding one may not be called upon again to review and annul. The decision of our highest court upon a question of the interpretation of the constitution, when calmly and decisively pronounced, ought in all ordinary cases, to be held final and conclusive. It were far better that they who are dissatisfied should receive the interpretation as authoritative, and seek to obtain such an amendment to the constitution as would meet their wishes, than to impeach the wisdom or probity of the Assembly that rendered the decision, and attempt to move succeeding ones to set it aside. How can this venerable body retain its hold upon the confidence of the churches, how can its counsels be received with respect, or its mandates obeyed with cheerful zeal, if upon questions affecting the interpretation of the constitution, the decisions of one year are continually annulled by those of the next?

Dr. R. J. Breckinridge, dissenting from the decision of these two questions by the last Assembly, moved the Synod of Philadelphia, at their meeting in October last, to adopt two several minutes condemning the resolutions of the Assembly, and proposing to the next Assembly to repeal these obnoxious resolutions and adopt others in their stead of a contrary tenor. The Synod refused to adopt the proposed minutes, whereupon Dr. Breckinridge gave notice of an appeal or complaint to be taken to the next General Assembly, in the trial of which appeal or complaint he should insist upon the exclusion of the Synod from the right of voting upon any question connected therewith. There can be no doubt that if the General Assembly entertain this protest against the decision of the Synod of Philadelphia under the character of an appeal or complaint, and institute the proceedings directed in such cases, the inferior judicatory must be debarred from the right to vote upon any question connected with the issue of the matter. And this of itself would be sufficient to show that this was not a case in which either an appeal or complaint could with propriety be taken, and that the proper course for the Assembly to pursue would be to dismiss it at once from consideration as irrelevant. If this appeal is to be so construed as to bring up the merits of the main questions for argument and decision, then surely the Synod of Philadelphia ought to be upon the floor. The questions at issue, not having relation to the wise and just administration of law, but to the determination of what the law itself is, can with propriety be settled only by the united voice of the whole church. The preposterous character of this appeal may be sufficiently illus-

trated by a very supposable case. The Synod of Kentucky has within the past year passed a resolution to the effect that in their judgment ruling elders ought to impose hands in the ordination of ministers. Let us suppose that some member of the minority had appealed from this decision to the next Assembly, and that that body issue this appeal. It is possible that the state of opinion in the next Assembly might be such that with the Synod of Kentucky off the floor, as it must be in the trial of this appeal, the decision would be adverse to the claim set up on behalf of the ruling elders, and with the Synod of Philadelphia excluded upon the issue of Dr. Breckinridge's appeal, a contrary decision might be rendered. We should thus have the church perplexed by two contradictory decisions of the same question by the same General Assembly. There can obviously be no fixed law or settled constitution in a church, if its highest court, in the exercise of its prerogative as an interpreter of the law and the constitution, may thus be broken into fractions by the conversion of abstract questions into personal wrongs.

The utter irrelevancy of Dr. Breckinridge's appeal will be further apparent, upon a moment's consideration of the nature of the decision appealed from. The Synod of Philadelphia passed no affirmative resolution. They neither affirmed or denied the doctrines put forth by the last Assembly. They simply refused to adopt certain private opinions held by Dr. Breckinridge, and by him embodied in writing and presented for their acceptance. Was this refusal a personal grievance of which Dr. Breckinridge has a right to complain? The Synod pronounced no judgment on the soundness or unsoundness of his opinions, but for reasons which they have not seen fit to assign, they declined to entertain them. Who was injured or aggrieved by this declared unwillingness of the Synod to take any action in the matter? A delay to act, may in some cases, where personal rights and interests are involved, be unjust and injurious, but in this matter we see not how any allegation of wrong can be sustained except upon the ground that Dr. Breckinridge has an inherent right to demand that any Synod to which he may be attached, shall entertain whatever opinions he may see fit to offer.

It is difficult to conceive upon what ground other than the existence of some such unqualified right, the Synod of Philadelphia could have been expected to adopt all the opinions that were on this occasion offered for their acceptance. In the minute touching the quorum question which

Dr. Breckinridge, "with a profound conviction of its truth and a deep sense of its timeliness" submitted to the Synod, this body is called upon among other things, to express its belief that "the principle here involved is practically the question between an aristocratical hierarchy, and a free Christian commonwealth." That Dr. Breckinridge should believe this is not perhaps surprising, for nothing is more common than for men who find themselves out of sympathy with the community to which they belong, to manifest a certain extravagant tendency of opinion as well as of feeling. The calmness which measures the exact nature and precise relations of the question at issue is not to be expected from a man who feels himself to be in the position of Jeremiah, when Jerusalem was beleaguered by the army of aliens, and he himself imprisoned, denounced as a traitor, and threatened with death, unless with the prophet's doom he possesses also the prophet's qualifications and supports. That Dr. Breckinridge's convictions and feelings should run out into great exaggeration, that matters in themselves of small import should be magnified into vital principles, and things that are totally dissimilar be confounded as identical, was nothing more than was to be expected from any uninspired man occupying the position in which he feels himself to stand. But if a complaint should be entertained against a deliberative body, because they refused to express their belief, that an economical rule, which affirms nothing respecting the constitution of a Presbytery, which debars no one entitled to partake in its deliberations and votes from attendance upon its meetings, which restrains no right and curtails no privilege, and which moreover has been in practical operation for more than a century, without having led to any evil, involves "practically the question between an aristocratical hierarchy and a free commonwealth,"—this we confess would surprise us.

There are other methods than by appeal or complaint by which these questions may be brought before the next Assembly, under such a form as may provide for the utterance of the deliberate judgment of the entire body; and in some one of these methods we suppose they will be brought up and discussed anew. We have therefore examined Dr. Breckinridge's arguments to ascertain what new light they have shed upon the subjects of which they treat. The many imputations of bad motives and sinister designs to those who are of a contrary opinion, which these speeches contain, as well as their confident prophecies, we shall pass

without further remark. It is impossible to refute a sneer, a vituperation, or a prophecy. Honest deeds are the only fit answer to dishonest words, and time, in the absence of miracles, is the only test of the prophet. But what they offer of argument or of fact, bearing upon the proper discussion of the subject, we propose briefly to examine.

In the discussion of the question, who ought to impose hands in the ordination of ministers, we do not find that Dr. Breckinridge has added anything to the argument as delivered before the last Assembly. The whole stress of this question turns, of course, upon the interpretation to be given to the direction contained in our form of government, that "the presiding minister shall by prayer, and with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, according to the apostolic example solemnly ordain him to the holy office of the gospel ministry;" and the whole force of the reasoning, upon the side of those who would change our established customs, resides in the assumption that the presbytery herein named must of necessity, mean the Presbytery previously defined as consisting of ministers and ruling elders. "Presbytery imposes hands in ordination; elders are of right members of that body; therefore they must necessarily impose hands." This is the whole argument. To assert that the Presbytery that imposes hands is not the entire Presbytery Dr. Breckinridge declares to be "utter folly." "Why," he asks, "would you stultify our fathers? Did they first define with the utmost clearness the term Presbytery; then invest the body so called with the power of ordaining ministers of the word; then in a long chapter treating of this ordination in detail use the word a dozen times in its defined sense; and then without motive or notice, use the same word in the same chapter and touching the same business, in a sense not only inconsistent with their own definition and their constant use of it, but in a sense flatly contrary to both? The thing is supremely absurd." Here is the whole case on the other side. And we are willing to grant that the *prima facie* meaning of the language is in favour of the interpretation here given to it. But we find sufficient evidence that this is not the true explanation, in the historical fact, altogether unexplained and inexplicable, upon the contrary hypothesis, that in the actual practice of our church with few and unimportant exceptions, ministers have been ordained by the imposition of the hands of ministers. The language of the written constitution, it is affirmed, is clear and explicit; it can have but one meaning; to attempt to give it any other is to stultify our fathers, is utter folly, is supremely absurd.

How then came it to pass that our fathers stultified themselves, for it is undeniable that they ordained by the imposition of the hands of preaching elders? If the language of the constitution is so unequivocal and explicit that it can bear but one meaning, how happens it that it was, as a matter of fact, understood and applied in a different meaning by our fathers and by all who have succeeded them, even until the present day? This fact is in truth decisive of the controversy. It is perfectly futile for men to write and speak, however plausibly or ably, to prove that certain language can have but one meaning, when it is a notorious fact that they who indited that language and the whole church after them for a period of fifty years, have actually attached to it a different meaning. No attempt has been made to explain this fact. Our fathers, whom we are urged in filial tenderness not to stultify, are left in the extraordinary predicament of having formally laid down a proposition in terms too explicit to be misunderstood, and then instantly reduced to action one that is not only inconsistent with it, but flatly contrary thereto; that is, through incredible ignorance they were incapable of comprehending their own language, or through wilful dishonesty they perverted it. We have said that no attempt has been made to explain this fact, for we do not reckon as such Dr. Breckinridge's argument to show "the absurdity of talking about a practice that elders *should not* impose hands." If there be any other man than one of straw who has ever talked thus, we congratulate Dr. Breckinridge upon his triumphant victory over him. Nor do we consider the force of the argument drawn from the practice of the fathers of our church as impaired in any degree by Dr. Breckinridge's denial that the practice of ordaining by the imposition of the hands of preaching elders has been strictly universal. What may have been done in one or two western Presbyteries, of late years, we know not, but it is beyond all doubt, that at the establishment of our church, the practice was universal, and that from that day to this, the same practice has prevailed throughout the church. Under such circumstances it is a truly desperate attempt, to show that the framers of our constitution intended to establish a rule which was flatly contradicted by every act to which that rule was applicable. The plain palpable force of the concurrent practice of the church from its commencement until now is not to be evaded. It is conclusive as to the meaning which our fathers who established the constitution attached to the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. Whether these words can properly bear this meaning or not,

it is certain that this was the meaning which they actually affixed to them when they inserted them in the Form of Government; it was in this sense that the church received them in adopting the constitution; it is in this sense that they have ever since been interpreted; and it is in this sense that we are bound by them. Of what avail is it, in disparagement of this conclusion, to tell us of other practices of this same church, such as the disuse of the office of deacon, and the establishment and tolerance of the Plan of Union, that were clearly unconstitutional? Who needs to be taught the distinction between a corrupt practice that has crept into the church, however insidiously, at some definite period of her history, and one that is co-eval with its constitution and necessarily interpretative of it?

The conclusion to which we are thus forced by the language of the constitution, as illustrated by the practice of its founders, derives additional strength from every quarter. The terms of the constitution are not only susceptible of the interpretation for which we contend, but they do of themselves, when properly collated, compel us to adopt this as their only consistent meaning. More than one instance occurs in our Form of Government, in which the terms Presbytery, and member of the Presbytery are used, where it is apparent that ministers only are meant, the duties being such as could be properly discharged only by them. Now we maintain that in the ordination service itself, there is evidence that the whole ceremonial part of the ordination was judged to be a work which could be fitly performed only by ministers. This is sufficiently clear from the direction given that "the minister who presides shall first, and afterward all the other members of the Presbytery in their order, take him by the right hand, saying, in words to this purpose, We give you the right hand of fellowship to take part of this ministry with us." Here the language, all the other members of the Presbytery, is express and peremptory, and yet it is obviously limited to those members who have already partaken of the ministry to which the candidate is ordained. Dr. Breckinridge indeed asserts that this argument is a sophism, which chiefly rests on an error of fact; and the error of fact which he elaborately overthrows consists in an alleged misapprehension of the word ministry, which restricts it to the ministry of the word. He succeeds in proving what no one has ever denied, that the word ministry, in its etymological sense, means service, and minister a servant; but he has not succeeded in finding a single instance in our form of government where

these words are employed to denote any other kind of service than that which is discharged by preaching elders. And if he had found any number of such instances, this sophism, as he is pleased to call it, would still remain a strong and impregnable argument in the judgment of all who can rightly appreciate the meaning of words. As if to forestal the very objection raised, this salutation defines with the utmost precision the kind of ministry, or service intended. They who take the newly ordained minister by the hand, receive him not to the ministry, but to *this* ministry. What ministry? Beyond all dispute, that to which the candidate is receiving his ordination, and which they who take him by the hand share with him. And is this the ministry of rule over the church, or the higher ministry inclusive of the other, of preaching the word and administering the sacraments? When, as has not unfrequently occurred, a ruling elder has been ordained, as a preacher, to what ministry did the right hand of fellowship welcome him? The theory of Dr. Breckinridge would demand that in this case there should be no second ordination; and the contrary judgment of our constitution shows conclusively that whatever may be in other respects the merits of his system, it is not the presbyterianism of our standards. When one who is already a ruling elder is ordained to the ministry of the word, with what propriety can an elder of the Presbytery, welcome him "to take part of *this* ministry with us?" It is clear that these words limit the performance of this act to the preaching members of the Presbytery; and it is equally clear that it was intended that they who welcome the newly ordained minister to his office should be they who induct him into it.

In reply to the question, why the unrestricted language, laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, is employed, if it was intended that it should be limited to preaching elders, we answer that it was doubtless for the same reason that when it is said that "a member of the Presbytery" shall preach a sermon, it was not deemed necessary to qualify the designation of the person any farther than was done by the nature of the duty assigned. There never was a Christian church upon the face of the earth, excepting the Anabaptists, the Brownists, and such like, which did not ordain its preachers by the hands of those who were themselves preachers. There is no account in the New Testament of an ordination that was not performed by those who were themselves possessed of the office conferred. It was thus that all ordinations had been performed in the Presby-

terian church of our own country, prior to the adoption of our present constitution. The Form of Government previously recognised as authority in the church, that drawn up by the Westminster Assembly of Divines and adopted by the Church of Scotland, expressly limits the imposition of hands to the preaching elders, and yet it speaks familiarly elsewhere of ordination as performed by the Presbytery, the whole Presbytery, and by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. It was to have been expected that, in settling a Form of Government in opposition to one that had previously prevailed, the Westminster Assembly would be precise and full in their exposition of the minor details of the organization established; and on the other hand it was not to be expected that in drawing up our briefer directory, its authors would be equally careful to define words and phrases which had been settled in their meaning and usage for a hundred and fifty years. At the time that our standards were framed there was no doubt as to who ought to lay on hands in ordination. There never had been any question respecting this matter. It was altogether natural, therefore, that in compiling the rule for ordination, the authors of it should quote the scriptural phrase, "laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," without dreaming of the necessity of imposing a limit upon the general term Presbytery, which had been already affixed to it by the universal consent of the church in all ages, and by the unbroken and unquestioned practice of our own church in particular. And had the danger of misapprehension occurred to them, they doubtless would have supposed that they had sufficiently guarded against it, by the direction subsequently given that "all the members of the Presbytery in their order" shall utter certain words, which words would be perfect nonsense coming from the mouth of any other than a preaching elder. If the ministry to which the preacher is ordained is a different ministry from that exercised by the ruling elder, then it is evident that "the Presbytery," and "all the members of the Presbytery" refer exclusively to preaching elders.

This is the law of our book, consistent with itself, with the practice of the church, with right reason, with scriptural authority, and with universal custom. Not one instance has been produced, from apostolic example or from the history of any Presbyterian church that has ever existed, in which a man was ordained to the office of a preacher, by the imposition of the hands of those who were not themselves preachers. It has always been recognised as fitting

and right, that the distinction which exists between the teacher and the ruler should be made apparent in the act of ordination; and it will accordingly be found that they who have undertaken what they are pleased to call the defence of the ruling elders, plead for their participation in the act of ordination upon principles that are utterly subversive of the true distinction between the preaching and the ruling elder.

We do not enter at present more particularly into the argument founded upon the use of the term presbyter in the New Testament; for this argument so far as it has any bearing upon the question under discussion has no force except as it tends to obliterate all distinction between the two classes of elders. The same reasoning which proves that ruling elders ought to impose hands in ordination, proves also that they ought to teach. The ruling elder, it is contended is a scriptural presbyter, a scriptural bishop, and as presbyters and bishops ordain, by the imposition of hands, therefore ruling elders must impose hands. So also the scriptural presbyter or bishop must be apt to teach; they that had the rule over the church were also they who spoke unto them the word of God. It is easy therefore, by the change of the middle term of the above syllogism, to construct one which would prove that it was one of the functions of the ruling elder to preach the word. When they who are now seeking their ends through the distortion of our standards, shall seek to change the standards themselves upon the ground that they are not consistent with scriptural teaching, we shall be ready to enter with all minuteness into this discussion. In the mean time the single question before us now is, what is the presbyterianism of our constitution? And the language of the instrument itself, interpreted by the collation of one part with another, and illustrated by other formularies from which it was compiled, and by the undoubted practice of its founders, leaves no room for doubt in an unprejudiced mind, that it was not within the intent of the rule upon that subject, that ruling elders should unite in the imposition of hands in the ordination of ministers.

Dr. Breckinridge has attempted to invalidate the historical argument, drawn from the practice of other churches, and this, as might have been expected, is much the weakest part of his essay. He who sets out to find in history that which never existed, is very apt to lose his way. Dr. Breckinridge, "the course of whose studies," as he informs us, "has not left him ignorant of the sentiments of God's people

in past times," avows his belief that the teaching of other reformed churches furnishes more in favour of his position than against it. How well he has sustained this belief, our readers may judge for themselves.

He refers, in the first instance to the Reformed churches of France and Geneva. In these churches he admits that ordination was performed by ministers, but attempts to show, by an argument that may be safely left to do its work unhindered, that the authority of this example is in favour of the participation of ruling elders in this service among us.

He then passes to what he terms "the most remarkable confession to which the Reformation gave birth," the second or latter Helvetic confession. In the eighteenth chapter of this confession, which treats of the ministry of the church, it is said that "they who are chosen shall be ordained by elders, with public prayers and imposition of hands." But before the meaning of this can be comprehended it must be understood who are meant by elders. In a preceding paragraph, after giving and defining the terms applied to the ministers of the church in the New Testament, it adds, "*licebit ergo nunc ecclesiarum ministros nuncupare Episcopos, Presbyteros, Pastores, atque Doctores;*" *it is therefore proper now to call the ministers of the churches, Bishops, Presbyters, Pastors, and Teachers.* The term elders or presbyters is, therefore, one of several terms that may be appropriately employed to designate the ministers of the church. What then were the peculiar functions of ministers? This is made perfectly apparent. In page 510 of the same chapter, it is said: "*Data est omnibus in ecclesia ministris una et aequalis potestas sive functio,*" *to all ministers of the church, one and the same power or function is given.* And again, "*officia ministorum sunt varia, quae tamen plerique ad duo restringunt, in quibus omnia alia comprehenduntur, ad doctrinam Christi evangelicam et ad legitimam sacramentorum administrationem;*" *the duties of ministers are various, though they are generally restricted to two, in which all the rest are comprehended, namely, teaching the evangelical doctrine of Christ, and the lawful administration of the sacraments.* Through the whole chapter it is apparent that the ministers of the church, of whom it treats, are such, and such only, as are authorized to preach the word, and administer the sacraments. It says not one word, directly or indirectly, respecting any other class of ministers or rulers. The existence of ruling elders is not

once hinted at throughout the document. It affirms that ordination shall be by the imposition of the hands of the elders—that elders is one of the terms appropriately applied to ministers—and that ministers are they whose chief functions are to preach the evangelical doctrine of Christ and administer the sacraments. It must require optics peculiarly constituted, to discern in all this any evidence in favour of the participation of ruling elders in the imposition of hands. It teaches the same doctrine that is found in the standards of our own, and of all other churches, that induction into the office to preach and administer the sacraments, should be performed by those who are themselves incumbents of the same office.

We are next referred to the second book of discipline of the Scottish church, which affirms that “ordination is the separation and sanctifying of the person appointed to God, and his kirk, after he is well tried and found qualified,” and that “the ceremonies of ordination, are fasting, earnest prayer, and imposition of the hands of the eldership.” “Such,” Dr. Breckinridge adds, “is ordination according to the doctrine of that venerable church whose standards have furnished so large a portion of our own; and such it is, essentially as held by all the Reformed churches—and I may add by the primitive and apostolic church.” And this is, as we maintain, precisely the doctrine of our standards. The same language in substance is employed, and the same question arises here as in the interpretation of our own directory; what does this language mean? what is the doctrine taught? It sheds less light upon the subject, than upon the difficulties by which the reasoner feels himself to be environed, when he attempts to fortify his interpretation of an ambiguous phrase by reference to one of precisely equivalent import. “The laying on of the hands of the Presbytery,” and “the imposition of the hands of the eldership,” inasmuch as they differ from each other only in sound, undoubtedly mean the same thing: but what is this one thing which they both mean? What was intended by the “hands of the eldership,” in the second book of discipline, is clearly made known by cotemporary writers who treat expressly of the subject. Calderwood, in the *Altare Damascenum*, published in 1623 says that the imposition of hands “is confined to pastors or teaching elders only,” and expressly justifies the consistency of this usage with the language of the directory. Samuel Rutherford in his “Peace-

able Plea for Paul's Presbytery in Scotland," published in 1642, says, "everywhere, in the word, where pastors and elders are created, there they are ordained by pastors. . . .

. . . Ordination of pastors is never given to people or believers, or to ruling elders, but still to pastors." To the same effect is the testimony of Alexander Henderson, and of James Guthrie.*

There is no room left for doubt as to the doctrine of the second Book of Discipline, that venerable standard which "was drawn up by Andrew Melville, adopted by all the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of the kingdom, and made the basis of more numerous and solemn national acts than any other paper, perhaps, of merely human origin." This book teaches the exact doctrine which we maintain, that ordination is to be performed by the imposition of the hands of the eldership, meaning thereby preaching elders. We have thus, not only the example of the Scottish Church, confirming us by the conclusions to which the ablest men of the day arrived, at a period which peculiarly called for a thorough sifting of the principles of church organization; but what is still more important in its bearing upon the precise question before us, we find that in the standards which are admitted to "have furnished a large portion of our own," the phrase "imposition of the hands of the eldership" had acquired a settled meaning as early as the year 1578.

Dr. Breckinridge declares that it seems to him "the very height of absurdity and an absolute contempt of common sense, for any one to contend, that according to the principles and the very terms of this instrument, ruling elders are not permitted to impose hands in the ordination of ministers of the word." And yet, in the light of the authorities above cited, it would be so plain an affront to common sense to deny that the principles and the terms of this instrument were intended to exclude ruling elders from taking part in the act of ordination, that no one we suppose will henceforth presume to call it in question. It was universally understood by the men who framed; adopted, and used this instrument, that it confined the imposition of hands to preaching elders. If men who use language are not to be denied the privilege of explaining what sense

* See these authors cited in the appendix to Dr. Miller's Sermon on the office of the ruling elder. p. 126.

they attach to their own terms, then the "imposition of the hands of the eldership," in the Book of Discipline refers exclusively to preaching elders. It was in this sense that the church understood these words; in this sense they passed into the Westminster Directory, and into our own standards. Through a period of two hundred and sixty-five years, during which this language has been employed, in the rite of ordination, no doubt has existed as to its true meaning. And are we now to be told that during all this time the men who compiled and used the church standards which have prevailed, did not understand the meaning of their own words? Is a purely verbal argument, founded upon nothing higher or deeper than a mere jingle of words, to be considered as of weight in determining that the true intent of language is one which they who employed that language, have disavowed by all their writings and in all their acts?

Greater violence even, than in the cases already reviewed, is needed so to torture the standards of the Westminster Assembly as to make them utter the desired response. There is of course no doubt as to the judgment of the Westminster Assembly respecting the point in debate. They have expressly decided that ordination shall be "by imposition of hands, and prayer, with fasting, by those preaching presbyters to whom it doth belong." They have made this matter so clear that there is no room left for a play upon words. The Directory for the ordination of ministers states, in general terms, analogous to the language employed in our book, that "the Presbytery, or the ministers sent from them for ordination, shall solemnly set him apart to the office and work of the ministry, by laying their hands on him," but this is elsewhere and more than once, limited to preaching presbyters. "The preaching presbyters orderly associated, either in cities or neighbouring villages are those to whom the imposition of hands doth appertain, for those congregations within their bounds respectively." To evade the force of this example, Dr. Breckinridge contends that this Directory teaches an entirely different doctrine respecting ordination from that which we maintain. Citing the declaration that "every minister of the word is to be ordained by imposition of hands, and prayer, with fasting, by those preaching presbyters to whom it doth belong," he asserts that this requires us to go much further than has yet been contended for, for not only imposition of hands, but ordination itself

is here explicitly declared to belong to preaching presbyters ; and he adds the significant hint, that it will not be long before this authority will be quoted to prove that preaching elders only, have any concern with the whole process of ordination. "Is that," he asks, "the doctrine of our church." Again he quotes the declaration of the Directory, that "the power of ordering the whole work of ordination is in the whole Presbytery," with the subsequent qualification that "the preaching presbyters . . . are those to whom the imposition of hands doth appertain;" and from this he infers that the business of the whole Presbytery is *only* to order the work of ordination, and that it is the preaching presbyters who ordain. And again he demands, "is this our system?" We answer, that the system of the Westminster Directory, according to the clear and palpable meaning of the instrument itself, is undoubtedly our precise system, neither more nor less. The "ordering of the whole work of ordination" which it gives to the whole Presbytery, will not be lessened in its meaning by the disparaging "*only*" which Dr. Breckinridge has prefixed to it. The whole Presbytery are to order or to determine the entire work, to judge of the qualifications of the candidate, and decide whether he shall be ordained; but the executive acts by which their decision is actually carried into effect, the prayers, the exhortations, the imposition of hands, are to be performed by the preaching presbyters. Such is the plain doctrine of this directory, and such precisely is the doctrine of our standards. The intent of the instrument itself is so clear, that it needs no elucidation. If any confirmation were necessary, it could be found abundantly in the debates of the Assembly, attending the formation of the Directory; and in contemporary expositions and defences of the form of government which they established. In the *Jus Divinum Ministerii Evangelici*, or the divine right of the gospel ministry, we find the whole matter of ordination, in its substantive and formal part, treated at length. This work was published in 1654, by the Provincial Assembly of London; it was subscribed, November 2, 1653, in the name and by the appointment of the Assembly, by the Moderator, Assessors and Scribes, one of the latter of whom was Matthew Pool. In the XIIIth chapter of this work, entitled, "Wherein the fourth assertion about ordination is proved, viz., that ordination of ministers ought to be by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," we find the following question and answer:

“*Question 4.* What part hath the ruling elder in ordination.

“*Answer.* Supposing that there is such an officer in the church (for the proof of which we refer the reader to our vindication) we answer, that the power of ordering of the whole work of ordination belongs to the whole Presbytery, that is, to the teaching and ruling elders. But imposition of hands is to be always by preaching presbyters, and the rather because it is accompanied with prayer and exhortation, both before, in, and after, which is the proper work of the teaching elder.” Here is the same phraseology that is employed in the Directory, and its meaning is placed beyond the reach of cavil. The system here taught is, we repeat it, our system. The decision of every question connected with each particular case of ordination is vested in the whole Presbytery, and the formal act or acts by which the decision is declared and carried into effect, is placed in the hands of the teaching elders.

But, in the second place, Dr. Breckinridge attempts to invalidate the authority of the Westminster Directory on the ground that its provisions for ordination were extemporaneous, devised confessedly to meet the exigencies of a particular crisis and of course not adapted to a different state of things. We prefer quoting his own words upon this head, fearful that any paraphrase which we might make of them would necessarily pass with the reader for a caricature. After citing from the Directory the passages to which we have already referred, he adds: “The two heads of *Doctrine and Power* under which the foregoing statements occur, are then thrown together; and under the 11th and 12th sections of this united head we have these two important propositions, ‘*In extraordinary cases something extraordinary may be done. . . . There is at this time, an extraordinary occasion for a way of ordination for the present supply of ministers.*’ True enough, sir; but it sets the whole matter on a new foundation. Are we in a state of civil war? Have we no church courts in America as there was not one in England, when this Directory was drawn up? Do our fifteen hundred ministers, and two thousand churches furnish no present supply of ministers to constitute a single Presbytery?” This has no meaning unless it be to disparage the directions, already quoted, respecting ordination, on the ground that they were framed to meet a special exigency, there being at that time no eccle-

siastical court, regularly constituted in England. But were there no courts, with ruling elders a constituent portion of them, in Scotland, to which no less than to England, regard was had in the compilation of these directions? Do they not in their own nature, and in express terms, contemplate a Presbytery fully formed? It is true that this instrument under the *Doctrinal part of Ordination*, which precedes the *Directory*, after laying down ten principles or rules, among which is one limiting the imposition of hands to teaching elders, adds that, "in extraordinary cases, something extraordinary may be done, until a settled order may be had, yet keeping as near the rule as possible." It is evident that the rule befitting a settled order, and to which, in the meantime, as near an approximation as possible is to be made, is that contained in the ten preceding principles. The *Directory* then follows, giving minute directions as to the manner in which this rule is to be carried out in practice, under a settled order of things. At the close of this, it adds,— "Thus far of ordinary rule and course of ordination, in the ordinary way; that which concerns the extraordinary way, requisite to be now practised, followeth,"—and it then proceeds to explain what it may be allowable to do under the present exigency. Had the restriction of the imposition of hands to teaching elders been found among these extraordinary things, which were allowed on account of the present distress, we should not of course cite the authority of this venerable standard in favour of the interpretation which has always been given to our constitution. We are seeking realities, and not playing with the mere sounds and shows of things. The only two points that have any conceivable relation to the question under discussion with us, that the power of ordering the work of ordination was entrusted to the whole Presbytery, and that the authority to execute the work, when ordered, was committed exclusively to teaching elders, are not alluded to among the extraordinary allowances that were to be permitted because no Presbyteries "could be immediately formed up to their whole power and work." This, on the contrary, was the perfect theory and practice of ordination, the complete rule, which might, in certain particulars, be varied to suit the necessities of the times, "until a settled order might be had."

And yet Dr. Breckinridge, after specifying some of the allowable departures from the rule, which are all given under the distinct head of the extraordinary way which may

now be practised, asks, "Is it not equally manifest, that the whole Directory contemplates the extraordinary posture of affairs then actually existing around them?" We answer that this is about as manifest, as that the Constitution of the United States in prescribing the method now pursued in the election of President, contemplated the adopting act of the several States and other provisional measures, which were necessary to carry the constitution into operation. No man can read the Directory without seeing at once, that upon the points under discussion, and upon all other matters, excepting the few that are touched upon in the appendix upon "the extraordinary way," it contains the matured and deliberate judgment of the body respecting what is orderly and right under a perfect state of the church.

But in the third place, Dr. Breckinridge attempts a higher strain. He aims not only to deprive the positive teaching of the Assembly of its due weight, but to make them utter a contrary doctrine. To effect this, must of course require peculiar powers of ventriloquism. By a comparison of dates he finds that the Directory for Church Government was sent in to the Parliament seven months after the Directory for Ordination. Hence he infers that this work contains "the more matured decisions of the body—their advice for a permanent and not for an extraordinary church state." He then selects from this work certain general principles of church government, such as, that the government of the church is in the hand of Assemblies, that these Assemblies are composed of teaching and ruling elders, and that many congregations are under this presbyterial government; and from these he argues that the Westminster Assembly, in its matured judgment, by deciding that ruling elders are of divine right a constituent portion of the governing assemblies of the church, have decided "*ex vi termini*, that they must unite in ordinations." If by uniting in ordinations, is meant, that ruling elders must have some share in the work, then all this talk about the matured decisions of the body, after seven months study, is devoid of meaning; since the Assembly had already decreed in their immature directory for ordination, that the power of ordering the whole work was in the hands of teaching and ruling elders. If it means that ruling elders must unite in executing, as well as ordering, the whole work, then we say, that the Assembly have decided no such thing, *ex vi termini*, unless *termini* means a determination to force upon their language

a construction which it was never intended to bear, and which it does not legitimately admit. The supposed advance in knowledge made by the Westminster Assembly during the seven months which elapsed after the establishment of the directory for ordination, upon which this argument rests, is of course destitute of the shadow of a foundation. There is nothing in their later work, which contradicts or supersedes any thing in the former. They were combined together and adopted as the form of government, in England and Scotland. The decision of the Assembly that ruling elders are of right governors of the church, did not, in their own judgment of it, decide that ruling elders must therefore impose hands in ordination. Nor does it, *ex vi termini*, include this, any more than the right which every member of congress has to deliberate and vote upon any question brought before them, includes the right to join his signature to that of the speaker, in attestation of the bills passed. This matter is really too plain for argument. The doctrine which the Westminster Assembly intended to teach respecting ordination, the doctrine which they do teach, is as explicit and clear as it is within the compass of language to make it; and the alleged inconsistency between placing the whole work of ordination in the hands of all the governors of the church, and restricting certain formal parts of the execution of the work to one class of those governors, does not seem to us worth an argument.

By the process which Dr. Breckinridge employs to extract historical evidence in favour of his position, we could prove any doctrine or practice whatever. He first determines that the work of ordination in all its parts and processes, in its decision, declaration, and attestation, belongs of necessity to the governors of the church. Hence if the government of the church is vested in teaching and ruling elders, he infers that ruling elders must impose hands in ordination. In whatever standards he finds that the work of ordination in general is committed to the governing body in the church, whatever that may be, he sees the proof of his doctrine, even when those standards in other parts expressly contradict it. History thus furnishes more that is for him than against him, because he forces upon historical documents his own inconsequent reasoning, and determines what the facts of history actually were from his opinion of what they ought to have been.

The discussion into which Dr. Breckinridge enters touch-

ing the influence of the Westminster standards upon the Church of Scotland, has no relation to the question in debate. We have shown that the doctrine of the Scottish and the Westminster standards respecting ordination was precisely the same. The second Book of Discipline, and the Westminster Directory, alike place the power of ordination in the Presbytery, and reserve the imposition of hands to the preaching elders. It is of no avail therefore to depreciate the modern Scottish church as compared with the ancient, seeing that upon this point she has never varied her doctrine or her practice, since the establishment of the second Book of Discipline.

Dr. Breckinridge asserts that, "it would be easy to establish the same doctrine from other confessions—for example, those of the Bohemian churches of 1535 and 1575, and various professions of the Polish and Lithuanian churches of the following century." Of the Bohemian Confessions here referred to, the second contains not one word respecting ordination; and the first has only the following sentence: "*Praeterea vitae consuetudinem honestam, atque ut hi probentur prius, tum demum a senioribus facta precatione, per manuum impositionem ad hoc munus in caetu confirmantur.*" There is nothing to inform us who the *seniores* were, except that throughout the article in which this occurs, entitled, *De ordine ecclesiastico, seu praefectis vel ministris ecclesiae*, there is not one word said of any other class of rulers or ministers of the church than those whose duty it was to preach the word and administer the sacraments; and the conclusion hence is irresistible, that they were the *seniores*, who were to offer up prayer and impose hands, in setting others apart to the same office.

No other confession is specially designated as lending aid to the new theory; but we find, in the October number of the Spirit of the Nineteenth Century, that Dr. Breckinridge has pressed the Belgic confession into his service. He says, "In Art. XXXI, *De Vocatione Ministrorum Ecclesiae*, of the last-named confession, it is explicitly declared that the work of holy ordination, as to manner and form, is prescribed in God's word, and appertains '*verbi ministris et senioribus ecclesiae*,' and that by it ministers, elders and deacons ought to be, '*confirmari in muneribus suis per impositionem manuum.*'" There is nothing in his article, or in the whole confession, which bears the re-

most resemblance to the affirmation which Dr. Breckinridge has extracted from it. The first sentence is as follows. *Credimus Ministros, Seniores, et Diaconos debere ad functiones illas suas vocari et promoveri legitima ecclesiae vocatione, adhibita ad eam seria Dei invocatione, atque adhibitis ecclesiae suffragiis, ac postea confirmari in muneribus suis per impositionem manuum. eo ordine et modo, qui nobis in Verbo Dei prescribitur.* The only other sentence in which the word *seniores* occurs, is that from which Dr. Breckinridge has excerpted the phrase, *verbi ministris et senioribus ecclesiae.* *Porro ne sancta haec Dei ordinatio, aut violetur aut abeat in contemptum, debent omnes de verbi ministris et senioribus ecclesiae propter opus cui incumbunt, honorifice sentire: That this holy ordination of God may not be undervalued or contemned, all men ought to esteem highly the ministers of the word and the elders of the church, on account of the work to which they apply themselves.* By what curious process this has been transformed into an explicit declaration, that ordination appertains to the ministers of the word and the elders or the church, we leave the reader to surmise. After this exposition of the manner in which Dr. Breckinridge has dealt with the historical documents which he has undertaken to expound, we need not fear to leave his assertion, that he could easily sustain his position from certain other Polish and Lithuanian confessions, to be rated at its just weight.

The attempt to extract aught from history in favour of the innovation urged upon us, is a signal failure. It remains a fact, to which nothing contrary has been shown, that through all time, in all countries, and by all Christian churches, the ordination of ministers has ever been ratified and attested by the imposition of the hands of ministers. The Presbyterian churches of England and Scotland, from whose formularies ours have been compiled, practised no other mode of ordination. Our fathers, who drew up our constitution, knew of no other; and the constitution itself, according to the only consistent interpretation which can be given to its language, admits of no other.

In maintaining what has always been believed to be the doctrine of our standards, we have not felt it necessary to interpolate any professions of our sense of the importance of the office of ruling elder, or of high regard for the intelligence and worth of the present incumbents of this

office in our church. We feel that we shall best manifest our true respect for the heads and hearts of the body of our elders by believing them to be inaccessible to the arguments and motives addressed to them, by some of those who claim to be their peculiar friends.

We have but little to say in reply to Dr. Breckinridge's argument in opposition to the decision of the last Assembly respecting the constitutional quorum of a Presbytery.* The constitution of the church declares, that "Any three ministers, and as many elders as may be present belonging to the Presbytery, being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business." The decision of the last Assembly was, "That any three ministers of a Presbytery, being regularly convened, are a quorum competent to the transaction of all business;" and it is alleged that this decision is in direct conflict with the constitutional provision.

It is argued, in the first place, that the language of the book implies that at least one ruling elder must be present to constitute a quorum; since as "many elders as may be present" can never be construed to mean no elders. But the advantage of the argument from the apparent meaning of the terms in which the rule is expressed, is clearly in favour of the construction given by the last Assembly. "As many elders as may be present belonging to the Presbytery," is a contingent expression, which leaves the number of elders unlimited in either direction, except by their right to sit in that body. All belonging to it may be present, which is the limit, in one direction; and none may be present, which is the limit, in the other direction; and in either case, if three ministers are present, there is a quorum of the body. The quorum shall not be hindered by the voluntary absence of all the elders in the one case; nor by their outnumbering the ministers in the other. This is the apparent intent of the rule; it is the natural, unforced meaning of its terms. In defining the quorum, it makes it to consist of two parts, one constant and the other variable; and the variable element may evidently vary from nothing to the entire number, who may lawfully be present. This is to us, the obvious construction of the rule;

* This question has been so largely discussed through the press, that it is the less necessary to enter into at length. Dr. Maclean, in a number of essays in the Presbyterian, has examined in detail, and refuted every position taken by Dr. Breckinridge.

and we are confirmed in it, because with this construction we can see a reason why the language used was selected, but none at all, if it was intended to express, that at least, one elder must be present. The language, as it now stands, leaves the number of elders to vary from zero upwards; if it had been intended to fix unity as the lower limit, it would have been altogether easy and natural to have expressed this intent. The rule could have been stated so as to express this with absolute precision, in as few or fewer terms than it now contains. That the purpose of the rule was as construed by the Assembly is further apparent from the practice under it. Abundant evidence, such as cannot be called into dispute, has been furnished from the records of our Presbyteries, that meetings have been held and business transacted, without the presence of any ruling elder. But few such meetings can occur now in our old Presbyteries. The facilities for attendance upon their meetings are such that in all ordinary cases one or more ruling elders will be present. The practical interests involved in the settlement of this question, which are magnified by Dr. Breckinridge into the wide difference "between an aristocratical hierarchy and a free Christian commonwealth," are literally nothing at all; except that for our frontier settlements, and for missionaries in foreign lands, the received construction of the rule might often be convenient and sometimes necessary, to enable them to obtain a meeting of the Presbytery. If a change in the rule were sought, in the mode prescribed by the constitution, except for the cases named, we do not suppose that much, if any, practical inconvenience would result from making it. But if the change is demanded on such grounds as are urged in opposition to the Assembly's decision, and if made, is to be considered as sanctioning the principles contended for, then the question before us is nothing less than a radical revolution in our whole system. The free Christian commonwealth of Dr. Breckinridge is nothing else than parochial presbyterianism—the governor or ruling elder of the church being the chief officer, the only one requiring ordination, who may also be designated and employed as a teacher, if in addition to his gifts for ruling, he be judged to possess also the gift of teaching,—and the bench of ruling elders of each particular church being fully empowered to license, ordain, and transact all other business that a Presbytery may lawfully do. This is a distinct and intelligible system. It is that to which

all the distinctive principles advocated by Dr. Breckinridge plainly lead. But it is not our system; and the church, we trust, will pause and deliberate long before she will be ready to adopt it.

The necessary presence of ruling elders to constitute a quorum is argued, in the second place, from the definition of a Presbytery, which makes it to consist both of ministers and ruling elders. Ruling elders are, therefore, held an essential element, not only of a Presbytery, but of a legal quorum of Presbytery. The only force of the reasoning under this head, resides in the confusion of these two perfectly distinct things. If a meeting of Presbytery could be held under the compulsory exclusion of ruling elders commissioned to attend, if the received construction of the rule involved this, there could be no doubt that it would be in conflict with the principles of our constitution. And it will be found that every plausible argument upon the other side, and all the fanfaronade about hierarchy, and freedom, and priestly usurpation, are founded upon the quiet assumption that such is the effect of the interpretation given to this rule. Ruling elders, if there be any within the district covered by the Presbytery, constitute a portion of that body, and no lawful meeting can be held, no business of whatever kind transacted, without an opportunity afforded, to all who may lawfully partake in its deliberations and acts, to be present and assist; but if they choose voluntarily to absent themselves, then, that the business of the church may not suffer through their absence, it is provided that the ministers who may be assembled may proceed to business without them. It will be perceived at once that there is here no restraint imposed, no subjection established, and, of course, no power bestowed. Ruling elders, one from each congregation, have a right to be present at every meeting of the presbytery. That right is left untouched. And this is a hierarchy! These are slight materials out of which to compose the horrid picture of the church, subjected to the rule of "three ministers without charge, who, it may be, have forsaken their covenanted calling."

If it could be shown that there was anything in our book, in the nature of the case, or in reason, requiring that the quorum of a body, which, when fully formed, was composed of different classes, must of necessity embrace some members of all those classes, the question would be decided that our rule ought to have been made to mean what Dr.

Breckinridge maintains that it does mean. But this has not been shown. On the contrary, our book, in providing for the action of a church session when no minister may be present, and for a quorum of the General Assembly when no ruling elders may be present, distinctly sanctions the principle, that a quorum of a body composed of two classes may be formed entirely of one of those classes. The expediency of the case furnishes no argument against our interpretation, inasmuch as there never have been any diverse interests between the ministers and elders of our church, nor is it easy to conceive how any such can legitimately arise. They are not adverse parties, nor is there anything in the practical working of our system which could ever make them so. And if this were not so, if they were antagonistic parties, the quorum rule would still be harmless, as the elders would, in that case, take care to exercise the privilege which they possess of being always present, and thus prevent their priestly adversaries from taking advantage over them. It has also been shown, that in the common judgment of men, as manifested in the constitution and rules of other analogous bodies, it has never been deemed essential to the constitution of a quorum that it should embrace some of all the classes represented in the body; as in the English House of Lords, which can transact business in the absence of all the spiritual Lords.

In the last place, it is argued that the authority of precedent is opposed to the authorized interpretation of the quorum rule. Dr. Breckinridge quotes under this head the authority of Steuart of Pardovan, who declares that neither the constitution of the church nor the law of the land, "do authorize any other ecclesiastical judicatory but Assemblies, Synods, Presbyteries, and Kirk Sessions, or their committees, consisting of ministers and ruling elders." It will be seen at once that this does not touch the question in debate. This, and all the other authorities cited by Dr. Breckinridge refer only to the proper constitution of church courts, and we are all agreed that these must be composed of ministers and ruling elders. They affirm nothing respecting the formation of a quorum of these courts. This is apparent from the language itself; and it is placed beyond all doubt by the fact that Steuart himself quotes from the Directory, "That to perform any classical act of government or ordination, there must be present, at least, a major part of the ministers of the whole classis." So that the

quorum of a classis, or Presbytery of the Scottish church did not require the presence of any ruling elders. This fallacy of confounding the composition of a body with the quorum of that body, runs through the whole of Dr. Breckinridge's historical argument, and vitiates every one of his conclusions. A proper regard to this distinction rescues from him every instance which he has adduced, excepting that of the condemnation, by the General Assembly of 1638, of six preceding Assemblies. And every one acquainted with the rudiments of the ecclesiastical history of Scotland knows that the grounds of this condemnation were utterly wide of the question which we are discussing. It was not because there were no ruling elders present in those Assemblies that they were set aside, but because there were elders present and voting, who had no lawful commissions. This case is too irrelevant to waste words upon. If anything can be established by testimony, it is clear that the doctrine and practice of the Scottish church are in agreement with the decision of our last Assembly. In addition to other authorities which have been abundantly given to this effect, we refer to the correspondence of Robert Wodrow, the celebrated historian of the kirk, Vol. I. p. 181. In a letter, dated Nov. 29, 1710, we find the following passage. "*Thirdly*, The rule of the church, though elders have a share in it, is principally committed to pastors. The keys of the kingdom are given to them. They are such as rule over the people, and speak the word, Heb. xiii. 7, and watch for souls as they that must give account, ver. 17; none of which places to me have any relation to the ruling elder; *and therefore they can act in absence or under the want of elders*, though I cannot see how elders can act without pastors."

We have thus in favour of the Assembly's decision, the obvious meaning of the language of the rule; the sanction by our book, of the principle involved, by its provision for the action of a church session, and of the General Assembly, in the entire absence of one of the classes that compose these courts; the practice of our own church in times past; the concurrent practice of the Scottish church; and the analogies of other bodies constituted in like manner. We have opposed to it, certain abstract notions about the rights of ruling elders, which, if fairly carried out, are destructive of our whole system; and certain exaggerated fears about the establishment of a hierarchy, by means of a harmless rule

of convenience, which, restraining no right, confers no power.

We cannot doubt that the next Assembly will, if need be, affirm the decisions of the last. There are some things which the church ought to be presumed to know, and among these surely should be numbered her first principles of truth and order.

14-

A DISCOURSE

ON

THE ORIGIN

AND

INCREASE OF DEVILS,

ON ALL PARTS OF EARTH,

BY ELDER J. P. NEVILL.



RICHMOND:
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DISCOURSE.

“ And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand; and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.”—REV. XX: 1, 2.

MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:

We have read this portion of the divine testimony from the twentieth chapter of the book of Revelation, for the purpose of inviting your attention on this lovely Lord's day morning, to the origin of the DEVIL, called the old serpent—the mystery of all past ages, and the wonder of the nineteenth century.

No subject, perhaps in all past time, has been more abused by religionists than the one now under investigation. Who has asked for permission to slander and misrepresent this aged and wonderful thing called the dragon? No one. The most of men suppose they possess the right to say what they please of the devil. Yes, even some religionists suppose they have this right vouchsafed to them and their children, by the God of all truth and grace. Did any one of you ever know any one reprov'd by men for abusing the poor old devil? No, you never did. But in this, none regard age or anything besides. But all stand in readiness to charge home on him their numerous sayings and doings. But in my opinion, weak as it may be, a little *fib* is the same, whether told on man, angel, or devil; or even on the smallest bird of this mundane of singers. It is the same—a *fib*. Many persons, as we suppose, have been ruined

for all time—have lied all of the way to the tomb, from having been permitted to saddle the old horse, the devil, with their first and youthful tricks and lies. Just permit a child to tell a lie to-day, and charge it to the devil, and peradventure on the next day, he will have one to tell on one of Eve's family!

“Mothers, do not, I beseech you this day, permit your children to lie on the devil, lest they turn on you and rend you,” said an aged man not long since, in the region of Pleasant Grove meeting-house. “Let us all deal honestly with the devil, for,” said he, “we do not know whose hands we are to fall into, for,” said he, “the devil is by no means a forgetful hearer.” Think of this old man's words, for they will do you no harm, if they do you no good.

What I am about to say in this discourse about the devil, I do not wish you to understand as being the views of the Church of Christ, so called, but the notions of the speaker, and who takes great pleasure in saying to you all, that you are at liberty to receive or reject all, or any part of what I may say to-day of the man of sin,—that great big puzzle fool of the age in which we live. We hope, however, that the dragon of former times will not be offended with us for this unscriptural appellation of himself. And now, having been so liberal with you, my respected congregation, as regards the reception of these my remarks on the old “swine-choaker of the country of the Gadarenes,” we most confidently expect you to hear us patiently, as novel as the subject may appear at first view.

My friends, but few of us, comparatively speaking, have altogether recovered from the superstitious flashes of primitive days and nights—when it was expected of all to keep a sharp look out for ghosts, hobgoblins, witches, and devils. The children of those early days and ghostly nights were, by nature, superstitious. A poor gift, indeed, and yet it has lived through all of the revolutions of the past. Yes, it lives to-day. See it in yonder church. See it in the parlor of yonder wealthy nabob. Yes, even behold it in the actions of the learned of the age. And do you not read it

in the very countenance of him who stands in the rostrum? May I be permitted to relate to you this quite ridiculous little harangue, which is said to have been played off on the community by quite a number of religious people, showing that they had not departed with the parents' inheritance—superstition :

“O shout! shout! shout!
The devil is about!
Shut the door,
And keep him out!”

Now, in this case, we suppose that the devil was *about*. Yes, perhaps he was in the harangue, and shutting the door was the means of keeping him in the house, and not out of it. But, if the devil was about, as stated in the harangue, how did those good, shouting people know it? Inasmuch as he is invisible, they must have felt him, and he was doubtless in the hearts of those who gave the alarm, and wished the door shut. It is impossible, as I suppose, to see the devil separate and apart from some person or animal. The devil works by means, and not without them. He operates on man by man, or, through some human instrumentality or agency of some kind. The devil has always been fond of company; he is intimately acquainted with the human family; he keeps the company of many of both sexes, but doubtless prefers the company of the ladies. Such was the case with him when young, as will appear by reading the first part of the Old Testament scriptures.

The races of men have, from time immemorial, met with obstacles in all attempt to find the alpha of this wonderful and highly mysterious thing, called the devil! Is he a native of heaven, earth, or hell? From whence did he come, and whither is he going? We are frequently told in this enlightened age of Christendom, that the devil is a native of the glorious kingdom of our God and his Christ. The Rev. James Covel, author of the Bible Dictionary, says, that “the devil was a fallen angel, and chief of those who were

expelled from heaven, for rebelling against God." Now, this is either false or true; and that it is false we have no doubt; although it has been preached in a thousand places, and is, at this time, the received opinion of the church on the green earth. But we do not differ with so many, both living and dead, without due regard for their opinions. Man has no positive proof that the devil was a fallen angel, since neither Moses nor the prophets, Christ nor the apostles have so informed us. As such, we can say in the language of the poet—

“No clouds these blissful regions know—
Forever bright and fair,
For sin, the source of every woe,
Can never enter there.”

Now, is it not, I ask, unreasonable to suppose that God permitted a wicked and fallen angel to be banished to our world, and that, too, for the purpose of imposing himself on women, the noblest work of creation?—yes, Eve, the mother of us all, was indeed the belle of all her children. And can we suppose that God did permit the fallen angel to fly from the high and shining battlements of heaven to deprive an innocent woman of the likeness of her God, which was more precious than the friendship of an angel, or all the world besides? To deprive her of lovely Eden, woman's first and best home—a home of a thousand lovely flowers. To fill a heart so lovely, so innocent, with innumerable sorrows. To fill her brilliant eyes with an ocean of tears of grief; and finally, to lead her in old age through the valley and shadow of death down to some lonely and awful hell, in some distant world, unseen and unknown to her in life.

My friends, I tell you, most positively, that this is a strange pill, and I do not like its looks, for it has an offensive smell. I cannot down with it. It will choak me. If you think you can dispose of it to your spiritual welfare, you may have it. If sin originated in the house of God, and with the family of heaven in the beginning, it may

return in the ages to come, and thus our anticipated felicity would be, in all probability, greatly molested, if not altogether annihilated. Sin, and the devil, and all kinds of wickedness had their origin in this world, in the house of *man*, and not in the edifice of Him who is invisible, immortal, and eternal. This is a broad position. One that conflicts with the opinions of eminent men, living and dead. Sin having originated on earth, its effects must be confined to the earth. And, as sin originated through an act of the human family on the one part, and as the devil is said to be the author of sin and all wickedness, therefore, we have supposed that Adam and Eve had a hand in making the devil. And that their posterity have kept him in employment. The effects of sin being confined to this world, cannot be transferred from earth to heaven. The crimes of wicked men on the earth cannot in any way molest or disturb the inmates of heaven. Nor can the acts committed in heaven by angels molest the people of this mundane world. There is in heaven no sympathy, nor hatred, nor jealousy, nor fear, nor spirit of rivalry. All these had their origin and are having their progress on the green earth, and not in the starry world. The greatest collision of the railroad cars, the most fearful earthquake, the most bloody battle-fields, with all famines and pestilence do not effect the inhabitants of the celestial world. Why not? you ask. I answer, because they attend to their own business, and not to that of others. Their muse is of a heavenly nature, not of an earthly.

I saw a man, not many years ago, fishing from the rostrum, on Sunday, for a compliment; and in his great excitement in speaking of the last day, he just stabbed the sun at noonday with his tongue, and caused it to be turned into blood. Then he went to work on the moon, the lovely queen of night, and soon blew her out. And not satisfied with all this, he went to striking at the stars, and soon beat them all down; and by this time, was just about out of breath. This is awful preaching; and is it not a wonder that the inhabitants of those orbs do not *have them insured?*

The doctrine of banishment originated from an earthly cause, and not from a heavenly one, as some have supposed. And it is also true, that the practice of trying men, of executing men, of excommunicating, and of banishing from one to some other country, originated through the actions of men on the earth. And it is also true, that the free and independent spirit of emigrating from one dominion to another, originated with the people of this earth. Now, if this is true, then their doctrine of the banishment of a fallen angel from heaven to earth is false.

Adam and Eve were banished from Eden, man's first and best home, to a land of thorns and thistles. Why were they driven away? Because they did wrong. They partook of the wrong thing. Cain, the unfortunate son and first born, was banished. What for? I answer, for doing wrong; for murder. But in after ages, it was the lot of St. John, the beloved disciple, to be banished, during the reign of Domitian, to the island of Patmos. And why was he banished? I answer, for doing right. Yes, for the testimony of God. Ages after this, the great Napoleon Bonaparte was banished to St. Helena.

Thus we have seen the origin of banishment, with instances of its perpetuation on the earth. Now, as regards Cain's banishment to the land of Nod, we will suppose that that land had no devil before his arrival there. Now, how did the devil get to that country? I answer, through Cain's instrumentality. And it has been in this way, that he has emigrated to all parts of the inhabited earth; and in no case, known to man, has he been the first occupant of any state or territory. In this particular, he is no squatter. This Asiatic devil that was in Cain's heart, is no apostate angel with golden wings, descending from some heavenly sphere to excite the community, and then fly up and perch on the bright stars of heaven, to smile at man's foibles. The devil had a beginning of days, and, like man, must have an end. That the devil is an immortal being, without beginning of days or the end of time, we do not nor cannot believe. That our first parents had a little to

do in making this devil of the garden of Eden, is, to my mind, as plain as the sun in the heavens at high meridian. The serpent was a devil, but the offence of our first parents was as bad, if not a worse one. It is a fact, that the races of men, from time immemorial, have added to the success of the man of sin, on all parts of the earth. And as the day of the election is at hand, we wish to say, that the success of the devil is, to some extent, like that of the politicians of the day, dependent on the choice of the people; who can make, and who can destroy. The devil works by means, and but seldom, if ever, without them. The devil, through the instrumentality of man, has more means now to work with, than he had in the days of Adam and Eve. It may, indeed, be said of him, that his resources are amply sufficient for the age in which we live! Notwithstanding this, he has not always the same amount of capital on hand, and as such, is, of course, better prepared for his work, when in possession of a good stock of capital, than when his stock is much diminished. The devil is, as I have supposed, dependent on the people, in part, for the implements of his warfare. All persons are not of the same worth that are in his employment. This is as true as that all persons are not of the same worth to the state, and to the government in which they reside. And thus it is that the devil does more through some men than through some others. But he has not the power to influence the intellectual man contrary to his wishes. Not only are the friends of the man of sin to die, but even the devil himself is to suffer great loss, and perhaps annihilation.

We read in the Scriptures, that the serpent was to go on his belly, and eat dust all the days of his life. And from this expression we may prove the death of the serpent, and that the serpent that talked with Eve is dead I have no doubt. But still, I will not say that his spirit is not living in some other serpent or animal. We read in the Scriptures that the devils fear and tremble. And why do they? I answer, because they fear an approaching annihilation.

lation. "The position of the devil in the world is to be changed in the future ages." Said John the divine, "I saw an angel come down from heaven; and he caught the old serpent and chained him, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up for a thousand years." And other Scriptures go to prove his destruction.

The devil is not, in his present state, an immortal and never-dying being, from the fact that immortal beings do not fear and tremble. And from this fact in the history of the dragon's long and wicked life, we come to the conclusion that he is in some way related to wicked and sinful man. Yes, for the Scriptures inform us that some persons are the children of the devil, and take pleasure in doing the works of their father, the devil. We may fitly compare the man of sin—that is the devil—to a pump-handle, which goes up and comes down as best suits the choice of the people. The trade of the devil in this world is somewhat like that of merchants, fluctuating. The works of the devil have, at different periods of his long history, been curtailed, as well as increased by the hands of men. Alcohol is the invention of man; and its introduction into our world has been a source of evil, and that continually. Yes, it may correctly be styled *the young devil of this age*. It is a dirty, sickly, vomiting, and contagious devil; always filling the world with broils, and the prisons with criminals. But after all this, King Alcohol devil is more universally beloved by men, than was the devil of the garden of Eden. It is not uncommon to see men courting and kissing this young devil, who has juicy lips, but an offensive breath. But few devils have done more harm than this young, but strong alcoholic devil. This is one of the devils that men see and feel, and should shun at all times. A still-house in operation is in some respects like a certain pulpit orator's hell, who said with a loud voice that "hell was swinging hot;" said he, "you had better believe it, I tell you so; and O, think of the rich man's tongue in hell-fire! Oh listen! He is now asking for one drop of water to fall on his tongue!"

When a small boy, I was perfectly disgusted with still-houses, from a knowledge of a painful occurrence that took place at one of them. It was this: A school-mate of mine happened to be at his father's still-house one night, and being fatigued, went to sleep; and the father, whilst engaged in the business of the still, happened to step on the boy; and, supposing him to be the devil, or the spirit of some poor dead drunkard, he struck him with the still-bucket, which spoiled the poor little sleeper's countenance in a moment of time. This took place more than twenty years ago, yet it is fresh in my memory to-day. Yes, it has made an impression on my mind that will go with me to the shades of the tomb.

We often think of the great injury that this alcoholic devil has done our friends, our relatives, and our beloved country. He has turned many houses of plenty into poverty and shame. He has destroyed the lover's happiness. Yes, he has cut him off from the land of the living, and lo! he sleeps in the grave. O! see that young man in the meridian of his day. He was a graduate; he sprang from a good family; he had many friends, who loved him and wished him well. But this alcoholic devil has blasted all of his fond hopes for years to come. He is sinking low in the inebriate's grave; he is dead. Could I only preach this alcoholic devil out of the church, and out of the world, I could then say, in my last and departing moments, that I had "fought a good fight, that I had kept the faith, and that the Lord would give me a crown of righteousness that fades not away."

Whatever has a tendency to remove superstition and evil habits from the community, may justly be classed with good works. Nor does it matter by whom it is performed. It is a good deed, and the doer of it is entitled to his reward. Morality is good in its place in society, and doubtless is a friend to the Christian religion; although it has been said, and that, too, from the sacred desk, that moralists are doing more to injure the Christian religion, than the worst of sinners. Now, is it not a pity that men will talk

in this way? But poor fellows! they are to be pitied; and their saying so, does not make it so. A man who, by nature, is strictly moral and honest, will always be a better man than the one who, by nature and practice, is immoral and dishonest. Bring them both into the church, and you will always see a difference in their religious deportment, although both may have been benefitted by the gospel. And I am sometimes almost ready to say that some men are, by nature, so dishonest and wicked, that they cannot be made perfectly honest by the gospel, no matter by whom it is preached. This is, to some extent, owing to the choice that men and women make in selecting companions for life.

Now, suppose that two consumptive persons form a union for life. The presumption is, that their children would be diseased. And suppose, again, that two dishonest persons with a thousand faults, form a union for life. The presumption is, that their children would inherit their faults; and would, in all probability, be perfect devils, going about seeking whom to devour. The fathers of past ages were apprised of this fact, and thus chose proper persons for their children. And our heavenly Father chose the tribe, from which the Lord Messiah was to descend. But a hint to the wise is, or should be sufficient. But before dismissing this part of the subject, we would recommend the advice of a wise man of former times, who said, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

It is a fact, that some of the inventions and discoveries of the past and present age, have operated to the discomfiture of the man of sin. The press with her numerous types have, to a good degree, been the means of advancing the cause of the Christian religion on the earth. And, although this, as well as some other things, have been, on some occasions, abused, yet it is a great blessing to state and church, and doubtless has done more for God and his Christ, than it has for the devil and his imps. Internal improvements have, doubtless, in some instances been brought to bear on the success of the wicked one. Perhaps

the telegraph has been the means of arresting some of the workers of darkness. Already has the devil made war against the wires, having, in some instances, cut them down, and thus causing the intelligence to fall powerless at his feet. The origin of this wire-working must have greatly confused the devil on its first introduction along our great thoroughfares. Many of our cities have been greatly benefitted by the discovery and use of gas-lights on their streets, thus shining devils away from their lurking places. War, famine, and pestilence, have, in some instances, operated against the old dragon. The gospel—the laws of nations, and benevolent societies—have all, in various instances operated against the works of the man of sin. Yes, the devil would sell whiskey on the Lord's day, at our church doors, save for the law of the land.

The death of some men in political power, have operated against the works of the devil. Yes, in the death of Herod we see an example of the correctness of this position. About the time of this wicked man's death, the voice of the messenger of the most high God was heard in the land of Egypt, saying, "Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child's life." After which the people talked of his death and wicked reign, and of the sorrow that he had caused, saying, "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." It was also through this man's instrumentality, that John the Baptist was beheaded. Just such two-legged devils are to be dreaded, as will appear from an examination of their history for ages past. Many devils have been made on this continent since it was discovered by Columbus; and but few men live to be old, without learning to make devils.

Our world has her political as well as her religious devils; some of which are longlived. It has not been long since a political *stick* devil was born in the capital of the United States of America, which was admired and

worshipped by many. Some have attended at called meetings, to bestow gifts of gold, with superscriptions, on this political infant stick devil. In the northern portion of the United States are mad devils, with great big, black, woolly heads. Some years ago the church made a devil, and the clergy, with some little help, just stretched the *black snake* all the way across the United States, as I have been informed; not that I know this to be so of my own knowledge. It is confidently believed that some hot-headed politicians are in favor of making a disunionist devil, of the same length of the church devil, that the preachers helped to make and stretch from shore to shore. But let me entreat of you this day, my congregation, to have nothing to do, either in the making or stretching of this black adder. For, of all anticipated political devils, this is most to be feared by the American people.

If our Union wishes to be inundated with blood, she only has to stretch this long devil; and then it will be, as was said by a preacher in a discourse not many years ago, when speaking of the political state of things in our country. Said he, "some persons wish to unite church and state, but," said he, "if they do this, I say it will be good by bright eyes. Your days are numbered. The Scriptures are perfectly plain on this subject. They speak as plainly to this nation as they did to past and fallen ones." Said Christ, that great Teacher of the Christian system, "A house divided against itself cannot stand; and a nation divided against itself cannot stand." So, we see what will be the result of a dissolution of this our much beloved Union.

It is anticipated that the people of Kansas will soon make a political devil in that part of the country. And we have good reasons to suppose that some members of the church are skilled in the work of making church devils. Others are skilled in the art of making family devils. Some others follow the pitiful occupation of making neighborhood devils, and in addition to this list, we have some mob devils. Yes, it has not been long since the city of Louisville, Ky., was visited with an awful mob devil, which

overran portions of the beloved city. These mob devils are of long standing. We may follow them back to the time of the apostles. Yes, Stephen, one of the deacons of the church in Jerusalem, was stoned by a mob of devils, who cried with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and killed him. Yes, and the church, too, like the world, has had her mob devils.

Only think of a church having men, women, and children arrested on account of religious notions. Go and read the books of martyrology. See men and women in the midst of flames of fire, and then see men professing to know the God of love and goodness, smiling over suffering and dying humanity. Yes, preachers professing to be in the service of the God of the Bible, engaged in this awful work. May I be permitted to say, that all such are the *worst* of devils. O! my congregation, they are to be feared. O! Lord God! save the people from all such hellish pulpit imps!

I once heard a minister call on God, in his prayer, to come down from his holy throne, and take the devil, and lead him out of the meeting-house, and chain him hard and fast. Now, had the Lord come down in answer to this minister's request, it is probable, at least, that the devil would have been found *in the pulpit*, and led out and chained,—and thus the people would have been disappointed, and left without preaching. That the pulpits of the land have, in some instances, been occupied by ministerial devils, is quite manifest, from the number already caught, and published in the common newspapers of the day. But by this, we only wish to state, that God has his good preachers, and the devil has his bad ones.

I was informed once by a young gentleman, that he saw one of the old devil's preachers take one of the largest drinks of whiskey that he ever saw a man take in his life. Said he, "I saw him cover the glass with one of his hands, and with the other he poured out so much from a black bottle into the glass, that when he drank it, it caused him to drip from his eyes."

It is the opinion of some persons with whom I have conversed, that the devil takes possession of the spirits of the wicked at the time they die, and goes off with them to the unseen world, where he confines them, and, if necessary, punishes them, tooth for tooth, for offences done in, as well as out of the body. But this will admit of doubt, since it is said that we are to be judged for the deeds done in the body, and not out of it; and that the judgment is to be in this world; and that the spirit must re-enter into the body, in order to be judged. This, however is not to interfere with the doctrine, that the spirit can, and does suffer in the disembodied state. The devil being a native of the earth, and having remained on it from time immemorial, engaged in his work,—as such, we have concluded that he has not the power to molest any one out of this world. Now, if the spirit goes out of the world at death, then the devil cannot molest it, as his power is confined to this world. It is the deeds of a man that go with him to that distant world, not the old serpent. Men have the power to resist the devil, and it is their duty to do so. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. You shall not be tempted above that you are able to bear; and in all of your temptations he will make a way for your escape. This is sufficient, and from which we learn, that man possesses the power over the devil; so that he cannot touch him, but flees from him. Such, are the friends of God, doing his will in this world. O! for a world of just such intelligence. We should learn to be more liberal toward each other on all religious matters, especially such as pertain to the other world. Let us not fall out with each other on the way to a better world. Let us think for ourselves, and let all others do likewise. Let us LIVE, and let others do likewise. But what is the cause of so much jealousy and hatred in the churches in this enlightened age of our Christendom. Many are the causes leading to this unpleasant state of things. The devils have something to do in bringing about this state of things both in church and state. The love of money is one cause, for we are informed that the love of money is the

root of all evil. A desire to get numbers,—that is, to have the largest church in Christendom, is another cause. Jealousy may be called another cause leading to this unpleasant state of things; and a desire to be called great, is another.

It has been more than twenty years ago since I heard this little anecdote, and which I will, with your permission, relate: A young preacher attended a meeting in company with an aged and learned minister, who addressed the congregation first, and the young preacher followed with the voice of thunder. As soon as the meeting was dismissed the young preacher said to some of the members of the church, “do you not think that I beat the old man preaching to-day?” “Yes,” said they in reply, “you beat him out of all hollow. You brought the heavens near the earth. You roared like a strong lion. You have made old seratch quake this time!” Now, this, in part at least, was unchristian; and was well calculated to spoil the young clergyman, and also to wound the old one; for old ministers have feelings as well as young ones. But in all probability this young man’s father or mother was possessed with the spirit of excelling others in all things. Yes, perhaps the father was a braggadoeio, and the son inherited it from him. If so, it was a defect in his nature, and in all probability the gospel had made but little change, as regards this defect of his nature. Yet, he may have been benefitted in other respects, by the power of the gospel.

About ten years ago, two young preachers had an appointment to preach; and just about the time for preaching, an eloquent clergyman of another order, walked in and took a seat in front of the rostrum; and just at that time, one of the preachers recognized him; and turning to his young brother preacher, who was in the act of rising to address the congregation, informed him that an eloquent minister had just come in. And said he, “do your best.” The other, however, replied to him, saying, “brother, do not be alarmed, for I will soon saw off his horns.” Now, this was wrong in the young *sawyer*, and perhaps he would

have been better employed at some saw-mill! But perhaps he had been reading the eleventh chapter of Heb.—“They were sawn asunder.” Or, peradventure, his father’s cattle had been troubled with the *hollow-horn*, and he learned to saw off horns first in a cow-pen! Now, may we not suppose that the devil was acquainted with this young preacher? Yes, he knew him like a book.

The rush to the rostrum is great, indeed. And think you, that some in the crowd have come after the loaves and fishes,—have come to fleece the flock,—to lord it over the people of God? O! how easy it is to see *manism* ascending to the sacred stand, and even to the cross, on which the Lord Messiah died,—to see the formality of the age in the seats of the sanctuary of the living God,—to see men, unlike the prophets and apostles, standing in that holy place! O! how few of us can say, as did the apostle Paul, when speaking of himself. Said he, “These hands have ministered to my necessities.” But St. Paul lived before the introduction of fixed and extravagant salaries into the churches. In this age of religious extravagance, you can scarcely go into a meeting-house without having a hat, plate, or bag poked at you. A man unacquainted with such, would naturally suppose that he was in the bank, and not in the church.

The world has a great deal of influence in the churches of the nineteenth century. Yes, even France has a yearly fashionable influence in all of the churches in America. The customs of apostles and primitive saints have been lost sight of. But few spend much time now, in looking after the lost sheep. Think of the churches long since gone down, and of that saying so common with ministers of the gospel, who say that nothing can now be done at Broken Bank church, nor at Little Stingy chapel; for, say they, “we had as well sing psalms to a dead mule, as to preach to such people.” Poor fellows! they never give, and as such, never receive.” Oh yes, you are about to let the cat out of the bag at last! You get no money at Broken Bank, and Little Stingy Chapel. Is it money that *makes the mare go*?

—and is it money that makes the gospel go, too?—! Yes, that which was without money and without price, is now of great price,—say, from hundreds to thousands of dollars. It is now, as was said by an eminent man of our own beloved country, “get what you can, and what you get hold, for this is the stone that will turn all your lead into gold.” But we do not design by this to say, that preachers should not be compensated. But we do say, that the Scriptures do not make a difference as to what each shall receive. One of the Lord’s preachers is entitled to just as much as another. So, if the learned and eloquent speaker is to have one thousand dollars, all others are to have the same amount. The Lord has no half preachers. All of his preachers are of the same worth. Those that come into the vineyard at the last hour, received as much as those that went in at the first hour. The custom of fixing salaries for preachers, plainly shows to the man of biblical information, that the spirit of the world has crept into the church. Some churches have been so industrious in the accumulation of church mammon, that it is to be feared that their bank, with other inducements, are actually attracting the attention of poor, lazy young men. But we see it now, as it was seen in the days of the unjust steward, who wasted his lord’s money, and said, “I cannot dig.” Oh yes, some of just such unfortunate, lazy devils have walked on this green earth for the last eighteen hundred years, crying, “O! I cannot dig!” But whilst some are like the poor, unjust steward in that of digging, they are altogether unlike him in that of begging.

That the church has, in some instances, acted imprudently in the way of getting money, all will doubtless admit. Perhaps the wicked are giving as much, if not more, than the church is giving for the support of the gospel. The gospel should stand or fall on its own merits. Now, if the church is dependent on the dimes of sinners, then sinners have an influence in the church. Do you not all see it? Is it not so? The polite, fashionable gambler has an influence in the church, not only by his dimes, but by his

moustaches. You may ask, in what way? I answer, by influencing the minister to leave his; and, in this way, he grows on clerical lips, chins, and throats. I do not speak of this to deprive any one of his comforts, but only to show how the author of fashion gets into the church. The fiddler, as well as the gambler, may be said to have an influence in the church, although he did not seek for it. How, you may ask, can this be? Listen, and I will tell you how it is. The fiddler played a tune at the frolic, and the people danced it. It was not a spiritual tune. But on church day, one of the members of the church fixed it to a song, and the church sung it! Yes, praised God with it! Now, as the fiddler was the author of it, and it went from his fiddle into the church, he must have had an influence in the church as long as the song lasted.

Some years ago, at one of my appointments, a tune was set to a song by a member of the church, and the singing was quite animating. But after meeting, an aged lady, a member of the church, said that she danced that tune when a girl, in a ball-room. "And," said she, "it was a sin to sing it in church. I am sorry that I went to the meeting-house." But, not only the singing in church is at times objectionable, but even the preaching. I remember, when a small school-boy, to have heard a minister preach on *the end of the world*. And, although I was young at the time I heard him, I still recollect some of the sermon. He had a tremendous voice, and was well calculated to alarm boys. Said he, "This world will all be destroyed, and it may be, for what I know, before the setting of the sun." Said he, "Suppose Gabriel should snatch one of the golden candlesticks from the altar, and fly with the speed of electricity, and touch it to the north star!" Said he, "all would be over in a moment; and the sun, moon, and stars all consumed, and the earth with them!"

Now, my congregation, is not such preaching calculated to do more harm than good? Many do not understand this subject. O! I cannot think that a fire will break out in that beautiful and starry world, and consume all the bright

and lovely abodes of the inmates of the sky. No!—the everlasting gates that David saw, will stand forever.

Some years ago, in the west, a great many people were alarmed at what was imperfectly called *the falling of the stars*. I saw it; but at that time did not understand it,—being young and inexperienced. But I now look back understandingly to that frightful morn, and think of the many that have fallen into the grave since that night. But when I raise my eyes to heaven, I see that all is as it was in the beginning; and so will it ever be. Men can set this world on fire, but cannot fire the celestial. I know that the Scriptures speak of the heavens being on fire, and the passing away of the earth, but I only have time to say, that these things are not correctly understood. No, not even by the wisest of ministers of the gospel.

Men and devils pass away; they fade as the visions of night; but the heavens remaineth forever. Judas Iscariot was a devil, about eighteen hundred years ago. But where is he to-day,—and where is the sun that illuminated his horizon? Yonder he is, just as bright as he was then; and so will he ever be. The sons of men die,—they grow dim; but the sun of the firmament abideth forever, and looketh down alike on all the races of men.

We have no doubt that many have sinned in fixing the day of the world's annihilation. But TIME, that great revealer of things, both small and great, has branded many with the mark of the false prophet. Let us all think a little better of our world, and live so as to better the condition of the human family. If the devil is in this world, it is no good reason why we should desire to quit the world. Since your parents were in the world a little while before the devil was, and have an older and better title to it than he has, let us agree that we will say less about the destruction of the world, and more about the improvement of it. Let us not be in such haste about going from this world. No doubt but many are doing quite well, but do not know it; and are always talking about going to heaven. Perhaps they would do as well to remain a little longer with

us, and try and find out a little more about that country, and get a little better prepared to go to it. Heaven is said to be at a great distance from the earth; but still, we are informed by some of our friends, that we can go it in a moment of time. But as it requires time to perform a journey to the capital of the United States of America, or even to go one mile to see those we love best, we have thought it best to allow a little time, at least, to perform this great journey from earth to heaven. It is frequently said at the time of a good man's death, that he is in heaven. Now, would it not be the better way, to say that he is on his way to heaven? Why should we wish to go charging into the spirit land? Is it because there is nothing pleasing and attractive on the way? This notion of darting into the heavenly world in a moment of time, reminds me of the lady on the railroad cars, who said that she "did not approve of this way of flying through the state, without giving a person time to see, eat, or sleep; for," said she, "I am only traveling to see the country!"

It is a fact, that no one in, or out of the church, has ever seen the devil separate and apart from some visible person or animal. Of all the known devils on the earth, those that go on legs are the most to be feared. And a large portion of the crimes charged to the devil, should have been charged to men. That the devil has been in good, as well as in bad company, no one will doubt. He has been with the noble sons of earth. He was with Job, the Arabian chief of Uz. He was also with the apostle Peter. And the Scriptures say that he was with the Messiah, on an exceeding high mountain, and showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world, in a moment. O! wonderful exhibition this! Who has done more in a moment of time? But the Lord knew how to treat even a devil? And is it not a pity that we are so deficient in this respect? It is one thing to be with the devil, but another, and a different thing to be influenced by him. The Son of God was not seriously injured by being with the devil; although he sat him down on the top of the pinnacle of the temple. I once heard a

minister say, that the devil sat the Messiah on the top of that high pinnacle, with the expectation that he would fall and kill himself. Now, perhaps, I shall not make a greater mistake than this, by saying, that it is not altogether unlikely that the devil that took our Lord on the mountain, and on the pinnacle, was the spirit of some of the earthly potentates, who had been in authority, and who had possessed or governed those kingdoms that were shown on the mountain's top. The Lord was tempted in all points, as we are, yet without sin.

Now, if demons did tempt men in that age of the world, then, the position in this case may be true; since it would be as easy for the Messiah to dispossess a demon from himself as from the nobleman's son. That demons are called devils in king James' translation of the Bible, no one, it is presumed, will deny. Nor is it unreasonable to suppose, that the spirits of dead persons would seek to molest the Son of Man, since it was so frequent with the spirits of the living. And, if a spirit would do so in the body of the living person, it is reasonable to suppose, that it would do so in the disembodied state.

In the early ages of the world, it is supposed that the spirits of the dead remained for ages in this world. Such was the case in the days of Christ and the apostles; and thus the Son of God gave the apostles power over devils and unclean spirits, so as to enable them to cast them out of the people.

I thought, when a small boy, I saw the devil, and never was I worse alarmed. I screamed as loud as I could, and every nerve in my body was excited. But I was mistaken in the thing that I saw; it was the shadow of an old drunkard on the door of the house. And ever since that time, whenever I see anything, or hear of anything that looks like the devil, I am almost certain to look around for some person; and have generally been successful in striking human tracks.

We frequently hear people say, that the devil is in the

church. But how, suppose you, that he got into it? "O!" says one, "he is omnipresent; and just steps in and out as best suits him." But, my good friend, permit me to inform you, that you are mistaken; for the devil can only enter into the church through some person. And whenever the devil is supposed to be in the church, you may examine the members, for he is in some of them; and should you not find him among the members, then go into the rostrum; and should you not find him there, then you only have to examine yourself, and you will have him, no mistake.

My friends, let us examine ourselves, for many have devils and are not apprised of it. A small fault in a man may be indulged in, until it will grow to be a fearful and dangerous devil. Think of the thoughts of Simon's heart; and remember that even an evil thought will soon grow to be as large as the devil. Said Paul, "I verily thought that I ought to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth." Remember that Ananias and his wife thought they could keep back a part of the price of the land. But this thought caused them to die. Yes, the thoughts of the devil consealed in the hearts of men and women, have terminated in shame and everlasting infamy. O! think of the many who have been ruined for all time, and excluded from all refined society, by giving way to evil thoughts. Let us all remember that the devil is in our wicked thoughts, as well as in our wicked deeds. Let us be careful how we talk after all sly devils, who only impart unto us information on the ground that we will not tell it to any one living.

I once heard a man say to another, that he knew something that he did not know. And, said he, "I will tell it to you, if you will give me your word and honor that you will never tell it to any living soul." "No," said the man to him, "I will not hear it; for if it is not worth telling, it is not worth having!" We would recommend to all such news-peddars, the advice of a wise king, who has said, that "a still tongue makes a wise head." A tongue devil is a dangerous and fearful devil. It is a little member, but

a big devil. The apostle of former times, speaking on this little tongue devil, says, that "men have tamed wild beasts, but no man hath tamed the unruly member."

The devil cannot injure us, save through some agent; therefore, he is powerless when no one will act for him, or permit him to act through them. Christ was not betrayed until Judas agreed to sell him, nor until he had carried out his agreement. Stephen could not be stoned by the devil, but was by his agents. Christ was not crucified by the devil; but his agents, with wicked hands, put him to death. So said St. Peter, in the city of Jerusalem. And so say we in the Old North State. The old devil, of himself has injured no man living—in, or out of the church, for the last thousand years. That is to say, he does not work without means. The naked spirit of the devil, does not operate on the naked spirit of man, save through words, or signs, or some kind of instrumentalities. The devil enters into our earthly house through, or by some fixed principles, and goes out by other means. The apostles did not, as I have supposed, cast out the devil from the hearts of men by the same means that gave him admittance. He enters by permission, but goes out by resistance.

It is the duty of all men to resist the devil; but as he is quite popular in some sections, and has many winning ways, it will require much firmness and self-denial. We would earnestly recommend you to read the advice of the man of God, as it is presented in the sixth chapter of the Ephesians; for it cannot fail to benefit you in your passage through this world.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; For we wrestle not against flesh and blood only, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in high places. A devil in political or religious power, is an awful thing; it is, indeed, an exciting and fearful thing, as will appear from the history of past ages. But our lots

have been cast in a land of political and religious liberty; for which all should feel grateful to Him that liveth and abideth forever. And, above all, to strive to do his will during this short and fleeting life; which is, at best, like the flower of the field, that withers and decays. Let us, as Christians, live in peace with all men; and pursue that in life, that will give ease in the hour of death. And thus, we shall go hence with a consciousness of having benefitted the world.

Many great and good men and women have lived and died in all parts of our country, leaving us an example for our future sojourn among the children of men. O! let us fondly think of the many loved ones, who have worshiped with us here in this sanctuary, in the beauty of holiness, and in the bonds of brotherly affection. And, should we differ as regards the "fallen angel," on the remarks of this discourse, yet, such need not prevent us from living and seeing Him who is invisible, eternal, and immortal.

And now, in the conclusion of this, my discourse on the origin of the "man of sin," I tender my thanks to you all for your unwearied attention, and for the many favors bestowed on me during my sojourn in your midst, for the last seven years. My attachment for you all is lasting; and it will afford me the greatest pleasure to remember you, and to speak of your hospitalities and Christian virtues at all times. I shall ever look back with pleasure to those shady and heavenly places, where so many saints, living and dead, have worshiped together in the beauty of holiness, having their spiritual strength renewed, and their prospects brightened for a blessed immortality in the ages to come. May you, my congregation, live for happiness, and for the good of your much beloved country; and, having so done, may you, at a proper time, go hence with pleasure, and not with regret. Amen.

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At a special meeting of the Vestry of Christ's Church, Raleigh, held on the 18th day of June 1840, a letter of resignation from the Rev. Dr. Freeman, the Rector of the church, was read in the following words—

Dear Brethren,

Believing that the time has fully come when I can no longer hope to be substantially useful to the people of my charge, I feel it to be my duty to tender to you, as I hereby do, my resignation as Rector of Christ's Church: and I beg that you will accept the same, as it is offered in the spirit of good will and brotherly love.

With many thanks for past kindnesses, and with heartfelt wishes and earnest prayers for the future prosperity both temporal and spiritual of yourselves and the congregation which you represent,

I am Brethren,

Respectfully and affectionately

Your friend and servant,

GEO. W. FREEMAN.

To

The Wardens and Vestry
of Christ's Church Raleigh,

June 18th, 1840.

And accompanying the said letter of resignation (to be read in case the Vestry should ask for the reasons which had induced the resignation) was a paper in the following words—

Should it be inquired by the Wardens and Vestry of Christ's Church, on what grounds the Rector has come to the conclusion that he can no longer hope to be generally useful to the congregation comprising his present charge, he would in all kindness, but frankly, submit the following reply:

That it is essential to the usefulness of one sustaining the relation of Pastor to a christian flock, that the members of his communion as a body, and himself should "be of one mind" in regard, at least, to the more important matters of faith and practice, the Rector supposes will not be denied. The pastor and his flock, maintaining and acting under *different*, especially *opposite* views of christian doctrine and christian duty, it is easy to see that the respect entertained for him, and consequently his influence for good, must be greatly circumscribed. In-

struction, respect, training upon those points on which they after will be thrown away—nay will probably be trampled under foot; and he who offers them may soon become an object of dislike, if not of scorn and insult. Nor will there be hope of better success in his ministrations to that interesting class which the christian minister habitually regards as “the hope of the flock”—the young and rising generation. The prevailing sentiments and practice of their seniors in the church, will, with them, almost always outweigh the precept of their minister, and he can never open his lips in instruction to them upon any of those contested points, however important he may view them, with the least hope of effect. His office, as an authoritative instructor in righteousness, has virtually come to an end.

And it is much in this situation that the Rector of Christ’s Church finds himself placed now at the close of the eleventh year of his ministry in that Church. He and a large portion of the communicants of his charge, including a large majority of the Wardens and Vestry, are directly at issue upon a subject which he sincerely believes to be intimately connected with the interests of vital religion among them—that of christians indulging in worldly amusements.

When he first took charge of the congregation, and for several, perhaps FIVE years afterwards, such a thing as a communicant’s attending a theatre, a publick ball, or even a private dancing party, was scarcely known among them, nor was there a voice heard in approbation of such a practice. Indeed it is believed that the sense of the great majority, if not of the whole communion, was strong and decisive against it. That the Rector was of the same opinion with his flock upon the subject, the whole tenor of his teachings both public and private, from the beginning of his ministrations has abundantly borne witness, and for FIVE years he was happy in the belief that he and his brethren of the communion were, in respect to the matter in question, “of one heart and one soul.”

Since that period, however, a change has come over the congregation, a new spirit has arisen, and the Pastor and his flock are no longer “of one mind.” Successively, the questions have been virtually raised and more or less discussed between the congregation and their minister; 1st, Whether communicants of the church, consistently with the solemn vows which are upon them, and their sacred character as “temples of the Holy Ghost,” as “members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven,” may give at their own houses, or attend at the houses of others, those worldly entertainments, commonly called dancing parties: and 2d, whether they may with

like consistency attend public places of worldly amusements, such as Theatres, Circuses, and Balls.

On both these questions the Rector has constantly, and he trusts conscientiously, yet affectionately maintained the negative. Notwithstanding his frequently expressed opinions, however, and in spite of his most strenuous efforts to procure from his people what he deemed a right decision, and to establish a wholesome practice upon these points, the *former* question, it would seem, and he supposes will be admitted, has for some time past been by the *general voice*, as indicated by the *general practice*, decided in the *affirmative*. While the *latter*, although pending the former, it seemed to be conceded that it was by no means to be sustained, has since found numerous practical supporters, and more recently has in like manner with the other seemed to be affirmatively settled.

Thus are these two questions decided, at least by the general practice of the communicants, in direct contrariety to the known opinions, and the solemn public and private teaching of their minister.

Under these circumstances, there having been no change of sentiment on the part of the Rector, it still being his honest and decided belief that the practice thus established, if persevered in, will be ultimately destructive of all vital religion in the congregation, and being deprived by these decisions, as he thinks, of all reasonable hope of further benefiting materially the people of his charge, especially the young to whom he has been accustomed to look with most confidence of hope, he has felt it to be his duty, and indeed the only consistent course left for him to pursue, to retire if permitted, from his most difficult post, and give place to some other person who by the blessing of God may be more successful in engaging the affections of the congregation, and inspiring them with respect and confidence in him, as a wise and judicious pastor, and a safe spiritual guide.

GEO. W. FREEMAN.

Raleigh, June 18th, 1840.

And therefore ^{upon} ~~for~~ motion it was resolved, that the said resignation be accepted, to take effect at the expiration of the current year of the pastor's engagement.

And it was also resolved, that a committee be appointed by the senior warden to consider of and report proper resolutions, &c. on the occasion, to the vestry at an adjourned meeting, to be held on the 25th of said month.

And at the adjourned meeting Messrs. Badger and Bryan, the committee so appointed, submitted the following report—~~which~~ with the

preamble and resolutions accompanying the same, was adopted by the Vestry.

The Committee having read the paper drawn up by the Rev. Dr. Freeman, and containing the reasons which induced his resignation, tendered and accepted at the last meeting of the vestry, think it due to themselves, to the Vestry, and to the congregation, to submit some observations thereupon, before offering the resolutions which accompany this report.

The Committee believe that there are many things in the conduct of life, about which religion gives us "no positive precept," in reference to which there is "room for difference of opinion," and on which every member of the church has a right to form his own judgment, and is not justly liable to condemnation for it by them who embrace an opposite opinion. Amongst these things "are certain diversions and a certain degree of intercourse with general society, about the lawfulness or unlawfulness of which, there not only does, but *may reasonably* exist that sort of difference in opinion which prevailed among the Jewish converts as to the Mosaic rites, or amongst the Gentiles as to meat offered to idols." In regard to these he that partaketh hath no right to despise him that scruples to partake; nor hath he that entertains the scruple a right to judge him that partaketh. Every man, indeed should be *fully persuaded* in his own mind lest his conscience condemn him in that which his practice alloweth—but beyond this, in regard to these things, there is, in our view, no positive and obligatory precept. In regard to them therefore *no man* has a right to require of another, as a point of religious duty, conformity with his opinion or his practice. If he can establish by argument the justness of his opinion, or reasonableness of his practice, he will have achieved the victory of truth over error, but he can have no right to supply by authority the defectiveness of his proof. We believe that "to inveigh in general terms against public assemblies, and amusements sanctioned by society, as if all toleration of them were positive evidence of a worldly spirit" and "as if a practice necessarily became unchristian because it had public opinion in its favor," "is neither just nor practically useful;" that it is "to confound things indifferent in themselves, with things wrong in themselves," and to erect out of an allowable difference of opinion on subjects left unsettled by positive precept, "a sort of party distinction" in the Church, whereby "the union among brethren who have one common interest is dissolved, and the friendly collision which would be beneficial to both parties is exchanged for an injurious opposition."

With these views (held we believe by a large majority of the congregation) we and others exercising an undoubted right to decide for ourselves, those matters which have not been settled for us, have adopted the opinion that "those entertainments commonly called dancing parties" are *in themselves* innocent and allowable, and hence we have attended them at the houses of our friends, and have given them at our own. We have thought that if Christians in St. Paul's time were at liberty when bidden, to attend feasts at the houses of avowed Idolaters, it cannot be in itself wrong, in our day, to attend or give feasts, with or to, friends and acquaintances who are at the least nominal christians, and certainly neither professed idolaters nor atheists. As this privilege of attending such feasts in the apostle's day was not restricted to those from which dancing was banished, so we conceive that their lawfulness now is not affected by the presence or absence of that amusement.

We have been aware that our Rector entertained different views, we have regretted that he did, but we freely accorded to him the same right of judgment which we claimed for ourselves, and never for a moment supposed that such difference of opinion formed any barrier against Christian communion, or kindly intercourse, or mutual respect. We felt sure that no man had a right to demand uniformity of opinion or practice in matters not determined by christianity; and that the relation of pastor and people did not involve the surrender on the part of the latter of all freedom of thought, and the adoption of any rule of conduct, merely because he deemed it proper and necessary to prescribe it. If we are wrong in this, then the gospel so far from having delivered us from that body of ceremonial observances which the Jews found intolerable, and given us some freedom of thought and action in regard to matters of mere expediency (that is of matters not determined by the gospel) has in effect left us liable to the imposition of a ritual for all the intercourse of life as strict, minute and burdensome as that of the Jews without its permanence, its limitations, its uniformity, or its divine original. To submit to divine appointments with implicit obedience is the part of true wisdom, for of them we are sure the reason is the highest and best whether it be known to us or not; but the opinions of men can justly command assent only so far as they *appear* to be supported by adequate reasons. To give to these opinions the force of laws would have an effect upon the pastor no less injurious than upon the congregation, and if all right of inquiry, of private judgment, be denied to the congregation, it seems a very useless proceeding to put the scriptures into their hands with directions to examine

—to try the doctrines they hear—to search the scriptures for their guidance in the path of duty. Yielding to others the same freedom we claim for ourselves, we had supposed the difference of opinion which has obtained between the Rector and the congregation furnished no ground of separation, and we were greatly surprised when we first learned that he thought otherwise.

With regard to “Public Balls, Circuses and Theatres,” we are not aware that the congregation *generally*, has determined any thing as to their propriety or expediency, at least any thing in favor of the two last named, but whatever may be our individual opinion respecting them, we claim no right to enforce its adoption on others. These, with the dancing parties, we conceive to belong to a debateable subject, on which difference of opinion by no means argues difference of principle. That abstaining cannot be justly viewed as betokening “affectation of righteousness over much” nor participation as proof of “slavery to the world and a love of pleasure in place of love to God.”

If therefore the decision by general practice be, as the Rector supposes, it would furnish no necessary ground of separation, unless it can be shown that no opinion or practice of the congregation should ever be avowed or followed, when in opposition to “the known opinion and solemn public and private teaching of their minister;” or in other words, that any matter on which the Rector deems it his duty to deliver a solemn and official opinion, at once ceases to be a subject of discussion and enquiry, and by force of his opinion becomes a point of faith, or an obligatory rule of conduct.

This proposition, we are sure that the Rector will not in terms maintain, and yet it seems to us that the reasons given for resigning his situation do necessarily presuppose a duty no less extensive, of submission to and conformity of opinion and practice with the Rector, on the part of the congregation; to this we can never yield; to this we do not think the congregation will, or ought to yield.

Shortly then we think the matters referred to in Dr. Freeman’s paper, are not things determined by the founder of our faith, that they belong to a large class of objects indifferent in themselves, involving mere questions of expediency, in regard to which it is an error “to attempt to fix a definite limit of universal obligation,” and by consequence that the differences adverted to by the Rector, furnish in themselves no just ground of interruption to full, affectionate, mutual, christian intercourse and communion, and are only just cause of separation on account of the mistaken views (as we think) of the Rector in relation thereto.

But we claim no right to pass judgment on the Rector's opinions on these matters, nor to think hardly of him because he does not agree in opinion with us; we doubt not his sincerity—we respect his motives, we remember his virtues and his services, and having frankly stated the views we entertain in common with the great body of the congregation, we recommended to the vestry the adoption of the accompanying resolutions.

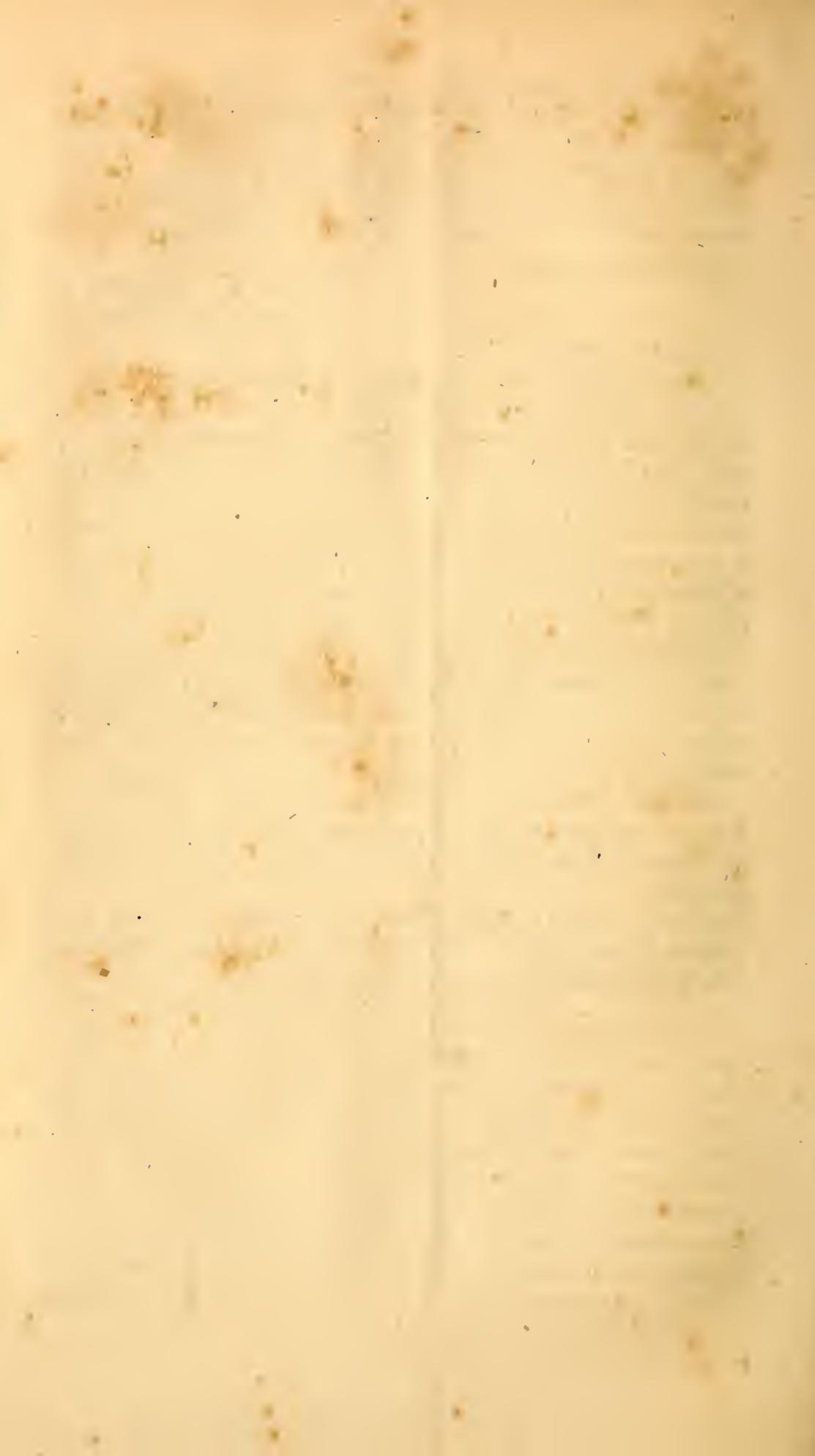
G. E. BADGER.
J. H. BRYAN.

June 25th, 1840.

The pastoral connexion of the Rev. Dr. Freeman, with the congregation of Christ Church, which has now subsisted for eleven years, having been dissolved by his resignation, the wardens and vestry deem it proper on the occasion to declare, that, in their judgment, Dr. Freeman during that whole period, has discharged the duties of his station with eminent ability and faithfulness; that he has been greatly instrumental in enlarging the number, and elevating the character of the members of the church; that for his understanding and attainments as a Divine, and his performances as a preacher, the congregation generally up to the very moment of his resignation felt great respect, for his person a warm attachment, and in his piety entire confidence; and that the vestry have no doubt these sentiments were fully merited by the personal conduct and christian character of Dr. Freeman.

Therefore, Resolved, That when the resignation of the Rev. Dr. Freeman was presented, we felt the deepest regret that he should for any cause have deemed it necessary to resign the charge of the congregation.

Resolved, That Dr. Freeman has presided over this parish with great ability and uniform zeal and fidelity, and that his ministrations have been blessed with signal and very unusual success.



A SERMON

PREACHED TO THE STUDENTS

OF

THE UNITED BAPTIST INSTITUTE,

AT TAYLORSVILLE, N. C.,

JUNE 4th, 1857,

BY REV. J. McDANIEL,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE CICERONIAN SOCIETY OF THE INSTITUTE.

“RUN, SPEAK TO THIS YOUNG MAN.”

ZECH., II CHAP., 4 v.

FAYETTEVILLE:

PRINTED AT THE OBSERVER OFFICE.

1857.

CICERONIAN HALL,
U. B. INSTITUTE, June 5th, 1857.

REV. JAMES McDANIEL:

DEAR SIR:

At a meeting of the members of the "Ciceronian Society" of the UNITED BAPTIST INSTITUTE, held to-day, the undersigned Committee were appointed to solicit for publication, a copy of your very able and eloquent Sermon delivered on yesterday, before the Students and friends of the Institute. The Committee add their most earnest solicitation that you will comply with this request, and gratify the wishes of all.

With sentiments of the highest esteem and respect,

We have the honor to be,

W. H. PEEBLES,
E. MARTIN,
W. C. THOMAS,
Committee.

JUNE 5th, 1857.

DEAR YOUNG GENTLEMEN:

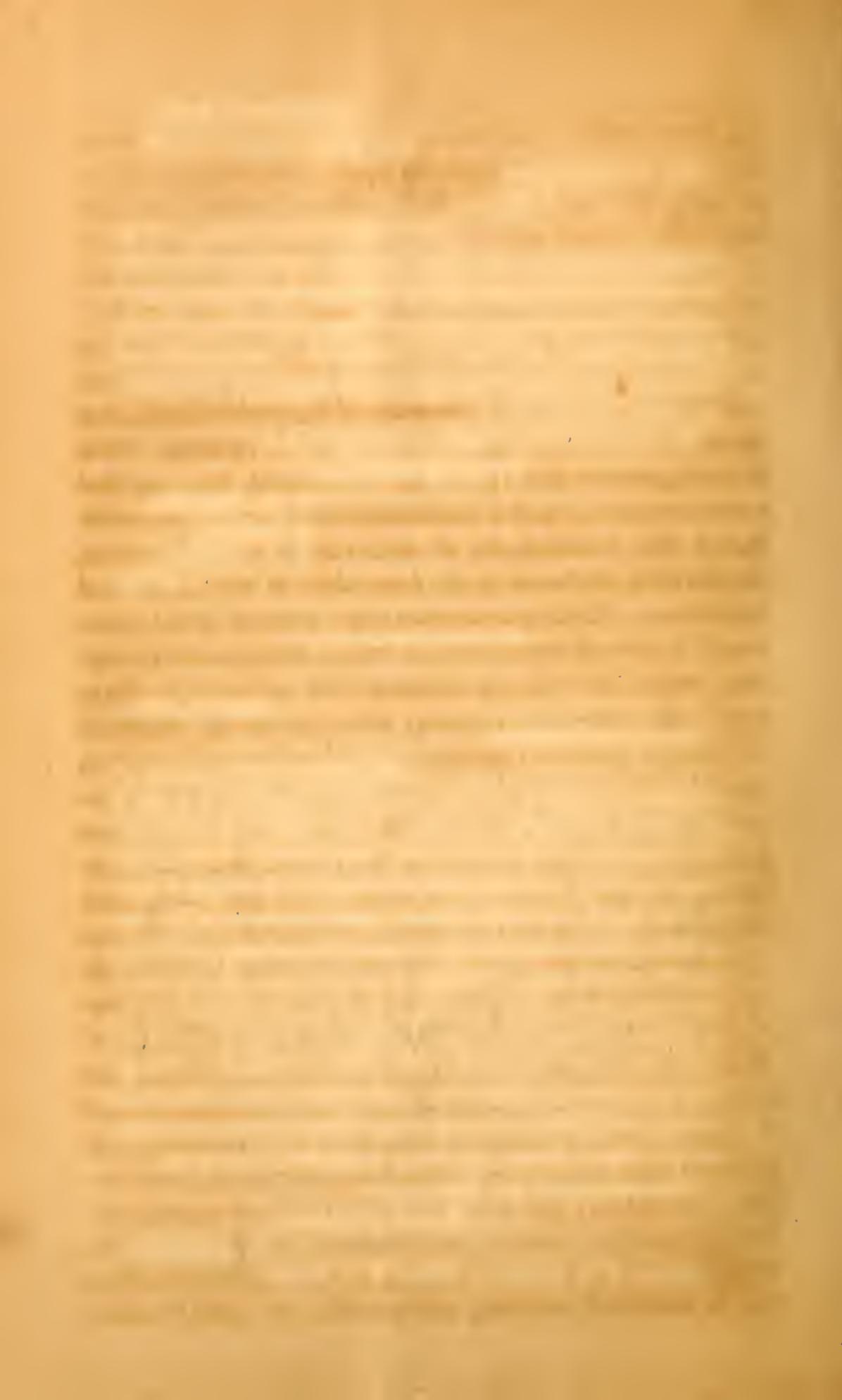
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Note of this date, requesting for publication, a copy of my Sermon delivered on yesterday. I have hitherto invariably declined compliance with such requests, conscious that my Discourses cannot appear to as much advantage in *print*, as in the *delivery* of them. But my *timidity* is, in this instance, greatly overcome by the very gentlemanly and courteous attention you have bestowed on me during my visit,—by the warm acceptance of my Discourse, you have manifested, and by the expressed desire of many of your friends with you, to have it published. I therefore yield and give it to you, hoping that when the *head* that composed it shall lie low in the grave—when the *heart* that conceived it shall beat no more—when the *tongue* that uttered it shall be hushed in everlasting silence, this Sermon may be to you, and The Platonic Society, and others, as *my affectionate memento*.

With sentiments of very high esteem,

I am your ob't servant,

J. McDANIEL.

Messrs. W. H. Peebles, E. Martin, W. C. Thomas.



SERMON.

ZECHARIAH, ii chap., 4th v.

“Run, speak to this young man.”

Man, the greatest visible work of Jehovah's hands, was obviously designed for usefulness and happiness. This divinely purposed state is an attainment, the *way* and *means* to which, is the construction of *proper character*. It is a fact manifest to all, and experienced by many, that *wicked character* is the *bane* alike of usefulness and happiness. “Evil communications *corrupt* good manners,” is a truth demonstrated before our eyes every day. And while, like “the pestilence that walketh in darkness,” *vice* strews its pathway with *injuries* to others, it renders its possessor unhappy. A heathen philosopher, guided only by the light of reason and the impress of experience, once said, *Nemo malus felix*—no wicked man is happy. And the voice from heaven confirms that sentiment, saying “There is *no peace*, saith the Lord, unto the wicked. The *way* of transgressors is *hard*.” On the other hand, *virtuous, pious character* insures both usefulness and happiness. “The *fruit* of the righteous is a tree of *life*.” “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise.” While *virtuous character* benefits others, it blesses the possessor himself. A sage of the world long ago uttered the truth, that “*virtue is its own reward*.” Solomon, the greatest king and wisest man that ever lived, (our Saviour excepted,) and who had fully tried every accessible prospective, source and means of happiness, to be found in all the sphere of irreligion—having testified that “all is vanity of vanities, and vexation of spirit,”—after

a due trial of the way of VIRTUE, said, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Jesus, the Great Teacher from God, says "My yoke is easy—my burden light: *Learn* of me, and ye shall find *rest unto your souls.*"

Now, that character which is the *foundation, way* and *means* of usefulness and happiness, is not a natural or hereditary possession, neither a fortuitous accident, nor yet a merely *sovereign* bestowment by the Great Creator; but a structure, in which are brought into requisition the *volition* and *agency* of man, under the favoring aid of God. It is not an *instantaneous* work, achieved by a *wish* or a solitary effort, but a *progressive* work, requiring the proper and habitual exercise of those noble faculties with which we are endowed, and because of which we are but a little lower than the Angels. The *fundamental* principles of character are, for the most part, wrought out in *early* life, in the season of *youth*. The sagacious Bard has truthfully sung—

"Just as the *twig* is bent,
The tree's inclined:"

And a voice, still more reliable, sounds from heaven, saying "Train up *a child* in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Education, by a Divine arrangement, holds a grand position and plastic office in the formation and structure of character. Inasmuch, therefore, as this work commences in *early* life, and Education fills such an important office in it, *haste* should be exercised to impart to the young, appropriate instruction. "*Run, speak* to this young man."

My theme is, THE INSTRUCTION APPROPRIATE TO A YOUNG MAN.

I. Adopt the BIBLE *supremely* as the Text Book of life and character. On going forth to the work of life,

every youth ought to heed the kindly voice which addresses him from heaven, saying, "See that thou make all things according to the *pattern* showed thee *in the mount.*" "Wherewithal shall a *young man* cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, *according to Thy Word.*" "To the **LAW** and to the **TESTIMONY**; if they speak not according to this **WORD**, it is because there is no light in them." I might construct a Babel of Scriptural evidence, that the **BIBLE** is the great Text Book of life and character, given by God in His grace to man. These quotations, already submitted, are deemed sufficient to establish this point.

We are accustomed to value a text book according to the celebrity of its author. Here then is one, that challenges *universal* and *supreme* regard.

"This is the Judge that ends the strife,
Where wit and reason fail;
This is a safe, unerring guide,
Through all this gloomy vale."

On its *excellences* and *merits* I might descant, until the sun might hide himself behind the western hills, and yet the half would not be told. This is a theme under which an Angel's tongue would falter: it is as high as heaven, and boundless as infinity! The best, the most noble, the most desirable constituents of character, are to be derived from a conformity to the teachings of the **BIBLE**. This will impart to the mind an elevation and expansion, far superior to all human productions. The reason is two-fold: First, it brings the mind into contact with the most stupendous and sublime truths and things, in association with which it partakes of their nature. And secondly, there is, by the Almighty, deposited in Scriptural *truths* and *duties*, a mysterious, hidden virtue and power, peculiar to them alone. There is in them something like a *Divinity*, in habitual association with which, the individual will partake of the excellence, as Moses caught the

Divine glory on his countenance, when in converse with God on Mount Sinai.

Public *opinion* and popular *example* may, and will, vie with the BIBLE for your preference. Each will set forth a form of character, which may be commended as sufficient for your aspiration. But, though public *opinion* and popular *example* may be considerably under the plastic influence of Biblical teaching, yet you will no where find them in sufficient harmony with it, to justify you in regarding them as text books of life and character. On the contrary, very much that is "highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God." Multitudes require no other commendation of a thing, than the simple sanction of *public opinion* or *popular example*; yet let it be remembered, that this is no *law* or *standard* of character, however received and honored as such it may be. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God! Whosoever, therefore, will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God." The sentiment of the Poet should be yours—

"Happy, if *Thou*, my God, *approve*,
Though *all* beside *condemn!*"

And ever bear in mind, that the BIBLE never accommodates men. It is no respecter of persons. Its *form* or *pattern* is immutable—its requisitions are established—they are never compromised to the *tastes*, *inclinations*, *wishes* or *circumstances* of men. Any attempt to *compromise* these requirements, is fraught with tremendous danger. God has placed around His WORD, a cherubic guard, to prevent any, and every attempt to change it. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the *plagues* that are written in this Book: if any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take *away his part* out of the Book of life." "The word that I have spoken, the *same* shall

judge him in the last day." The BIBLE therefore is, and ever will remain, while the world stands, the great Text Book of life and character. "Run, speak to this young man," that he adopt the teaching of the BIBLE *supremely*.

II. Adopt as a *fundamental* principle, the recognition of *your dependence on God*. It is "in him that we live and move and have our being." All our springs are in him. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: Except the Lord keep the City, the watchman waketh in vain." No man is independent of God in the very least particular. Whatever capacities the Creator has given to man,—whatever *freedom* in agency, still every where, and in every thing, he is dependent on God. He cannot create for himself one breath—he cannot add one cubit to his stature—he cannot form or control one event without God. Say not that there are many men who accumulate *wealth*, make great advances in *science*, attain unto high *worldly distinctions*, and yet do not recognise their *dependence on God*. All this may be true, but it does not prove that they are *not* dependent on God; neither does it prove, that the *guilt* involved in this forgetfulness and disregard of God is not *fearful*, and in many instances, *ruinous* to those by whom it is indulged. God is slow to anger, and of much long suffering, not willing that any should perish; and he deals kindly with men even while they are treasuring up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath! And should this goodness be presumptuously perverted into a *reason* and a *cause* of contempt of him? Is such a character to be coveted by rational beings, lovers of happiness, and expectants of a future retribution? The very thought of possessing a character, branded with the *disregard* of our *dependence on God*, ought to cause paleness to gather on the cheek, and trembling to seize the

limbs, such as the sight of the mysterious hand on the wall of the palace, produced on the impious King!

Engrave on your mind, then, young gentlemen, as with a diamond-pen, a recognition of your dependence on God. Even in the *dark* ages of the world, the recognition of dependence on Divine agency, was regarded as one of the highest virtues, and most excellent principles. As evidence of this fact, a distinguished Scholar has furnished a corresponding sentiment, uttered, as he tells us, by Pliny in his panegyric on Trajan*. Both Greeks and Romans held the sentiment in such high admiration, that frequent allusion to it is found in their most valued writings. And let it never be said that young gentlemen, collecting materials for the construction of noble and excellent character, in the 19th century, and under advantages far surpassing those of any former age of the world, overlooked or disregarded this one, so great and so important! Ever remember, that a hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand years hence, you will be as dependent on God, as at the present moment. To whatever part of God's empire you may go, your dependence will never be diminished. The treatment you may expect at the hands of your Creator, will depend on the agreement or disagreement, which may exist between your *character* and his *commands*! "Run, speak to this young man," that he duly regard his *dependence* on God.

III. Adopt a *manly, magnanimous, prompt, determined* performance of what is *right*. Men often *know* the *right* and *approve* it too; yet have not the moral courage to do it. Pilate was convinced of the Saviour's innocence, yet he dared not to release him. Agrippa knew the superior excellence of the Christian religion, but he had not the

* Nihil rite, nihilque providenter homines, sine Deorum immortalium ope, consilio, honore, auspicerent. [This and other Latin Notes were not spoken in the delivery of the Sermon.]

courage to embrace it. Many of the Scribes and Pharisees knew that Jesus was the promised Messiah, but they were *afraid* to confess him. A *cowardly, vacillating* spirit, that crouches to the *known wrong*, and hesitates to do *right* in the face of *danger*, is as great a reproach to any person's character, as it is *criminal* and *hateful* in the sight of God. This has been, in every age, the enemy of virtue and piety. It ought to be abominated wherever seen. A vain adulation may be its present reward, as in the case of Pilate, Agrippa, Herod, and many others; but this, like the *festivities* and *honors*, bestowed by the Persians on a conquered General, for three successive days prior to his execution, is only a pompous prelude to *ruin*. But for this *hateful cowardice* of spirit, that shrinks from confronting *error*, and turns traitor against the *truth*, never would our world have been cursed with multitudes of those evils which have obtained dominion, and are producing effects over which, the pious heart heaves a pensive sigh.

But, while to this detestable cowardice is attributable the successful establishment of many of the greatest evils that afflict society, and mar the true glory and happiness of man, to that noble, magnanimous spirit, which dares to do *right*, cost what it may, is attributable the introduction, perpetuation and diffusion of those principles, which give to the world what moral glory it possesses, and to communities, whatever of loveliness they exhibit. As illustrious examples of it, for your imitation, I point you to the history of Joseph, who, when allured to do *wrong*, in a very powerful manner, said, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God": to Micah the prophet, who dared to prophesy the truth to the king, though it cost him imprisonment and suffering: to Daniel, who would not swerve from duty, though it caused him to be cast into the lions' den: to the three

Hebrews, who refused to bow down to the image which the king had set up, though, as the consequence of their refusal, they were cast into a fiery furnace, heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated: to Moses, the illustrious leader of Israel, who chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to possess the Egyptian monarch's crown: to Paul, and the Apostles of our Lord, who, when they suffered for the truth, rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer in such a cause. These, and many others who adorn the pages of history, possessed and exhibited that noble courage, which has encircled their character with a glory untarnished by time, and enriched the world, in all coming ages, by the *principles* they have transmitted, and the *example* they have presented. "Run, speak to this young man," that he be bold to embrace, vindicate and practice, at all hazards, what is *right*.

IV. Dare to think with *personal* independence—to make deductions and form conclusions for *yourselves*. It is an evil of wide-spreading influence and much to be deplored, that so few venture to *think* for themselves. A *few* do the *thinking* for the *mass*, in reference to almost all important matters. And it is to be apprehended that this is a growing, rather than declining evil. In proportion to the facilities of information possessed by any people, ought they to *think* for themselves. We object not, to all due deference being paid to the *opinions* of others; but we do protest against the too prevalent custom, of taking the *opinions* of others without due investigation. A few leading minds, in *State* and *Church*, exert over the mass, the same moulding power, that the potter exerts over the clay, to form such a vessel as he pleases. There are thousands of clamorous partisans, who have not one *idea* or *reason* for the system they embrace and advocate,

except such as has been formed and presented to them by their admired leaders. They have no distinct knowledge whether their system is *right* or *wrong*, never having duly investigated the subject. There are *nominal* Literati, who cannot solve a problem, that is not in the text book they have studied: *parrot-like* Linguists, who cannot translate any sentence involving difficulty, except it be in the book they have well nigh worn out by long usage. There are multitudes of religionists, who have no *reason* for the system they adopt, except that their *teachers*, in whose judgment they have implicit confidence, declare it to be correct. Opinions on almost all important subjects, are received by very many, from some leading spirits, with as little hesitation as the young bird receives the food offered by the dam, whether it be a spider or a worm. This is a sore evil under the sun, and tends to multiply and perpetuate unhappy diversity, against which the Saviour so fervently prayed, just before His death.

The common idea of *Education* entertained among men, is, that it is a *putting into*. And there are many, said to be *educated* men, who only have the little Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, &c., together with the few *scraps* of Mathematics and Sciences, which have been *infused* or *put into* their memories, by their teachers or class-mates. No doubt there are those who could not correctly translate their *Diploma*, never having *seen*, or *heard* a translation of it, given by their teachers, or by some other person. But the correct idea of *Education* is, that it is a *drawing out*. The word *EDUCO*, from which it is derived, means *to draw out*. By education the powers of the mind are disciplined, and the individual is prepared to *think* and *reason* independently. The *BEREANS* were commended by God for *thinking* for themselves, and for *investigating* what was submitted to them

for their adoption. And they stand as noble models for your imitation. "Run, speak to this young man," to *think* and *reason* with proper independence.

V. Adopt a principle of *modesty* and *courtesy*. There is in the human mind naturally a disposition to *vanity*, *pomposity* and *arrogance*. Too many, alas! on the attainment of some considerable distinction in wealth or learning, &c. betray the possession of this disposition. Every department of public life is affected by this evil. The happiness of social intercourse in society is often spoiled by it. One *vain*, *pompous*, *arrogant* person, in the social circle, like the dead fly in the box of ointment, destroys, to a great extent, the fragrance of enjoyment through all the circle. The dignity of the Legislative Council, or of the Bar, is often injured by a display of pomposity. The very end to which the actors in the fulsome scene aspire, is defeated by their own *vanity* or *arrogance*. The glory of the pulpit ministrations is often destroyed, and they are made the ministrations of *Death*, instead of *Life*, by a detestable show of *pomposity* or *vanity*. This has no more business in the sphere of *Learning*, or *Piety*, than Satan had in Paradise. It is a perversion of both, and ought to be abominated wherever seen; and it ought to subject, to general disgust, the infatuated creature who figures in its exhibition. Ever exhibit *modesty*, whatever the position you may occupy.

And remember that without *courtesy*, there can be no *proper character*. This is a cheap excellence, though so great and important. It costs a man but little to be *courteous*; and yet its rewards are far richer than is generally imagined. Those widely err in their judgment, who suppose that a man compromises his dignity or excellence by being *courteous*, even towards those who are obviously his inferiors in the circumstances of life.

Jesus, our Great Exemplar, was courteous—so much so, that he was called the FRIEND of *sinners*. There is a pharisaical self-importance and bigotry possessed by many, which constitutes them *cold, impolite, austere* and *unsociable* towards any and all, except a certain few, towards whom, they think it a little *honor* to be polite. Such persons possess a very meagre share of general esteem while they live, and when they end their course on earth, they descend to their graves generally, “unwept and unsung.” “Run, speak to this young man,” that he be *modest* and *courteous*.

VI. See that the *influence* which you exert on others, be *salutary*. Man is a social Being. We are susceptible of influence from one another. Mind acts on mind. Solomon says “One sinner *destroyeth* much good.” Your influence will be a mighty agent for good or evil. Learning is power, and will impart that power to your influence. If it be seen that you, who have such facilities of knowing what is *right*, and *wrong*,—what is commendable, and what is reprehensible; and who, because of these advantages of knowledge, are expected to be *models* of propriety, and *criteria* of what may, or may not be adopted:—if it be seen that you act according to very latitudinarian principles, and with but little scrupulousness about the *right*, or the *wrong*, it will have a powerful effect on the judgment and conduct of others. Whether you design it so or not, your influence will impart a power, that will tell mightily for *virtue* or *vice*, on the character of others. You are held responsible by God, for the *effects* of your influence. This responsibility is entirely overlooked by many. In estimating their life and character, they have too little regard to its effects on others.

But this is indeed, a momentous particular for your

consideration. Your influence will go far beyond your individual self—it will enter circles of society, and permeate spheres of mind, of which you will have no adequate knowledge, until in eternity, the whole *panoramic* scene will pass before your astonished vision. You are not like the Flower, which springs and blooms on some desert wild, unseen by human eye,—whose fragrance wastes and dies, on the lonely, passing breeze:—no, your life and character will be seen,—the influence emitted from it, will be inhaled by others, and will become in them, elements of good or evil. You are to live, not with reference to yourselves alone, but also with reference to others.

Give diligence then, that your influence on others, be like that stream which the Prophet saw, which “ran down into the Desert and into the sea, and being brought forth into the sea,” the waters of the sea were thereby healed. Or, like that wonderous Tree, which, Moses, by Divine instruction, cast into the bitter waters of Marah, and they were thereby “made sweet.” Thus will you be honored and loved; and when the memory of those who have been only walking pestilences in society, shall rot in *infamy*, yours will be embalmed in perpetual esteem. “Run, speak to this young man,” that he regard the influence he exerts on others.

VII. Determine on the attainment of *true* and *eminent* Piety. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments. Remember now thy Creator in *the days of thy youth*, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. Seek ye, *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the Tree of Life,

and may enter in through the gates into the City." Thus you are addressed by the voice from heaven. All the instruction I have already given you, may, to a considerable extent, be adopted, and a character may thereby be constructed, that will excite the admiration of all virtuous persons, and on which an Angel, as he looks, may love; and yet the crowning excellence be lacking. *True, eminent* Piety is the perfection of character. But, beware of *modern, nominal* Piety, which, in very many instances, is like the figure of a person, well-proportioned, handsomely dressed, in all the comeliness of religious drapery, yet without a soul or life. Let not the *form* of godliness suffice for you. See that the Religion on which you rely for safety and happiness, demonstrates its real existence and power in the soul, by a life of strict *obedience* to God's Law. The Great Teacher from God says, "If any man *love* me, he *will keep* my sayings. Ye are my *friends*, if ye *do* whatsoever I command you." And the inspired Apostle says, "This is the *love* of God, that we *keep* his commandments. Show me thy faith without thy *works*, and I will show you *my faith* by my *works*. Faith without works is dead."

A person is to know himself to be a christian, only so far as his religion exerts in him, a sufficient power to lead him to *obey* God's requirements. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and *do not* the things I command you? Not every one that *saieth* unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the *will* of my Father which is in heaven." Give therefore, no heed to that fabulous Theology, which teaches that there are *non-essentials* in the requirements of God's word. O what presumption it is, to arraign the wisdom and goodness of God, by supposing that he has appointed or commanded any thing, that is not of very grave and great importance! Hear the Great Law-giver saying, "Who-

soever therefore shall break one of *these least* commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven." Does it appear from this declaration of him, in whose lips there was no guile, that there are any *non-essentials* in God's requirements; when the violation of the *least* one of them, if deliberately perpetrated, will entail on the transgressor such an awful disadvantage, that the compassionate Saviour has warned men of it, that they may avoid it? Ah, remember that the *least* commandment of God, will, in eternity, be seen possessed of an importance, towering to an infinite height, and of dimensions, which will stagger the soul of the *neglector*, so that he will covet concealment from the dread responsibilities of such neglect, in some everlasting sepulchre, not obsequious to the Judgment summons! Be sure that you seek and embrace *true* Religion, producing scriptural fruits, as evidences of its reality and power.

This will be *protective* in the present life. It institutes restraints, which keep the possessor from those pursuits and indulgences, that soon or late, would inevitably bring distress and anguish on the soul. It likewise insures Angelic guardian-ship; for it is written, "The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Moreover, Jesus has pledged himself to their safety:—"My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." In true Religion therefore, you will realize the best safeguard through all this perilous state!

It is likewise, the source of the greatest, present enjoyment. Men dream of richer pleasure, elsewhere, than

in the service of God. The Prodigal son had brilliant anticipations of greater advantages, and better entertainment, than were to be found in his Father's house. He went forth in pursuit of these vain *shadows*—he traversed this *dream* to satisfy his soul's desires, until at length, he awoke in wretched disappointment, far, far away from the good he craved! "When he came to himself he said, how many hired servants of my Father, have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with *hunger*. I will arise and go to my Father." He returned—his Father saw him coming home, he ran, embraced, and kissed his long lost son. His tattered garments were exchanged for the best robe—a sumptuous feast was spread to relieve his hunger—and friends rejoiced over his return. Never, never, was he so happy in any state, in any place, in all the circle of his prodigality, as when he had arrived at home, and was settled in his Father's family! So it will ever be found, that the highest, the richest enjoyment to be found in this life, is in the service and ways of God. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

But, the chief blessedness and advantage of true, and eminent Piety will be realized in eternity. The end crowns the action. The present scene of things will at length terminate. The Arch-angel with the judgment-trump in hand, will appear on the wing, descending from heaven to this world! As he comes, he will blow the tremendous blast, which will publish the Decree of the Great God,—*the end of all things is come!* At the dread sound, the curtain of Time will drop, and Nature stand aghast! The sun in the heavens—stop his course and drop his beams in endless night! The moon, wrapped in a crimson shroud—shine no more! The stars, extinguished—fall from their orbits, as the ripe figs from the

tree when shaken by a mighty wind! The sea—roar a solemn dirge, of wild death march waves, upheaving, and bearing on the foaming billows, its drowned millions to the wave-lashed shore! The Earth, reeling and quaking, convulsed by rending earth-quakes,—uncover her entombed myriads, and from Battle-fields and Grave Yards, swarms of resuscitated persons, awoke from the slumber of ages,—start into life, and hasten to the awful Judgment! The world draped in the sombre garments of mourning—utter forth its last, and death-like shriek! The stupendous Fabric of Nature, at whose birth, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy,—whose wonders have engaged the study, and kindled the admiration of men in all generations,—fall into dissolution! Fire descending from God out of heaven—ignite, and enwrap the prostrate ruins! O what a catastrophe! What a sight to behold!

Where then will be that vain show—those honors, riches, pleasures, which allured so many from the claims of God? Gone—all gone forever—not a vestige of them left, except the consequences of the inordinate love, pursuit, and embrace of them! Man will remain, with the character he has constructed, whatever that may be! Then will be seen and realized, the grand difference between the righteous and the wicked—between him that feared God, and him that feared him not. Then will the righteous receive their **DIPLOMA**, with this brilliant inscription, “**WELL DONE, THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT: THOU HAST BEEN FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS, I WILL MAKE THEE RULER OVER MANY THINGS: ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD!**”^{*} Escorted by Angels, with Jesus, their Great Teacher and Lord at the head of the majestic procession, they will enter upon the everlasting felicities of heaven!

^{*} *Eugel serve bone et fidelis; super pauca fuisti fidelis; super multa te constituam: intra in gaudium domini tui.*

But, the wicked who would not heed instruction's voice, will be driven away into everlasting sorrow—expelled forever from the society of the just, to be the victims of unending woe! When they have passed the awful gate, and entered the prison of despair, the Angel of God will turn the key,—the sound of the bolt as it locks, will roll like the thunder of Death through the soul—then with his mighty arm, he will cast that key, far, far into the abyss of oblivion, there to lie and rust, while endless ages roll away! Dark columns of smoke, ascending from the miserable abode, will be the DIPLOMA of the accursed, bearing in letters of flame, this fearful inscription, “THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH!”† These dismal scrolls, as they rise and unfold, emit the dread sound of despair, the deep wailings of woe, incessantly uttered by the sufferers, “*Lost! Lost! Lost! O, FOREVER lost!*” “Run, speak to this young man,” that he, by all means, become a true christian.

Dear young Gentlemen! I have almost finished the work, which your preference has assigned me. Many of us have met for the first time, and when I reflect, that in all probability after we part, at the close of this occasion, we shall never all meet again in this life, I feel my bosom swell with emotion. Wherever you go—wherever you dwell—whatever the position in life you may occupy, you will have my tender regard, my warm desire for your usefulness, prosperity, and happiness; and when Life's educational course and labors shall have with us terminated, that we may all meet at God's right hand in heaven, where there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures forever more!

“O, the hope, the blissful hope,
Which Jesus' grace has given;
The hope, when days and years are past,
We all may meet in heaven!”

† Stipendia peccati, mors!

Think of the solicitude of your Parents, Teachers, and Friends, for your usefulness and happiness. Disappoint not their fond hopes and expectations—wither not, by any improper course, these budding flowers, on which they gaze, in hope to see them open soon in attractive bloom! This vast assembly, by their presence on this occasion, show to you the interest they feel in your success. Ever let them see that you are worthy of such esteem.

Dear Instructors of these young men! I congratulate you on the success which has thus far crowned your labors. I gaze with pleasure, on the luminous prospect of still greater success, which shines on the future of your work. Go on then, with cheerful hearts and animated spirits, in your noble toils. “Run, speak to this young man.”

And my respected and strange audience! many of you, I doubt not already love the Saviour. You are my *kindred*, whoever you are—whatever your name—wherever your home. Pray for the peace of this Jerusalem! Foster this Institution, for it will richly reward all your labors and expenditures for it. I know that you feel emotions of pleasure in its present, great prosperity. “Tully acknowledged the transports which he felt, when he saw the Laurel groves where Cicero held his disputations, and the Porticoes at Athens, where Socrates taught.” Sharing with you, in your present enjoyment, which is similar to his, I can exclaim in the language of the Classic Bard,—“*O fortunati, quorum jam mœnia surgunt!*”—Thrice happy ye, whose walls already rise!





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Call

THE OLD PATHS:

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH, SALISBURY,

By the Right Reverend THOMAS ATKINSON, D. D.,

BISHOP OF NORTH CAROLINA,

AT THE ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

OF THE

Rev. Messrs. BENJAMIN SWAN BRONSON, GEORGE BADGER WETMORE,
WILLIAM MURPHY, and THOMAS GOELET HAUGHTON,

ON WHIT-SUNDAY 1857,

DURING THE SESSION OF THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA,

AND PUBLISHED BY THE REQUEST OF THE CONVENTION.

FAYETTEVILLE:

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1857.

SERMON.

JEREMIAH, 6th chap., 16th verse.

“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, wherein is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”

In the latter days of the Jewish Commonwealth, just anterior to the Babylonish Captivity, among the numberless confusions and miseries that gathered like a black cloud over both Church and State, this was not the least, that the path of duty and of safety had become difficult to discern, even by those who were willing to follow it.

There were men, indeed, claiming to be the Prophets of God, and to speak in His Name, but they denied each other's pretensions and contradicted each other's messages. Some cried Peace, Peace, while others said there was no Peace. There were Priests also, the ordinary stated Teachers of the People, (for “the Priests' lips should keep knowledge,”) but instead of union among these, violent discord and mutual denunciation drove them asunder. It is under these circumstances that God counsels and indeed commands His people, to stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and thus find rest for their souls.

This, then, is the sentence of Divine Wisdom: Since present teachers differ, but it is confessed that the past were right, inquire diligently what the past taught, and follow their guidance.

Now there is a principle in Human Nature which makes us revere *Antiquity* as such, and cling to ancient opinions and usages merely because they are ancient. And even this principle has its value, as giving more consistency to our opinions, and steadfastness to our conduct, and consequently even this ought not to be eradicated from our nature, were such eradication possible. But yet this mere abhorrence of innovation is scarcely better than a blind instinct, and may array itself in opposition to Truth, as well as to error; may resist improvements, as well as withstand corruptions; may assist in keeping the worshipper of Juggernaut prostrate in the dust, while it strengthens the follower of Jesus in holding on to “the Faith once delivered to the saints.” It is not then on this principle

that the counsel of the Most High to His creatures rests, but on one not so ambiguous, not so liable to mislead us in its application,—on one which is as safe as it is plain. It is on the necessary consistency and harmony of Divine Truth. Since it was universally acknowledged in the time of Jeremiah, that the Patriarchs, and the early Prophets of Israel, spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, the Prophets of later date who agreed with these undoubted messengers of Almighty God, must be received as true, while they who gave inconsistent testimony must be rejected, because God cannot contradict Himself, and what He speaks by one man, He will not deny by another.

Now it is clear, that we of the present day need the salutary guidance of this Divine Counsel, just as much as the Israelites of old. We too live in a day of perplexity. The Prophets and the Priests throughout Christendom contradict one another. The Romanist maintains that his is the only true Catholic Church, and that all beyond its pale are schismatics or heretics, or both. The Greek believes no less firmly that *his* is the only true orthodox Communion, and that whosoever adds the *Filioque* to his creed, and rejects the communion of Infants, has accepted the principle of Rationalism, whether it carry him a shorter or a longer distance. The Anglican contents himself with maintaining that his is the *purest branch* of the Catholic Church. The Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Baptist, the Quaker, the Socinian, each claims to teach exact Christian Truth, which others, as things seem to him, either mutilate or alloy. Since then the trumpet gives so uncertain a sound, who in the Christian Host shall know how to prepare for the battle? How shall a sincere Christian, who seeks to know the will of God that he may do it, ascertain that Holy will, amid the strife of tongues and rage of controversy? To such an one God speaks now, as of old in Jerusalem, saying, “Stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old Paths.”

And this counsel meets our case even better than that of the men of Judah; for their book of Revelation was confessedly incomplete. They rightly expected a greater Prophet than had ever yet visited them; new messages from God more weighty, more august, than they or their fathers had received. When, then, a Prophet propounded to them a doctrine, the only way in which they could apply to it the test of Antiquity was to

ask, was it *consistent* and *harmonious* with what they had already received? It might be different, and yet true. It could not be inconsistent, and yet true. But with us, the test of Antiquity is more exclusive. We must reject any doctrine which is either inconsistent with, or different from, that which has come to us once for all. Because, except on the supposition of Development—a supposition to which I shall hereafter allude,—our Revelation is full. The Church has no Truth revealed to it, which was not revealed in the Apostolic age. No Divine Utterance has reached it, since the aged exile at Patmos closed the volume of Inspiration, and by the authority of God announced, that if any man should add to the words of the prophecy he had been uttering, God would add to him the plagues written in that book. Our Revelation then is, and long has been, entire, absolute, complete. What is true in Religion this day was just as true seventeen centuries ago. It is, of course, peculiarly incumbent on us to ask for the old ways. In Christianity none can be the right way, but the old way. And it is to this test that our Church submits her doctrines, her government, and the framework of her worship. In the preface to the Ordinal she refers us to Holy Scripture and ancient Authors. In the preface to the Prayer Book she tells us, that “she is far from intending to depart from the Church of England, to which she acknowledges that she is indebted under God for her first foundation and a long continuance of nursing care and protection,—to depart, I say, in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship, or further than *local* circumstances require. Now the Church of England, by the Canon of 1571 concerning Preachers, requires them not to teach any thing to be religiously held and believed by the people but what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old or New Testament, and collected out of that very doctrine by the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops. To the same effect speak the great Authorities in the Church, Jewell, Hooker, Jackson, Bromhall, Hammond, Bull, and the like.

But some may say, it ill becomes the Anglican Church, or our own, which is derived from her, to hold this language, since that Anglican Church dates her very origin only from the middle of the 16th century, and owes the dew of her birth, the very breath of her life, to a wicked King, a slavish people, and a rebellious clergy. This is one of the most frequent reproaches

of the Romanist in his denunciations of that Church which he most abhors, because it most effectually obstructs his progress. And this too is the language of the Latitudinarian, who, like Gallio, cares for none of these things, and only regards the political, superficial aspect of religious interests. He speaks of the Church of England as founded by Cranmer and Ridley and Latimer. The Romanist speaks of it rather as the creation of the hateful Henry 8th.

Is this a just view of the origin of the Church of England, from which our own has sprung? If it be, I admit that we, at least, have no right to say to others, "stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old Paths," until we ourselves have turned from the paths in which we have been walking.

Now one thing is very certain: that if the Anglican Church be a creature of the 16th century, her apologists and champions are very unwise, for their favorite appeal, after Scripture, is to Antiquity. They seek then to be tried by a method of proof which must condemn them. Yet as a body they certainly are not deficient in acuteness or in learning. Hooker was neither stupid nor ignorant; on the contrary, his intellect shines forth to the eyes of mankind as one of their guiding lights in their onward and upward progress. Yet in the third Book of his Polity he quotes with approbation from Ireneus, saying that "the Church, though scattered through the whole world, hath from the Apostles and their Disciples received belief. Which Faith, the Church, spread far and wide, preserveth as if one house did contain them; these things it equally embraceth, as though it had one soul, one heart, and no more. It publisheth, teacheth, and delivereth these things with uniform consent, as if God had given it but one tongue. He which among the guides of the Church is best able to speak, uttereth no more than this, and less than this the most simple doth not utter." Such is Hooker's view of the unchanging nature of the true Faith. If then he conceived his to be new, how plainly he condemned himself.

Bishop Jewell, one of the most eminent Theologians that England ever bred, said in his famous Challenge Sermon, that if the adversaries of the Church were able to bring any sufficient sentence out of any old Catholic Doctor or Father, or out of any old General Council, or out of the Holy Scriptures, or any example of the Primitive Church, in their behalf and against

the principles of the Church, in a number of particulars which he names, that then he would give over and subscribe to them. Again, Bishop Bull, whose Defence of the Nicene Creed is held by the Universal Church as a possession forever, and who has evinced therein such immense learning and such discriminating accuracy, avers that whatever Theological doctrines are sanctioned by the consent of Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops, he embraces with all reverence. It is to Antiquity, in short, as the most authoritative expounder of Scripture, that the trusted and honored advocates of the Church of England ever gladly appeal. And at the same time, it is observable that no other body of Christians seems fond of that appeal to Antiquity. The Presbyterians and the Methodists seem to think that from the days of St. Paul to those of Luther and Calvin, the Christian Church was hardly better than a desert without fruit or flower; that from Dan to Beersheba all was barrenness. Their standard of orthodoxy is the naked text of Scripture, theoretically as understood by themselves, practically as understood by their leaders and favorite commentators. For there is a class of persons with whom Thomas Scott is as authoritative as Thomas Aquinas is with others.

The Romanists did, for some time after the Reformation, contend strenuously that the voice of Antiquity was on their side. But the labor bestowed on them has not been in vain. They have been taught better, and now their favorite Theory is that of Development, that is, that the doctrines of the Church not only are not the same now as formerly, but that they ought not to be, that they are meant to enlarge and improve from Age to Age. In opposition to these, the Anglican Church claims to hold and teach that very Christian Faith which was held and taught by the Church of Christ in the first and purest ages. Now a Church with advocates so able and so well-learned, which thus seeks to be tried by Antiquity, must have good grounds for believing that Antiquity is not opposed to her.

But to go more minutely into the inquiry, let us ask, in what does the continuity of the Church consist, what makes an existing Church to be identical with that which Christ established? Certainly its Identity does not consist in maintaining unchanged its various rites and ceremonies. These are but its vestments, and to alter them no more impairs the identity of the Church, than to change one's clothes affects the identity

of the person who wears those clothes. Indeed it is obvious that as times and circumstances change, rites, ceremonies, usages, *must* also change. That mode of worship which was appropriate when Christians met in upper chambers and in catacombs, must have been discontinued when their assemblies were gathered together in the stately Basilica of Saint Sophia at Constantinople, or under the lofty dome of St. Peter in the elder Metropolis. Indeed, uniformity in such things never belonged to the Church. At Jerusalem, after Pentecost, believers had all things common, but it is clear from St. Paul's Epistles that even in his day, there were distinctions of rich and poor in the Church, and consequently separate property. Sometimes he practised immersion, as with Timothy, at other times, resisted it, as with Titus. His maxim as to rites and usages was, let there be liberty, but only let all things be done decently and in order. And so has it been universally held, and no Church, no communion of Christians, pretends that its rites and usages are, point by point, exactly the same with those of the Apostolic Age. By what characteristics then is the identity of the Church to be ascertained? As the Church is a Society, Divinely instituted, for teaching and transmitting religious Truth, and for the rightful worship of the most High, these things would seem to constitute its Identity: its preservation of its original authority, its maintenance of the same essential doctrine, its observance of the same essential worship. To begin then with Doctrine. All of the teachings of Christianity are true and profitable, but of some of them, it is essential to salvation that they be received, of others it is not. Faith in the proposition that Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, was sent by the Father to be the Saviour of the world, is essential to salvation. He that believeth not this will be damned. But faith in the proposition that Mary Magdalene is the same with Mary of Bethany is not essential to salvation.

Now one office of the Church of Christ is to collect and embody those doctrines of the Gospel, which are essential to salvation, that she may effectually teach her children what they must believe in order to be saved. This she has done from the earliest age, and incorporated those essential doctrines in her creeds. Of these, the Apostles' is the more brief, the Nicene the more full expression of the same Faith. The Athanasian Creed is, as Luther expressed it, rather a Bulwark of the

Apostles' Creed, than itself a Creed. If, however, any prefer to regard it in the latter light, it is a more minute and detailed statement of what is contained in the Apostles', as the Nicene also is.

Now these Creeds, early existing in the Church, propounding the Faith ever held by the Church, and used regularly in her worship, were for many centuries all that were required as the essential Faith of a Christian man. At the Reformation the Church of England retained these old Creeds, adding nothing, diminishing nothing. Surely then she has not changed the essential Faith. In her Faith she is not a new Church.

Our own Church is in the same position, for she holds the same doctrine with that of England. On the other hand, the Church of Rome, after the Reformation, did add the Creed of Pope Pius the Fourth, containing twelve new Articles, to the Nicene Creed, and declare this amalgam to be the true Catholic Faith, without which no one can be saved; and within the last five years she has added still another under the same penalty. Which then of these bodies can be most justly charged with changing the Faith? But it may be said that these various doctrines, thus stamped with authority, such as Image-Worship, Invocation of Saints, Communion in one kind, and Transubstantiation, and the like, though not incorporated into the Creeds, were yet generally held in the Church before the Reformation, and that their being discarded by the Church of England at that time, did of itself make her doctrine new. To this there are two sufficient answers. 1st, that as these opinions were not incorporated into the Creeds, the Church thereby declared her judgment that they were, at the best, not essential. 2dly and principally, that these notions were themselves new, and that when discarded, the Church only re-asserted her primitive Faith. As Bishop Bull strongly but justly observes, nothing but impudence itself dare affirm, that the Holy Scriptures teach, or the Primitive Church practised Image-Worship, Invocation of Saints, half communion, or Prayers in a tongue not understood by the People. I consider this question however in effect settled by the position the Church of Rome has lately taken on the subject of Development. Dr. Newman, in his essay on that subject, struck a chord which has vibrated throughout the whole Papal Dominion. He teaches that there are Christian doctrines not reveal-

ed in one age, which are revealed in another, e. g. the Worship of the Virgin. He traces this to the Arian controversy in the 4th century. The Arians acknowledged Christ to be begotten before all worlds, and exalted above all creatures, but yet insisted that He was Himself still but a creature. The Church held that no honor paid to Christ, no office, dignity, authority, ascribed to Him, reached that which was due to Him, until He was acknowledged to be very God. What was the consequence? This, of course, we all know, that the Arians were declared Heretics. But there was another of great import, and of singular nature, that Dr. Newman has himself the merit of having discovered. Then, says he, "there was a wonder in Heaven, a Throne was seen far above all created powers, mediatorial, intercessory, a Title archetypal, a Crown bright as the morning star, a Glory issuing from the Eternal Throne, robes pure as the Heavens, and a Sceptre over all. And who," he asks, "was the Predestined Heir of that Majesty?" And his answer is, that "the Church decreed it to be the Virgin Mary." You may ask what is the meaning of this rhapsody? The meaning is, that because certain Heretics imagined a Creature with many of the attributes of the Creator, and the Church disclaimed this position for Her Lord, that it was indispensable some one should fill it, and it was assigned to the Virgin Mary. It would seem to follow from this, that whenever a heretic imagines an anomaly, it is to be converted into a reality by the plastic power of the Church. But without stopping to analyze this idea, one thing is certain, that it acknowledges, and is an attempt to account for, *the fact* that the Divine, or quasi-Divine honors now paid to the Virgin Mary in the Church of Rome, were not known among Christians till the 4th century, after the contest with Arianism. Then, of necessity, it follows that the doctrine of the present Church of Rome is not the doctrine of the Primitive Church, on that vital subject. But it may be said that these are the views of one man. The reply is, that they have been endorsed by the Church to which he now belongs. That man published the Book containing these views when he gave in his adhesion to the Church of Rome, as a sufficient explanation and justification of his course, and he submitted his work to the judgment of that Church. She knows how to stigmatize Books, that do not appeal to her for judgment, and much more, of course, those which do, when she

condemns their doctrine; and she is not slow or sparing in the exercise of this function. But no word of official disapprobation has gone forth against this work. On the contrary, the Author, immediately after its publication, went to Rome, as it were, in triumphal procession. He immediately received offices of high honor and trust, and is now at the head of that University, which the Church of Rome has established for the very purpose of moulding the minds of all who speak the English tongue. That the Church of Rome then does not now hold Primitive Doctrine, is in effect confessed, and has lately been most flagrantly exhibited in act, a dogma having been enjoined as matter of Faith, without belief in which there is no salvation, which was not only unknown to Scripture and Antiquity, but denounced by St. Bernard in the 12th century, and treated as an open question until our own day. On the other hand, that the Anglican Church and our own do hold the Primitive Doctrine, is manifest from their preserving the Creeds intact, and ever appealing to Scripture and Antiquity.

As regards Doctrine then, there was no new Church established in England at the time of the Reformation. How then has it been with regard to Government? Now it is clear that nothing is *essential* to the government of the Church of Christ, which she can subsist without, for the essence of a thing is that which causes it to be, and that which is essential is consequently indispensable to its very existence.

An ecclesiastical society may subsist without something which is essential to the Church of Christ, because it may not be the Church of Christ, but the Church of Christ cannot subsist, a single moment, without any thing which is essential to it. If then our Church possesses a government which is the same with that under which the Church of Christ once subsisted, it has all that is essential in Church Government. Now what is the Government of our Church? It is an Hierarchy of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, claiming to derive their authority from the Apostles by unbroken succession. The nature of this succession is that each Bishop has his office conferred on him by others holding that office. One Bishop is sufficient to confer the office on another, but from abundant caution the Council of Nice required that three Bishops should unite in the consecration of another, so as to exclude, as far as might be, any possibility of the chain being broken. Now no one doubts

that this method of consecration has been preserved in our Church since the American Episcopate was established. It is equally certain that the English Bishops since the second year of Queen Elizabeth's reign have been consecrated in like manner. Romanists will of course agree with us in affirming what no instructed person can truthfully deny, that this succession had been preserved from the time of the Apostles to the Reformation. Was it then lost at the Reformation? They who say so, must rely either on the position that no consecration of a Bishop is valid without the assent of the Pope, which is a mere assumption, or rather much worse, for it is an assumption opposite to Scripture, contradicted by the principles and practice of the Primitive Church, contradicted by the view which Rome herself takes of the Greek and other Oriental Churches, and contradicted by her own conduct when there have been Popes and Anti-Popes. Either, then, it is on this unsupported and even disowned Theory, that the denial of the transmission of the Episcopal office at the Reformation must rest, or it must be on the Nags-Head Story—that is, that Arch-Bishop Parker chose to be consecrated at a Tavern, rather than any Church or Chapel in England, all being at his command, and that he chose to have a Bible laid on his head as the act of consecration, instead of using the service established by Edward the 6th, or any other that was decorous and authoritative. This foolish story, originating forty years after the occurrence, has been abundantly disproved by Roman Catholic as well as Protestant writers, and is treated with contempt even by Lingard, the Roman Catholic historian of England, who cannot be accused of any tenderness to her Reformed Church.

The Anglican Church, then, and our own, have a government of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, enjoying their office by succession from the Apostles. Is any thing more *necessary* to the government of the Church? It cannot be, because for many years the whole Church of Christ was thus governed. The power of the Pope was not developed for several centuries after the death of the Apostles. When St. Paul resisted St. Peter to the face, when St. Polycarp resisted Victor, when St. Hyppolytus denounced the successive Popes Zephyrinus and Callistus as heretics, when St. Cyprian resisted Stephen, when St. Hilary anathematized Pope Liberius, it must be acknowledged that the power of the Popes *was not developed*. And so thinks Dr.

Newman, and so must they think who make him the highest instructor of youth. Since, then, the primitive Church continued to subsist under the government of Bishops, without a Pope, it is certain that the authority of the Pope is not indispensable to the Church. And since the Church was at that time most pure and most vigorous, it would seem to follow that the authority of the Pope is not merely not essential, but even injurious. And furthermore, the Church subsisted in England itself, before, as well as since, the Reformation, without any subjection to the Pope. For it is matter of history that the British Church, before the mission of Augustine, was not Papal, and that when he demanded of the British Bishops a recognition of the Pope's authority, they explicitly refused it. Such is the testimony of venerable Bede, himself warmly attached to the Roman See. The supremacy of the Pope, then, as it was no essential part of Church government in Christendom generally, so especially was it not in England, but was every where an innovation, and *there* an innovation which provoked protest and resistance. To discard this innovation, then, was certainly not to destroy the continuity of the Church.

And now as to Worship. I am not concerned either to maintain or to deny that a Liturgy is essential to the preservation of the identity of the Church. It is indeed a purely speculative question; for in point of fact, every Church that has retained the Apostolic Succession, has also, by a sort of inviolable instinct, retained the use of a Liturgy. And our own Liturgy, as well as the English, retains the leading features of the Primitive Formularies. This has been abundantly shown by Palmer in his *Origines Liturgicæ*. Changes were indeed made at the time of the Reformation, and others of less importance have been since made; but the Liturgy of the Church of Rome has also repeatedly been altered, and even now the Gallican is about being superseded in France, where it has so long embodied the devotions of the people.

This, then, is the state of the question: The Church of England, and by consequence our own, is accused of being a new, a merely human society, originating in the 16th century. What are the facts? That the Church at that era, with the concurrence of the entire Laity, (for, during twelve years, the whole body of the Laity of England accepted the reformed Church,) with the concurrence of all of nine thousand four hundred Cler-

gymen except one hundred and eighty-nine, continuing to live under a government essentially the same with that of their forefathers, holding doctrines essentially the same, using a Liturgy essentially the same, did yet reform some grievous corruptions, put an end to some dangerous innovations, and return, as far as might be, to that very model of doctrine, discipline, and worship, which had been enjoined by the Apostles, and followed by the first Christians. If this destroys the Church, then the Church is designed to be a cage of unclean birds; then any opposition to evil in the Church, any reformation of corruptions, any resolute and effectual purpose to obey God rather than man, any such Christianlike and faithful conduct, tends to destroy the Church, and establish a schismatical institution in its stead. But we have not so learned Christ as to believe this. If this were so, then the best of the Popes were themselves enemies of the Church, and the worst were its true friends. Gregory the Seventh and Clement the Fourteenth must be stigmatized as innovators and schismatics, for they too sought to be reformers, while it is such wretches as John the Twelfth and Alexander the Sixth who are to be regarded as the true friends of the Church, for they abhorred reform, protected all old abuses, and introduced new. In short, if reformation be schism, then good is evil, and evil good. Reformation is not destruction: reformation is preservation. And therefore it is that we rejoice in it.

The Old Church is the True Church. A new Church is as repugnant to my convictions as to those of any person whatsoever. A human Church, a Church which derives its origin from any man, however wise and good,—for such a Church to be the Pillar and ground of *God's* Truth, to give authority to Ministers who are *God's* Ambassadors, to assure validity to sacraments whereby faith is confirmed, and grace increased, and *God's* promises sealed,—this seems to be a contradiction in thought. The incongruity needs no proof; it is manifest in the very statement.

Such a Church I do for my part utterly reject and disclaim. If I were compelled to choose between a new Church and a new Gospel, I should feel that in effect no choice had been allowed me, for that a new Church is, to some extent, a new Gospel, for the Church is a part of the Gospel.

Were our Church a new Church, there would not be such a multitude of wise and good men coming out of other religious

bodies to seek in her bosom stability of Faith and assurance of Hope. Were she proved to be a new Church, she would at once lose the affection and the reverence of many, who are now among her most devoted children. No; we venerate her authority because it has been transmitted from Christ and his Apostles; we love her doctrines because they have purified the lives of saints of old, and nerved the hearts of martyrs; because “no man having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new, for he saith the old is better.”

It is because the Church to which we belong is the old Church, preaching the old Gospel, because she abhors innovation, and knows nothing of Developments, and cries to all her children to walk in the old paths, wherein is the good way,—it is for these reasons that we love that Church, and confide in her mission, and believe that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against her, but that she will arise and shine, and that Gentiles will come to her Light, and Kings to the brightness of her shining.

Of this Church, you, beloved brethren, are about to receive another grant of Authority, and another mark of confidence. No longer her mere Ministers, she is about to make you her Priests, thereby enabling you to perform the highest and most sacred offices of religion, and thereby clothing your words with a new sanction.

Need I exhort you to be faithful to this high trust? To be worthy of the confidence of the Church, you must diligently teach her principles, and faithfully illustrate them by your own example. You too must call upon men to walk in the old paths, and thus to find rest for their souls.

That old path is laid down in Scripture, for there is no religious teaching so old, or so true, as that of Scripture, so that the Church, reverencing the voice of Her Lord, says whatsoever is not read *in Scripture*, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man to be believed as an Article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. And in the mighty work of interpreting Scripture, again the old is the best. Cherish candor and openness of mind, and welcome Truth from whatever quarter it comes, but in tracing out for yourselves and your people the way of salvation, expect no new lights, but follow that which flows to us, down the long tract of the Ages through which Christianity has already passed in its

splendid and beneficent progress, that light which has heretofore guided the steps of devout men, and comforted the hearts of the weary and heavy-laden, the Light of Gospel Truth, of which the Church is the appointed Pillar and Ground, Holy Scripture as the Rule of Faith, Ancient Authors as the best Interpreters of that Rule. This it is, to which you are remitted for your guidance, by the Church whose higher orders you this day take on yourselves.

But those old paths lead not only to sound Doctrine, but to the acceptable service of God. The old way of salvation, as pointed out by the Apostles and as travelled by the early Christians, was not a wide, smooth, primrose path, but straight and narrow, over the mountains of difficulty, and across the valley of humiliation. A man who sets himself to follow Christ, must prepare for trouble. A man who sets himself earnestly to bring others to the obedience of Christ, must prepare for a double measure of trouble. The great English moralist said with his accustomed wisdom, that he did not envy that man to whom the Ministry was an easy life. He to whom it has been an easy life, will find it a heavy burden in Death, and a woful stewardship in the Day of Judgment.

A faithful Minister must, until the Millennium comes, be sometimes considered singular, narrow-minded, impracticable; and that not by the world only, but by even his flock. He must often oppose popular opinion and common practice. Never should he do this for opposition's sake, but on the contrary seek to please men for their good to edification; but if he be faithful to his Master, he must be sometimes opposed to that world which crucified his Master, and would again were He again on earth. If, then, a Minister find his path arduous and painful, let him not on this account alone be discouraged. If he bring trouble on himself by sin or folly, he has more cause than any other man to be distressed; but if sincerely and carefully seeking to do his duty, he yet find himself thwarted, opposed and traduced, perhaps if he examine the thorny path in which he is traveling, he will find it the old path of obedience to God rather than to man, in which he will recognize the footprints of Wilson and of Ken, of Hooker and of Ridley, of Chrysostom and of Ambrose, yea of the Great Captain of our Salvation Himself. May these old paths be your paths, my beloved brethren, both as to life and doctrine, and walking therein may you find rest for your souls. And now, &c.

THE
SACREDNESS OF HUMAN LIFE,

AND

American Indifference to its Destruction:

AN ADDRESS

BEFORE THE LITERARY SOCIETIES OF WAKE FOREST COLLEGE,

JUNE 10TH, 1857,

(Being the day before the Annual Commencement.)

BY

REV. WILLIAM HOOPER, L.L. D.



RALEIGH:

HOLDEN & WILSON, "STANDARD" OFFICE.

1857.

ADDRESS.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN OF THE
EUZELIAN AND PHILOMATHESIAN SOCIETIES:

HAVING arrived at and past the grand climacteric of human life, I might reasonably hold myself excused from being called upon for any of those annual addresses which it is now the fashion for all literary institutions to provide as an allurement and as a reward to the audiences who may honor their commencements with their presence. When, therefore, I received your strongly urged request to be your speaker on this occasion, my immediate resolution was to decline the honor. "No," I said, "these Collegiate Rostra are arenas for the young and aspiring, who want an opportunity of recommending themselves to the public, by an intellectual effort; or, at least, they are fields for those who are still in the vigor of life—still partners and leaders in the busy scenes of the world, and to whom excitement and a crowd are yet dearer than repose and seclusion, the chosen lot of the aged." But upon second thought, that age which, in one view, seemed a plea for exemption, in another view appeared an argument for compliance. What head so fit to give counsel as one hoary with the experience of more than three score years! What heart so apt to feel a deep interest in the young as one that has been warmed with the domestic sensibilities of two generations, and has listened to the tender tones of children and children's children! And again: What younger man can there be, standing on such a vantage ground for observation—for foretelling the future from the past—for descrying at a distance the shadows that foreshow coming events—and for giving affectionate monitions how to avert the evil, and secure the good!

It was such considerations as these that overruled my first

inclination to be excused, and made me willing to avail myself of this, perhaps my last public opportunity of bearing my testimony, before my country, on some important subject, touching the public happiness, and appropriate to the ears of our educated youth. These annual addresses meet a public want. There is wanting, in our country, some periodical of such pre-eminent reputation as to be the chosen depository of the thoughts of our wisest and best men, and the channel of communication between them. If a man of vigorous and liberal thought wishes to reach the thought of kindred spirits through the periodical press, he can find no journal of general circulation. All are circumscribed to narrow limits, either by the want of commanding talent or by being the organs of parties, political or religious. But the enlightened and fargathered audiences of our collegiate commencements furnish perhaps the best substitute for such a wide-spread periodical; and present favorable opportunities for laying before the public our views on some subject of present and living interest. This then may be taken as my last public secular address—would that it might be my *cycnea vox*—like the swan's dying song—its best, as it is its last.

And the theme that I have chosen is one which has long brooded with painful weight upon my mind, as involving the moral standing of our beloved country, and threatening to bring down heaven's withering curse upon the BUENA VISTA of this Elysian land. My theme is: THE SACREDNESS OF HUMAN LIFE, AND AMERICAN INDIFFERENCE TO ITS DESTRUCTION.

When I consider the preciousness of that ethereal spark which burns within the frail casement of the human frame—when I reflect upon its endless destinies—its keen consciousness of its own infinite susceptibilities of happiness or misery—its horror of being suddenly struck from its throne within, and sent out, a terrified stranger, into an unknown world,

“Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying ;”

when I consider under what careful and jealous custody its Maker has placed this inestimable, yet most perishable treasure, denouncing upon the man that touches it a bloody death

in this world and exclusion from heaven in the next,* I am ready to wonder at its perilous exposure. I am amazed that it is not defended with bars of steel and walls of adamant, but that its slight fortress can be pierced and the tenant destroyed "with a bare bodkin." I see the Deity's tender care of his creatures from the least to the greatest. I see him taking care for the unfledged birdling, that it shall always be born in the Spring, and never feel any thing more rude than the vernal airs that wave the branch of the tree where it is nestling. I see him "tempering the wind to the shorn lamb." I see that exquisite tenderness still more beautifully exhibited in the implantation of maternal love in all animated nature, from the timid hen that will fight the powerful bird of prey, as soon as it becomes a mother, to the woman that will waste away her life over her sick infant's cradle. I hear the voice of God's tenderness in that mother's wail, when that babe breathes its last: "Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted because they were not." I recognize God's jealous protection of man's life in that severe inquisition for blood in the Mosaic law, which commands every city in whose vicinity a man was found slain by an unknown hand, to expurgate itself by solemn sacrifice; and by proclamation of herald to disclaim any agency in the homicide: "And all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the sacrifice that shall be beheaded—and they shall answer and say: our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people, and lay not this innocent blood to their charge. So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you."†

Compare with this jealous, severe guardianship of human life, the recklessness with which blood is shed and left una-

* I conjure every young man who carries a *Revolver*, and who may cast his eye on these pages, to *revolve* these solemn declarations of God's word: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." 1 JOHN, 3 15. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these:—hatred, variance, wrath, strife, envyings, murders, and such like—of which I tell you that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." GALATIANS 5, 19 21.

† DEUT. 21, 6 9.

vengeed on the face of our land ; and well may a patriot fear, lest, ere long, the cup of trembling shall be put to our lips, and we shall be made to drink blood, because we have loved blood.

“ Oh Britain !” exclaims Dr. Young, “ oh Britain, infamous for suicide !”

“ Oh America !” I respond, “ infamous for inventions of murderous weapons, infamous for bloody rencounters, for blood-defending lawyers—for blood-acquitting juries, but above all, for blood-stained steamboats and railroads.” The prosecution of our subject will lead us to speak of these several methods of destroying man’s life, in which our country has risen to a “ bad eminence ” among the nations.

I.—THE BLOODSHED OF THE PUBLIC HIGHWAYS.

Europe, hardened as she is by perpetual wars, and crimsoned with battle-fields, looks with wonder and horror upon our lavish slaughter of our citizens in time of peace. Such is the atrocious waste of human life among us, that it would really seem as if our legislatures, our courts of justice, our steamboats, our railroads, and our citizens generally, had embraced the Malthusian system of population : “ That the increase of the species is greatly too rapid for the production of food—and hence wars, pestilences, and other modes of thinning out the redundant population, are absolutely necessary for the good of the world ; and thus, what we commonly call calamities, are no more calamities than a farmer’s thinning out his corn, or a vine-dresser’s cutting away the hurtful luxuriance of his vineyard.” And if Malthus’s theory be a sound one, it must be acknowledged that the steamboats and railroads have done good service to their country in this respect ; and as long as they go on at their present commendable speed, we need not go to war to rid ourselves of *loafers* and to save our *loaves*. I seriously recommend to the legislature to amend the law relating to the qualifications of jurors, in capital trials, and to make the presidents and other functionaries of railroad companies ineligible to sit on juries, as well as butchers, because of their familiarity with blood. And as

the butcher's trade is a very useful one, I recommend that no railroad company shall be liable to prosecution for injuries to life; I will not say to "life or limb," because they should be punished unless they do their work effectually, and put the wounded out of their misery. It would be no favor to the community to turn out from the shattered cars a mass of helpless cripples for the public to feed and nurse. I recommend, further, to the grand jury, that the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad Company be presented for not having rid their country of more than five or six lives during the whole time of their existence; and thereby having been guilty of raising the price of provisions to the present alarming rate. Be it understood, however, that said company shall not be subject to prosecution for failing in their butcher's work, during those years when the cars had the rheumatism, it being unreasonable to expect of them much effective service in their then disabled condition.

But if it be a matter of national policy, in these times of short crops, to increase the quantity of food and diminish the number of consumers, there is a plan which we may adopt, as a last resort, in case the railroads should fall off in the due amount of killed. It is a plan once recommended by the celebrated Dean Swift, on occasion of a great scarcity in Ireland. He proposed that all the fat, well-looking children should be prepared for the table. This, he said, would have the double advantage of increasing the supply of food, and diminishing the demand. Now, should the crops of the present year fall short, as they did during the last, and great scarcity ensue, the Governor of the State has only to make secret arrangements with Barnum to get up a "baby show" in Raleigh, advertising premiums for the fattest and rosiest children, (none so old as to be tough.) At the same time His Excellency should send out private instructions to all the starving paupers of the land, to be ready at the metropolis, on the appointed day; and when the market-house is full of babies, to give the signal for a general onslaught, when the famished wretches should "hie on" and carry off as many prizes as they could manage. But this is a matter we should

be a little secret about, lest the mothers should get hold of it. But I rather think the railroads will save us from the necessity of so extreme a measure as this. I recollect, a year or two since, some hundreds of children got on board the cars at Philadelphia, to spend a holiday, and have a merry-making in the country. When they got the poor little things safely in the trap, down came another car upon them, like a great dead-fall, and crushed the little sparrows all in a mass! Some hopped and fluttered a while, but soon died. Now, what better provider of fresh meat can we have than a railroad which does its business in this style! In this fast age people *must* travel thirty or forty miles per hour, and while this is the case, there is little danger of a failure of supply from these winged shambles.

This is fine work to go on in a christian land, and in the most civilized country in the world! And what was done to the Herods who were guilty of this massacre of the innocents? Why, nothing; and the souls of these slaughtered innocents are crying to God from under the altar, saying: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth."

Does any one take the part of the railroad companies and say: These accidents are inevitable—that they *necessarily result* from the use of so great power—that you can't use great power to achieve great public benefits without great risks! I answer: That great risks are *not* necessary, as is proved by railroad statistics in Europe, where deaths from this cause are in a proportion vastly below our average. The only necessity for the excessive risk among us is, the unprincipled and uncontrollable *love of gain*, overleaping all concern for murderous consequences: and this is not a *refutation*, but a *confession* of the charge which I am now making upon the American people of a *reckless indifference to the destruction of human life*.

After reading the details of one of these murderous railroad collisions, in which a hundred human beings, some of them the life and flower of the land, are hurried, without a moment's warning, into eternity, and many more left so shock-

ingly wounded that the poor remains of life are not worth having, I am ready to wonder that the public indignation does not rise to such a pitch as to execute immediate "lynch law" upon all the engineers and superintendents. We might almost imagine that some frantic father, hearing that wife and children were all destroyed by the carelessness or murderous rashness of some conductor or engineer, should take up the words of Macduff in the play, when the heavy tidings reached his ears :

"Your castle is surprised, your wife and babes
Savagely slaughtered; to relate the *manner*,
Would—add the death of *you*."

Macduff. "My wife killed too?
My children too? All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam,
At one fell swoop?
Oh I could play the woman with mine eyes!
————— but gentle heaven
Cut short all intermission—front to front,
Bring this man and myself—
Within my sword's length set him; if he 'scape,
Then heaven forgive him too."

If the public feeling and the public conscience were properly awake on this subject, railroads would be subjected by law to such enormous forfeitures that they would take good heed against such horrible perpetration of wholesale murder. But "Young America" cares little for "dash, smash, crash," provided he can "go ahead."

It is a common saying that "corporations have no souls;" but it is a mistake, and the reason of the mistake has been that people looked for the soul in the wrong place, supposing they must find it in the head or the breast; whereas, the seat of a corporation's soul is the *pocket*, and I am glad to find that the friends of slaughtered travellers have at last found out the locality by frequent stabs into these souls; are making them bleed as freely as *they* have made to bleed the hearts and veins of our once happy families. As a further safeguard, I recommend that the law oblige every engineer and captain of the road to be chained by one foot to the floor

of the locomotive. Then, in case of a collision, the authors of the massacre would be the foremost victims. In these remarks I have paid my respects chiefly to the railroads; for which I hope the steamboats will forgive me, inasmuch as they have been so far surpassed, of late, by the railroads, in thinning our surplus population, that we have almost forgotten their former meritorious services in that line.

II.—THE BLOOD OF SUDDEN RENCONTERS.

The immense fortunes which the patentees of improved fire-arms are acquiring, indicate the horrid greediness of men to be provided with implements of social murder, and prove the direful retrogradation of the American republic towards barbarism. Time was when desperadoes could carry but one, or, at most, two deaths in their pockets. Now they can carry twelve! Hitherto Guttenburg, and Franklin, and Jenner, and Watt, and Arkwright, and Davy, and Fulton, and Morse, have occupied the temple of inventive genius and discovery, and received the homage of mankind for their beneficent inventions and discoveries; but now Colt, and Sharpe, and Bowie, and Paixhan, and Minie, have hurled those worthies from their pedestals and set themselves up as Molochs to be worshipped! Gibbon, the great historian, has remarked that the earth will always be overrun with the pernicious race of conquerors as long as men pay more honor to the destroyers than to the benefactors of the species. So we may say, that the wit of man will always be more prolific of evil inventions than of good, while the engines of destruction are more in demand than the implements of useful industry.

The wearing of arms in time of peace is an indication that a nation is in a semi-barbarous state; and one of the first steps towards civilization is the banishing of deadly weapons from the persons of the citizens. Sudden passion ought never to have at hand the means of instant vengeance; and as no man can feel himself safe in the social circle, if he suspects his neighbor to be armed, the practice in *some* will lead to the practice in *all*, and society will, every now and

then, be shocked by some bloody affray occurring in our streets, or even on the domestic hearth. I hope, young gentlemen, you will lay it down as one of the principles of your future life, never to follow the example of these rowdies of our frontiers. Act on the principle that the man who is conscious of virtue and uprightness, wants no shield, no weapon but his integrity:

“Integer vitæ, scelerisque purus,
Non eget Mauris jaculis neque arcu.”

Expose not yourselves to the awful calamity and the immedicable grief of shedding a fellow-creature's blood, in sudden anger or alarm. Better fall a victim to another's violence, than yourself bring death upon a brother-man. He who carries arms, has deliberately resolved to kill his fellow-man whenever sudden passion or fear may impel him; and must he not, then, be written down in God's book, as a murderer in purpose and intention, whether he ever carries his purpose into execution or not? And indeed it will be well for him, if his violent dealings do not come down upon his own head, even in the present world. The man who is known to carry arms is in greater danger than others of being assassinated. “They that take the sword shall perish by the sword.” Like begets like. Dreading his desperate character, others will be apt to be beforehand with him, and shoot him before he is aware, from apprehension of being shot themselves.

But alas! what avails my feeble voice to dissuade the youth of our country from violent personal rencounters, when the representatives of the nation, in the very halls destined for calm and high debate on the momentous interests of this great country, set examples of ruffian assault, and when half the nation applaud the deed! In pursuing my present line of thought, I can hardly omit, without being faithless to my cause, that instance of personal violence which has shaken the feelings of this nation from the centre to the circumference. I know I am treading on dangerous ground, because I venture upon a collision with sectional and party spirit.

But that noble sentiment of Churchill, which long ago won my admiration, I trust will ever animate me :

“ Rather stand up, assured with conscious pride,
Alone, than err with millions on your side.”

The assault upon a Senator of the United States while sitting at his desk in the Senate House, defenceless and unsuspecting, and the pouring down upon his naked head a shower of violent blows with a cane, until he was felled down, in a senseless condition, was an act so outrageous, that it ought to find no apologist—no extenuator. It has increased, to an incalculable degree, the strength and fury of abolitionism. It has injured the character of the southern States, first, as being perpetrated by one of their representatives, and then as tempting all the south to vindicate and even to applaud an act, which has tarnished the glory of republican government to the utmost boundaries of civilization. And what is the plea of defense set up by the assailant and his backers? It is: “That the party attacked used, in debate, violent and contemptuous language respecting the State of which the assailant was the representative.” I do not pretend to vindicate the language which provoked the assault. Even moderate *northern* men saw and acknowledged it to be shameful and unjustifiable. But I hold that such a method of restraining or chastising the license of the tongue, is utterly at war with the conditions and rights of social life, and the principles of representative government. The maxim: “*De mortuis nil nisi bonum,*” would have restrained me from this animadversion on the conduct of one who has since been called to a more solemn bar than that of this world, had not concern for the living demanded it of me; and did I not think it my duty, as a minister of the Prince of Peace, to bear my unflinching testimony against an act of a *public* man, which, through the influence of accidental, political considerations, is defended and applauded by half the Union, with a few individual exceptions. I fear we have not seen the end of this transaction. As once, of old, crystal streams flowed at the stroke of the staff of Moses, and followed the Israelites

through all their journey; so crimson streams may burst forth at the stroke of this unhallowed staff, which shall follow our American tribes during all the train of their political history. I, for one, protest against the South's assuming the responsibility for this act. No independent, no unfettered, fearless discussion of national interests could be carried on, if club law, the *argumentum baculinum*, were the order of the day. In a deliberative assembly, the attacks of the tongue should be met by the same weapon. The philippics of Cicero were avenged by cutting off his head, and by boring with a bodkin the tongue that pronounced them. And, although the smitten Senator of Massachusetts is no Cicero, but only one who "has the venom of his shaft without the vigor of his bow," yet, I hope we shall not sanction Mark Anthony and his wife's method of punishing a sharp tongue, with still sharper steel. To do this, is to confess an inability to repel insolent charges with intellectual weapons; and I hope the south is not ready to admit such inability.

III.—THE BLOOD OF THE DUEL.

But these sudden, fortuitous, bloody rencounters, in which human life is unscrupulously smitten down, as if it were no more than the life of an ox, are not the only forms of private slaughter which we have to dread, and against which, young gentlemen, I am bound to seize this public opportunity of warning you. These savage fights, the results of sudden passion, armed with deadly weapons, are a feature of *frontier* life, where rude adventurers throng, and where the law is not yet strong enough, nor society sufficiently sober and mild to make the wearing of arms criminal and disreputable. But there still remains, in undiminished credit, the old-fashioned, time-honored duel, associated with great and gallant names, such as those of Hamilton and Decatur, in this country, not to mention the nobility and gentry of all Europe, who bow to the "code of honor" as their binding law.

I am not going to enter upon the hackneyed arguments against this practice. I am not going to move your pity and

inflame your indignation by painting a wife, a mother, a sister, wild with grief over the freshly slain corpse of a husband, a son, or a brother. I know the duellist can parry all your arguments, and drown all your lamentations, by this short defence: "I *must* live in society. I can't live in society unless I defend my honor. If I am insulted, however reluctant I may be to take or lose life, I *must* fight, or I lose caste. *That* I cannot bear. Better die honored than live dishonored. My reputation is dearer to me than my life. I have a right, you will admit, to defend my *life*, much more have I a right to defend my *honor*." Now, what have you to reply to such a plea as this? Nothing that will have weight with the duelling world. You may bring powerful considerations, founded on the awful danger of being sent, in a moment, into the presence of God with the crime of intended, perhaps actual, murder on the soul. You may expose most graphically the absurdity, the cruelty, the political and social mischiefs of such a practice; but these do not prevail with the minds of the young and ardent, whose ruling passion is pride of character, and a keen sensibility to their position in society. This is a feeling not to be despised. If it is an infirmity, it is one which Milton has almost justified and canonized by calling it: "The last infirmity of noble minds." It is not right that high-minded young men should be put to the excruciating alternative of forfeiting their place in society, or running the dreadful risk of killing or being killed in a duel. They ought not to be reduced to this cruel choice. Rather, this high regard to reputation—this sensitive concern for a position in society, ought to throw its weight and force *against* the duel, and not in its favor. As soon as you bring society into such a state of sentiment and principle, that the duel will be the *ruin* rather than the *preservation* of character, then, and not till then, will you put an end to the practice. And never will society stamp this stigma upon duelling, until it shall imbibe, in full measure, that estimate of the awful sanctity of human life, which it is my object, this day, to impress upon your minds. Yes, I repeat it, *the awful sanctity of human life*, and the dire atrocity of striking at

that sacred thing, without a sad necessity of doing so. Long ago I learned from Mr. Locke that "uneasiness determines the will." Whenever, in any question of conduct, a man feels greater uneasiness in letting an action alone than in committing it, he will infallibly commit it. Whenever he feels greater uneasiness at the thought of committing it than of abstaining from it, he will abstain from it. If, then, you want to govern men, you must enlist their strongest feelings on your side, and make the *violation* of your will more painful to them, (that is, occasion them more uneasiness,) than *obedience* to your will. With duellists, nothing makes them so uneasy, nothing is so intolerable to them, as scorn—as losing their place among the first classes of society. It follows, that if duelling can be made, not a passport to favor, but a sure prelude to disgrace, and a ground of exclusion from the society of the great, the elegant, the rich, the fashionable, the beautiful and the refined, you take away the chief motive to it, and cut it up by the roots.

I stand here, then, as the apologist of the duellist, against the upbraidings of society. I thus speak in his behalf: "You declaim," he may say to society, "in the most eloquent and the most piteous terms against the folly, the stupidity, the inhumanity of duelling. All this folly, stupidity and inhumanity I am guilty of in order to please you. I love my own life, of course; I abhor to shed the blood of my fellow-man. But if he insults me the opinions of society require me to call him to the field. I yield reluctantly to their imperious demand. I consent to risk my own life and the imbruing of my hands in the blood of my fellow man rather than forfeit your favor. I live upon your smiles. Death and homicide are, either of them, easier to bear than your intolerable frowns, and still more intolerable sneers. Your esteem drives me to the field, charges the deadly tube, sends the mortal bullet! How then can you consistently blame and upbraid the man who values your high opinion so much as to risk the life of himself, and that even of his dearest friend, to preserve your smile?"

Thus might the duellist defend himself against the re-

proaches of society, and fasten the guilt of duelling upon society itself. Suppose now a revolution in the opinions and manners of society. Suppose the man that has fought a duel cuts himself off from all offices of honor or profit. Suppose society treat him as they treat a thief, a cheating gambler, a vulgar, beastly drunkard. Suppose the ladies to shun him. When he calls they refuse to see him in the parlor. If he appears in the ball-room the ladies refuse to dance with him; nay, they even retire from the room, and complain of the managers as admitting improper company into polite assemblies. Suppose no lady would think of marrying him; if she did, society would forsake her. Suppose no father would allow him to visit his family. And all this because he had shown, by fighting a duel, that he could be guilty of the deep crime of attacking the citadel of human life. Who believes that duelling would long survive such treatment as this?

But you will say: How can we treat thus, a young man, gallant in spirit, generous, kind, warm-hearted, honest, honorable, amiable, elegant in manners, cultivated in intellect? I admit it is hard, but this is the only way in which you can get rid of duelling. And you will not have to do it long. The first generation must be sacrificed, but the second generation, and all succeeding generations, will be saved. Duelling, which lives upon the smiles, will die under the slights and sneers of society. Society, then, has the control of the practice. It will flourish at her bidding, it will wither at her rebuke. And I fear there is no hope of its extinction until the popular sentiment shall sympathise with the law of God, which commands the magistrate to shed the blood of the wilful homicide. The arm of the magistrate must take the lead in directing the opinions and giving force to the sentiments of the community. If they treat the duellist as the enemy of social life, the magistrate must pursue and arrest him as a culprit. He must advertise him, and offer a reward for his apprehension. He must apply to the governor of the adjacent State, whose soil has been violated, to deliver up the homicide. How preposterous to pass laws making duelling felony, and then to allow all the parties and accessories

to walk at large, stained with blood as they may be, perfectly fearless and untouched, and society to treat the hero as a favorite! But this will always be the case where the sentiments of society do not accord with the severity of the statute. The magistrates will connive at the breach of the law, while the public consider the law as "more honored in the breach than in the observance." Let society insist on the execution of the law. Let governors and other executive officers be forced, by the voice of society, to arrest, prosecute and punish the duellist and his accessories; and society will not long have to mourn the fall of fine young men in single combat. Until this be done, I see not how the public themselves and their magistrates can be exculpated from the charge of encouraging the duel, or clear their skirts of the guilt of all its tragical consequences. God writes down, in his book, the community that countenances the blood-shedding duellist, as accessories to his crime.

IV.—THE BLOOD OF THE BAR AND THE JURY-BOX.

But how can we expect that the mass of the citizens will be very scrupulous of shedding human blood, when the tribunals of justice, the very sanctuary and palladium of our safety, betray us into the hands of murderers! Yes, I utter it deliberately and solemnly: the very machinery which our ancestors set up to shield our lives, does, by abuse and perversion, entangle us within its crushing wheels, and prove our destruction.

It must make the heart of every feeling man bleed, and it must make the face of every patriot burn with shame for his country, to think that there is no protection in the law—that when the lawless passions which run riot in our land, have smitten down, in their blood, our dearest and our best—the beloved father, brother, or son,—the mourning relations cry in vain to their country for relief. The country is deaf to their wailings. She delivers up the innocent and the helpless to the dagger and the pistol, and throws the shield of her defence about the ruffian and the assassin. Her tribunals of

justice, so called, are a mockery. Little offenders may be convicted and punished, but the powerful and the wealthy escape; thus making good the saying of one of the ancients, that "laws are like cobwebs, they catch the flies, but the wasps and hornets break through." These complaints and reproaches are amply sustained by the present practice of the courts. We prepare, at great expense, and with great formality, all the insignia of justice; the court-house, the prison, the pillory, the judge, the prosecuting officer, the sheriff, the jury. The judges are sent over all the face of the land to punish the violators of the law, and to protect the lives and property of the citizens. But if, by this means, *property* is generally secured to its right owners, it must be confessed and deplored that what is so much more valuable and sacred than property, even the life of man is left unprotected, I had almost said is betrayed and derided by the machinery and forms of the law itself. Our present system of criminal trials was invented and framed under a monarchy as a defence of the subject against the power and tyranny of the crown—of the vassal, against the oppression of the baron. It was thought that no barriers were too high, no precautions too jealous, to shield the weak from the violence of the strong. Hence the boasted trial of the accused by a jury of his peers, an *apostolic twelve*—chosen by himself, excluding every one who was likely to condemn him unjustly. Hence the right of being advised and defended by the ablest counsel. Hence the right of that counsel to cross-examine, puzzle and brow-beat witnesses; and hence the glory of the bar when the client was snatched from the talons of arbitrary power. Every such acquittal was hailed with pride, as a proof of the noble independence and courage of an English jury, in defying the terrors of a court thirsting for blood. Every such acquittal clothed the brow of the victorious advocate with the double glory of eloquence and of heroic devotion to the cause of the innocent. But this boasted feature of the English law, the trial by jury, worthy as it may have been of its praises, in the circumstances where it originated, is by no means so worthy of *our* love and adoption, perverted as it is, in this

republican land. *Here* the tables are turned. *Here* the State is the weak party and the criminal is the strong party. In some very aggravated cases of murder, where the victim has powerful friends, or was a favorite of the community, there may be a public sentiment running strongly for the condemnation of the prisoner. But in most cases, where the killer is rich, and of an influential family, his conviction is next to an impossibility. The State prosecutor is almost always inferior in legal ability and age and reputation to the counsel for the defendant. The very first act of the criminal, when he has imbued his hands in blood, is to secure the services of the greatest lawyers in the country, which, if he has money, he can always do. No lawyer can or will refuse the task, however bad. The worse the cause, the finer chance it presents to the barristers to fleece the villain well, for obliging them to pollute their hands with his filthy cause, and for saving his worthless neck from the halter. The more desperate the case, and the more odious the offender, the greater is the harvest of renown and wealth to the successful pleader. He may expect, after such a triumph, to be sent for from neighboring States, and that every rich criminal who hears of him from a distance, as the villain's refuge in time of need, will summon him to the rescue and say: "Ask what thou wilt, and I will give it thee, even to the half of my kingdom." Under such temptations of ambition and cupidity no wonder that human genius, art and passion should be strained to the utmost intensity of effort, and that the splendor of ingenuity and eloquence, stricken forth on such occasions, should completely dazzle the mind, and conceal the hideous enormity of thus moving earth and hell to defeat justice, to let innocent blood cry to heaven for vengeance, and cry in vain, to snatch an outlaw from the ignominious death that he richly deserves, and turn him loose again upon society, proclaiming to all the desperadoes from the Atlantic to the Pacific, that they may shoot and stab their fellow-citizens with impunity. Every great criminal lawyer ought to have this sign over his office door:

"Life insurance office for murderers and other felons."

Such is the power given to the advocate by packing the jury, worrying the witnesses almost to death, artfully wresting and perverting the merits of the case, not to mention the secret, magical sway of a lawyer of commanding character over the feelings of a jury, that it need not surprise us when acquittals take place in cases of such atrocity that all society receives the verdict with astonishment and abhorrence. Let it not be said that these are the mere chimeras of a theorist, who has no practical knowledge of the matter in question. I am confirmed in my belief by the declaration of distinguished barristers themselves, one of whom said to me, that our criminal trials were a mere farce; that a man indicted for murder, who had numerous friends, could easily contrive to have his friends upon the jury: and another told me, that he had heard jurymen, in their visits to town shortly after a trial, remind the advocate that they had given him a verdict lately, and hinting very broadly that "one good turn deserved another!!!" The country has not forgotten, and I trust will never forget, the atrocious crime and the almost equally atrocious defense and acquittal of Matt. Ward, of Kentucky, the murderer of Prof. Butler. A man universally esteemed and beloved—in the fulfilment of his duty as an educator of youth, administers a moderate and reasonable chastisement to a little boy, one of his pupils. For this the elder brother arms himself with a revolver, goes to meet his unprepared and unsuspecting victim, and shoots him down as a butcher would an ox! The public is at first petrified with horror; and as soon as it recovers from the stupor of its faculties, the universal burst of virtuous indignation cries, that if justice ever claimed a victim, it must claim one now; that if God's outraged law, enforcing the death of a wilful homicide, was ever binding on the conscience of a jury or of a community, this, this was the flagrant case that demanded its execution. But a lawyer of the first ability and influence was soon enlisted in the defence of the murderer; and soon the ears of an insulted country heard the astounding intelligence that Ward was acquitted; thus proving to all the rich ruffians in the country that there was no danger in bloodshed

—and proclaiming to the widow and the fatherless that there was no protection in the laws of their country, and to the respectable and conscientious fraternity of teachers that to touch a boy with a rod deserved death, and that the only safety to their lives, in this nation, was in allowing all their pupils to do as they pleased! Unhappy widow and thine orphan babe! Ye thought that that beloved husband and sire was safe in his legitimate and honorable vocation, under the ample shield of his country's protection. But it was not enough to have the light of your eyes taken from you in a moment, by the hand of violence. The further sting must be inflicted of impeaching his fair name, in order to extenuate the man-slayer's criminality. The blameless must be blackened, that the bloody may be bleached! and the poor mute victim, weltering in his blood, must have it sounded "in the dull, cold ear of death:" Thou wast thyself the aggressor and deservedst thy fate. A Ward could not have been made out worthy of life but by making out a Butler worthy of death, and to a Crittenden belongs the honor of shifting the bloody raiment of Ward upon the shoulders of Butler by so masterly a feat of *legerdemain* as to deceive the optics of a jury; an honor in which I trust he will never be equalled; an honor and an office which the great poet has assigned to one of the chiefs of Pandemonium:

"He seemed
For dignity composed and high exploit;
But all was false and hollow, tho' his tongue
Dropp'd manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels ———."

This, I am sorry to say, is not a solitary case. It may be the most flagrant that has disgraced our country, but there are many others which are near akin to it, and some which have occurred in this our very State. These are the cases that give birth to "lynch law" and "vigilance committees." Man has within him an instinct that authorises him to defend himself while he is living in a state of nature. This right he parts with, when he becomes a member of civilized society,

for the reason and on the condition that the State will protect him better than he can protect himself. The covenant between him and the State is virtually this. He says to her: "Now, O my country, I throw away my arms and my armour. I leave my bosom bare to my enemies. I walk the streets in conscious security, relying on thy might and thy majesty and thy plighted faith, to shield me from violence. By the faithful enforcement of the law, I trust that evil-doers will be impressed with terror, and not dare to assail my life." Now, if that country proves false to this high and sacred contract—if she, by her legal machinery, defeats justice—surrenders the harmless and the defenseless a prey to the lawless and violent, what wonder if the citizen should throw himself back upon his natural rights and say: "I find the law is impotent and worthless. Such is the delay of the courts, so many tricks can counsel make use of, to postpone and evade trials, and so many tricks to extricate murderers when brought to the bar, that I dare not trust my life to such a feeble protector. Henceforth I take care of myself. Come revolver! Come bowie knife! Be ye, henceforth, my gods! Ye shall be to me in place of courts, and judge and jury! Ye will speedily rid me of mine enemies, and will not give them time to take my life and then employ ingenious counsel to save their necks. Besides, in killing, I am only a little faster than my adversary. Had I pulled my trigger a second later the State would have equally lost a citizen, perhaps a better one, and *my* family would have been the mourners instead of *his*. And now, O my country, I demand impunity from thy courts. The inefficacy of those courts drove me to my crime, let the same inefficacy sanction my escape." This language would come with peculiar force and justice from a Californian, in vindication of his "vigilance committee." In new countries, where society is just in its *forming* state, the public arm is weak and the private arm is strong. If you want a people to be quiet and law-abiding give them safety by the courts, and vigilance committees will vanish like the shades of night before the morning sun. But such a reformation in the courts, such a protection of human life by our tribunals

of justice, I despair of, as long as the present system of legal counsel prevails. The theory is fair and promising, as a security that the accused should have justice done to him, and not be illegally condemned. But in actual practice it works most perniciously. I seriously doubt whether the ends of justice would not be better and more speedily attained in criminal cases, if the lawyers, except the prosecutor, were dispensed with altogether, and the protection of the accused confided to the judge and the jury. The wrangling of the bar is the cause of the most vexatious delay, and the most disgusting exhibition of sophistry and dissimulation. It is a scandal that the legal profession should educate men in such a manner as to make it their highest glory to do that upon which God has pronounced his special curse: "Wo unto them that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him." This every lawyer is bound to do by the necessities of his profession. He must *identify* himself with his client, and all the art, and industry and zeal which the client would exert, if he pleaded his own cause, his counsel must display, if they would be faithful or successful advocates. The great criminal lawyer, when he has undertaken a desperate cause, knows that every thing with him depends on the issue. All the powers of the man, all the arts and subterfuges of the profession, are brought into requisition. He resolves like Juno in the poet:

"If Jove and heaven my just desires deny,
Hell shall the power of heaven and Jove supply."
"Flectere si nequeo Superos, Acheronta movebo!"

It is perfectly wonderful that any lawyer can be an honest and honorable man. It is perfectly wonderful that any integrity, candor, or sincerity can survive the moral trials of such an employment as the lawyers are daily engaged in. If we were to form conjectures *a priori*, and guess, previously to experience, what kind of characters such a profession would form, we should predict with confidence that every

lawyer must have his principles ruined by the inevitable tendencies of his professional work; and that if he were saved from moral ruin, it must be "as by fire." The bar can be very ingenious in defending their calling; but after all that can be said, this is the *common-sense* view of the case, and every man in the world, not familiarised with the spectacle, and every angel in heaven would confidently assert that the practice of the law, as now carried on, is an experiment how much ill-usage the conscience can bear without expiring under the torture. The common defense set up is: that every man is entitled to justice, and that all that the lawyer undertakes, is to see that his client has justice done him! This looks very plausible, but every practitioner at the bar knows that if he were to attempt no more than this, he would get but few fees, and that if he were to say to his clients: *I'll see that you have justice done you*, most of them would put their hands back into their pockets and say: "You are not the man for me, sir, I want a lawyer who will see that justice is *not* done to me." *

* Let any lawyer put it to himself whether he would like to see the principles on which he practices law brought home to his own family and carried out by his children and servants. Let us suppose a case: His two sons, John and James, have been strictly charged not to take the fruit from a certain choice tree in the garden. The fruit tree is robbed, and John, who knows that James is the plunderer, is questioned by his father about it: "John did you take that fruit?" "No sir." "Well, did James do it?" "Why father there are many circumstances to lead to the belief that James is innocent. In the first place, James' character pleads in his behalf. He loves you and would not willingly offend you. In the next place, the tree must have been robbed at night, and James is too great a coward to go out to that distance in the dark. In the third place"—"hush you little rascal, you know James stole the apples, and if you don't tell the truth about it I'll flog you both." *John*: Then, father, I confess he did, and I ate some of them; but as I am going to be a lawyer I thought I might try what I could make of a bad cause, as you did when you defended Jack Sly, who stole Mr. Kennedy's corn, and got him clear. Father didn't I hear you whisper to Jack Sly after you came out of the court house: "Now, you rogue, I've got you off this time. If you ever do the like again I'll let them give you thirty-nine!"

Another case: The lawyer lives on a farm and finds one of his hogs missing. It has been stolen by his servant, Ephraim, who has sold it to a thievish neighbor for \$5; and, as he knows his master suspects him, he begs his young master to try to get "old master" off the scent. Accordingly John, keeping in mind his legal apprenticeship, and anxious to redeem his late failure, ambitious withal of the glory of beating his father with his own weapons, undertakes the cause; Ephraim promising him, at the same time, half the price of the hog if he gets him off clear. The lawyer

You will recollect, young gentlemen, that your books of rhetoric caution you when you are training yourselves up to be public speakers, against choosing the wrong side of questions in your debates, lest it should confound your notions of right and wrong, and accustom you to the hazardous experiment of enlisting your feelings on the side of error, and of inventing sophistries in defense of falsehood. You will recollect, also, that in the study of moral philosophy, you are taught to cultivate sensibility of conscience; not to trifle with truth and sincerity; not to simulate conviction when you do not feel it; not to rack your ingenuity to hide the truth, not to put on the air of sincere zeal in defence of a man whom you know to be a villain. To act thus, you are taught from the professor's cathedra, would be to sap the vitals of moral principle. These moral and prudential maxims, intended to save you from poisoning your moral constitution, the lawyer is obliged habitually to transgress, and to yield himself up a passive mouth-piece to every villain in the land who offers him a fee! I say again, that it is a miracle—an anomaly in moral science, that human integrity can survive such an ordeal.

Are there any lawyers among my audience, and are they saying to themselves, "this is a hard saying, who can bear it?" Are they indignantly charging me with a calumny on their fraternity, as if they were all corrupt men? I answer:

examines Jeff, another servant. Jeff testifies that on a certain night he heard a hog squealing down in the hollow near Ephraim's house, and the next day he saw the offal and the feet of a hog in a harrel in Ephraim's cabin. John assists his father in the investigation and cross-examines Jeff. "What time o'night was it, Jeff, when you heard the hog squealing?" "About midnight, sir." "Was the moon shining, Jeff?" "No sir—she didn't rise that night till way along towards two in the morning, I reckon." "That'll do." Exit Jeff. John now takes down the almanac and shows his father that the moon, on the night of the theft, rose before midnight—in-sinuates that Jeff is a tricky fellow, has a dislike to Ephraim, and in all probability stole the hog himself and laid the offal in Ephraim's house when he was absent. Ephraim is acquitted, and Jeff is punished for the theft.

John's father is much pleased with his son's presages of legal ability—thinks no old lawyer could have ferreted out the truth more successfully—exhorts John to make haste and get ready for the bar, and promises him that the first cause he gains, and the first fee he pockets, he will make him a present of \$500. John then informs him that he was Ephraim's counsel, had gained the cause and is entitled to the \$500. The report is that the lawyer soon after retired from practice.

I mean not so. I judge no man. But I confess that I look at the bar with astonishment. I see them, as a body, highly honorable and public spirited, and I give them credit for coming out of the fire, I will not say with unscathed virtue, but with any virtue at all. They are salamanders that can live in the fire. The habitual and indiscriminate defense of right and wrong, from day to day, would seem enough to disturb and subvert, in any man's mind, the foundations of truth, and damage his intellectual soundness. But there is a deeper injury than the clouding of his mental perceptions. To act this theatrical part habitually—to be constrained to make daily use of all the doublings of the fox, to escape the hounds that are in pursuit of him, would seem enough to obliterate, in any man's mind, the line of demarcation between good and evil, and cause him to glory in the faculty of "making the worse appear the better reason." I, therefore, look upon a moral, honest lawyer as I would look upon some noble man-of-war, "which long has braved the battle and the breeze," now come into port, after a long cruise, mutilated, it may be, and damaged in some of its timbers, and perhaps a little leaky in its bottom, but still above water, and still capable of repair. But if I did not personally know this veteran of the forum, I should regard him with some apprehension, on account of the infected atmosphere which he had been breathing. I should meet him as I would meet a physician just from the wards of a hospital where the small pox was prevailing. "What! are you afraid of me, sir," says he, seeing me a little shy of his approach. "Do you see any pimples on my face?" "No sir," I reply, "I am in hopes you have been vaccinated, and have not taken the infection." I honor the lawyers as I would have honored the three fire-proof young Hebrews in the court of Babylon, who came out, undevoured, from the seven-fold heated furnace, protected by some heaven-sent guardian. Thus I would make my peace with the lawyers. If any indignant son of Themis should frowningly enquire: "Do you mean me, sir, by your reflections on the bar?" I reply, "No sir." King Mithri-

dates, we are told,* in order to guard against being poisoned, was in the habit of swallowing a little of various sorts of poison every day, and thus made himself poison-proof. So I trust, sir, you have swallowed some antidote, some moral *Mithridate* which has kept alive your principles and your honor in spite of the dangerous doses you have so often taken. †

My audience may wonder at my audacity in making these free remarks upon a profession which holds the first position in the country—and they may suppose I am relying for my protection from the wrath of the lawyers upon my age, and my sacred office, together. But, in truth, I am trusting to the good nature and *sang froid* of the lawyers themselves, who feel themselves so strong in public favor that they will regard *my* puny attack as the firing of a pistol against Gibraltar, and will make me no harsher reply than was once made by the French ambassador at Washington to a lady who poured out a torrent of invective against Napoleon: “Madame, my master, the Emperor, would be very much troubled if he knew your ladyship had so bad an opinion of him.”

The lawyers are so much accustomed to hard knocks from one another, that they laugh at these passes-at-arms. It is nothing but an intellectual digladiation with which they have amused themselves all their lives. A contest which would set two clergymen or two physicians at loggerheads will only serve the members of the bar as a joke to laugh at over the dinner table. But anxious as I am to think that the practice of the bar is not productive of those disastrous moral influences which my theory supposes necessary and inevitable, and ready as I am to acquit of corruption those who appear honorable, still, keeping my theme in view, *the sacredness of human life*, I never can forgive the active agency of the

* I am confirmed in the correctness of these opinions on the tendency of the legal profession, by the suffrage of the late Dr. Thomas Arnold, one of the greatest minds and best hearts that England has produced in many an age. See his life and correspondence by Stanly.

† *Profecto poto Mithridates saepe veneno*

Torica ne possent saeva nocere sibi.—*Martial* 5: 77.

lawyers in rescuing arraigned manslaughterers from the just vengeance of the law and thus emboldening others to follow their example. I shall hold *them* responsible for many of the ferocious, deadly rencounters by which our land is signalized and disgraced. Who can deny that crime is encouraged by the hope of escape and impunity? Who can help believing that among the throngs who witness our capital trials, and the ingenuity, and zeal, and success of our great barristers in snatching blood-red murderers from the halter, who can help believing, I say, that many a spectator of such scenes imbibes a secret hope of a similar escape, should *he* ever be involved in like jeopardy? It is highly probable that in that critical, delicate moment, when his mind is on the balance whether he shall pull the trigger of his pistol or not, his will is determined on the side of killing by the confidence that he can fee a lawyer to pack or deceive a jury which shall acquit him. Rejoice not, then, oh victorious advocate, in thy might, when thou hearest thy praises blown upon the four winds. Thy brightest laurels, like those of the warrior, are often stained with blood, and bedewed with the tears of the widow and the orphan! I hold thee responsible for rendering the JURY, once the impregnable fortress of our lives, now a mere quicksand, which invites the tread of the trusting victim only to swallow him up!

Oh YE IMPANNELED 12!—sworn, like your apostolic models, to save men's lives and not to destroy them—boasted monument of the wisdom of our Saxon ancestors! “How is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed!” Your verdicts of “not guilty!” have turned loose the wolves upon the sheep. The angry ghosts of assassinated men will visit your midnight pillow and whisper in your secret ear: “you sent me to my bloody grave.” The wailings of widows and orphans charge you with cutting off their husbands and their fathers by your indifference to human life. Remember that impunity to the guilty is perfidy and cruelty to the public. For every guilty life you spare, you immolate a hecatomb of more precious victims.

Let none condemn these censures on the old, traditionary,

time-honored forms of justice, because they have been the laws under which our ancestors lived and flourished for many generations. Many institutions are good in the main, but have serious admixtures of evil, of which they ought to be purged. Many forms have a conservative tendency in an early state of society, which are cumbrous and retarding to progress in a more advanced age. The nutshell which protects the kernel during the frosty season would kill it unless it should burst and drop off at the arrival of Spring. And thus, as Dr. Arnold most beautifully remarks: "What is the wisdom of Winter, is the folly of Spring." Old legal customs may have had their use in their day, but something better ought to be substituted in an enlightened age.

The Edinburgh Review, whose high position among the periodicals that have controlled human thought for half a century, I need not tell to this well-informed audience, bears the following testimony to the working of the English law in England. What modification and improvement of the machinery have been introduced into this young country I am no competent judge of, but it does not take a very keen observer to notice, that this country groans under many of the evils complained of in the following passage of that famous Delphic oracle of criticism:

"In spite of the panegyrics which have so often been pronounced upon our laws and upon the administration of them, no person who is practically acquainted with our English system of jurisprudence, and who will speak of it ingenuously, can deny that it is attended with great and numerous mischiefs, which are every day becoming more intolerable. The difficulties, the expenses, the tedious length of litigations, the uncertainty of their issue, and, in many cases, the lamentable delay of their decisions, are but too well known to the great number, to whom all this is a source of profit, and to the far greater number, on whom it brings down calamity and ruin."

In this young country we *need* not, and *ought* not, to submit to old abuses. There ought to be reformers of the *law* as well as of the *government*; and if the bar and the bench do not provide for loosing these Gordian knots in which they have long entangled the interests of mankind, let them look to it, lest the outraged patience of the people cut these Gor-

dian knots, after Alexander's fashion, with the sword! or, California-like, take the administration of justice into their own hands. It is not for me to point out the remedy.

"Non nostrum est tantas componere lites."

But I cannot believe that, after so much experience, there are not wise statesmen and jurists enough in the land to alleviate the present abuses, if not entirely to remove them.

V.—CHRISTIANITY THE SOVEREIGN STYPTIC—THE APPOINTED
STAUNCHER OF HUMAN VEINS.

It is the glory of christianity that it has stamped an infinite value upon every human being, and thus throws its heavenly ægis around every human life. It has taught us that the true nobility of man consists, not in the artificial and accidental distinctions of the world, but in his possession of a SOUL, capable of illimitable progress in virtue and in bliss—that the highest perfection of that soul is, not intellectual, but moral excellence—that this perfection is as attainable by the pauper Lazarus as by Solomon on his gorgeous throne; by the illiterate peasant as by Newton, the high-priest of nature and interpreter of the laws of the universe.

It was one of the darkest features of the first French revolution that its leading spirits denied the existence and the nobility of this immortal soul of man, and adopted the creed that man was a mere forked animal, of little more importance than a radish or a nine-pin; and, therefore, that the rapid feeding of the hungry guillotine with human necks was as innocent an operation as feeding the threshing machine with sheaves of wheat; and the demolition of a hundred thousand men in the field of battle, was as trifling a matter as the knocking over of so many pieces in a game of nine-pins. No wonder when they annihilated God, they ignored the noblest part of man, his handiwork. It is to this cheapening of human life, by disowning his immortality, that Robert Hall, in his celebrated "sermon on modern infidelity," has traced the unexampled horrors of that revolution; and by

which he has accounted for the production of such prodigies of ferocity as Robespierre and his fellow-demons. And to the same cause may we attribute it, that Napoleon Bonaparte, the legitimate progeny of that atheistic generation, played with armies as with nine-pins, and made Europe, Asia, and Africa one great nine-pin alley; showing in his battles a prodigality of the carnage of his own men which made his victories almost as terrible as defeats. To use the language of the same celebrated Review already quoted, his was "a frantic contest against the principles of human nature, and the laws of the physical world; against the rage of the winter, and the liberty of the sea."*

The moment that the world catches the spirit and the genius of christianity, the remorseless indifference to human bloodshed will cease. That religion bears not on its banner the eagle, the cock, the lion, or the dragon, signals of havock and depredation to the world, but displays on its waving white folds the figures of the dove and the lamb, and promises, as the sign of its full advent, the change of all the weapons of war into implements of husbandry, and the disappearance from off the earth of all that can harm or destroy the creatures of God. That is the time when DEATH, the last enemy, shall be destroyed; and the death of DEATH shall be the final extinction of evil, and the commencement of LOVE's eternal reign.

* Edinburgh Review.

NOTE.

The writer of the Address is confirmed in his remarks on the mob-creating tendency of the present practices of the bar, by the following extract from a Baltimore paper, (the "American") of Sept. 11th, 1857:

MOB LAW IN MEMPHIS.—Some short time since one Isaac L. Bolton, a citizen of Memphis, Tenn., shot and killed a man named McMillan at that place, under circumstances which marked the transaction as a cowardly murder, and excited public indignation to the highest pitch. Bolton, relying upon his friends and position, fully expected to escape scot free, but was arrested and put in prison. After having been

detained in jail long enough as was supposed for the public excitement to subside, a movement was made to procure his release on bail. A habeas corpus was consequently sued out before Judge Fitzgerald, who directed the writ should be heard, not at Memphis, where the prisoner was confined, but at a place called Carrolton, some distance from that city. It is charged that the object of this arrangement was to secure Bolton's escape while on the road, if the application to release him on bail should not succeed. The citizens of Memphis became highly indignant and exasperated at the announcement of the proceedings on the habeas corpus. They insisted that Bolton should not be removed; the papers were filled with inflammatory appeals, and it was very plainly intimated that if the sheriff attempted to remove Bolton from Memphis, it would lead to the prisoner's summary punishment at the hands of a mob. Public meetings were held, in which the most influential citizens of the place participated, and the most determined feeling prevailed. A committee was formed, who endeavored to prevail upon the sheriff not to obey the order to remove Bolton, which the sheriff refused to promise, when the Mayor took possession of the key of the jail, and a guard of three hundred men was formed, to prevent, by force, the execution of the writ. The judge was solicited to modify his order, but he would not. In fact, the time limited for the execution of the writ having expired, he has issued a new one; and thus the matter stands. The laws are practically nullified, the city of Memphis is in an actual state of revolution, and by a popular movement that invaluable personal writ and guardian of personal rights and liberty, the habeas corpus, is forcibly suspended, and this too, which makes it the more remarkable and the more to be regretted, in the interest and on the side of true right and justice.

The state of things at Memphis calls for earnest consideration, not so much for the isolated violation of the law by a whole community, with its chief Executive at their head as there presented, but because we see in the transaction which we have related as transpiring in that city, the full fruits and ultimate development of a state of things relating to the administration of criminal law, which is almost universal throughout the Union. There is a growing feeling of distrust and insecurity as to the administration of the law, which is likely, and indeed will inevitably lead to just such scenes elsewhere, and perhaps with the most deplorable and disgraceful consequences. It is difficult, under the circumstances, to censure the proceedings of the citizens of Memphis, with the Mayor at their head, as unlawful and revolutionary as they are, and subversive though they be of the first elements of order and good government; for they saw, through the legal machinery of the courts, arrangements made to set at large, and free from all punishment for his crime, a man whom they regarded as undoubtedly guilty of the wanton assassination of one of their fellow citizens, and the instinct of self-protection, no less than the demands of natural justice, impelled them imperatively to the course they have pursued. That citizens of other localities have had the same provocations to irregular action is but too well known. The laxity of the administration of criminal law, the difficulties in the way of convicting criminals, and the legal facilities afforded for their escape from the consequences of their misconduct, are becoming an incurable evil. There must be a change; there must be a reformation. Crime, when the guilty are caught, must be surely, swiftly and severely punished. At least legal forms and proceedings must cease to be a shield and a protection for the criminal. If such a change do not take place, the people will take the law into their own hands, and it may be with fearful, bloody and disastrous results.

A DISCOURSE,

SHOWING THAT

“The Earth Abideth Forever,”

AND THAT

HELL AND HEAVEN

ARE IN THIS WORLD:

BY ELDER J. P. NEVILL.

Delivered in the City of Raleigh, June 14th, 1857.



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A DISCOURSE.

“One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth forever.”—Ecc. i: 4.

MY FRIENDS:

This is an old text, the opinion of that wise man, Solomon, King of Israel. We agree with the king, that the earth abideth forever; and, although the term forever in some places in the sacred writings is limited in its duration, nevertheless, in this text it is unlimited. The history of the past proves the correctness of the first part of the text, viz: “One generation passeth away and another cometh.” The old and young of this congregation are proof of the same fact. And the many thousands of years that have passed away before and since the days of Solomon, with the present appearance of the earth, after having stood firmly for so long a time amidst the commotions and revolutions of the past, go to prove the correctness of the second part of our text, viz: that “the earth abideth forever.” The return of new forests and new vegetation, on old fields long forsaken by the agriculturists, considered with the various deposits beneath the earth’s surface, all go to prove that it is likely that “the earth abideth forever,”—that time is not about to end, but will never, no—never end.

Things that are subject to decay and death generally show marks of the same; such we see in the wisest and best of men. Yes, the flowers of generations wither and die, they fall at the touch of time’s scythe. But not so with the sun, moon, or stars—not so with the earth. No! they do not grow dim with years, time does not make impressions of an approaching annihilation on them. No! for they are the strong works of Him who is immortal, eternal and invisible.

Spurious must be that dogma that proposes to pull down and root up all heaven above, and all earth beneath. O! mad and presumptuous man, take heed, do stop and think; lest you be sun-stricken, and swallowed up by the earth! Remember those poor deluded fanatics who spread their tent north of this place some years ago, to behold the end of the world. But, poor ones, they were mistaken, for time swiftly passed them by, perhaps unnoticed. And soon it was said by all, "See the new day, the new Sabbath, the new year;" and see our poor deluded friends yet in this world. O! They thought that Jesus was to come and take them up on high, where they would not have to work for food and raiment; but, poor fellows, they have been left on earth, and I thank my God for it. Remember, too, the false alarm that was made in this State, and in many other places, more than twenty years ago, about the falling of the stars of heaven, and the end of the world. Brethren, have you forgotten that night? But the sun arose and went down, and night appeared again, with all of the stars of heaven, and they met around the midnight arch and not one of them was missing, although thousands of Christians on earth said, fifteen hours before, that they saw them fall to the earth. But, brethren, it was a mistake. Yes, and so will it be with all those that are this day looking out for the end of the world. O! how many have spent life, beginning in youth and terminating in old age, in sermonizing on the destruction of the heavens and the earth. But time, in his flight has smitten them, sealed their lips, cut short their frightful story.

It cannot be that God designs to annihilate all creation—no, no! View the sun, moon and stars of heaven through your telescope, and you will find that they are as bright now as in the beginning; then what proof have we that they will fail? that they will be destroyed? None, I think. Men, have, as I honestly believe, misconstrued the Scriptures on this subject, as will be seen in the ages to come. The day will come when a minister would be looked upon as a maniac, to preach that God would destroy all creation with fire and brimstone. Some bloody-minded speakers grow eloquent when speaking of this humbug, the conflagration of the world.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and said they were good, and this was, in part, no doubt, in reference to their durability. Now, if God should destroy them and make new ones out of them, the new ones would not be better than the old ones when first made; for be it

remembered, that God does not make improvements in his works, he does not improve by repeated efforts. The gospel and all religious efforts have not, nor cannot, make a more perfect being than was Adam, when first created. It cannot be, that the transgression of Adam and Eve will, at some future period, cause God to destroy the heavens and the earth. No! for the earth was not a party in the offence, and, as such, should not be destroyed. The old world was destroyed in the days of the flood, that is, the people were destroyed, and not the earth.

I want you, my friends, to remember this when talking about the end of the world. It is a key that will unlock 2 Peter, iii: 10; and many other difficult passages may be explained by it. The people are frequently addressed in the Scriptures by the appellation, "earth:" "O earth hear the words of the Lord;" "The earth shall remove out of her place." Now, all such Scriptures, as a general thing, refer to the people who hear and remove from place to place. Remember the children of Israel journeying to the better land; hear their song on the other shore; think of Abel's brother when on the lonely road to the land of Nod. Remember Lot's wife removing out of her place. God, in his wisdom, has frequently changed the location of man, by which he has rewarded, as well as punished, as will appear from the history of our race. St. Peter speaks of the passing away of the heavens and the earth, by which he meant, as I suppose, the political and assumed powers, the isms of the religious world. Behold the movement of the Mormons in the beautiful West, whose heaven will sooner or later be destroyed. Yes, perhaps pass away with a great noise. Remember ancient Greece, once the mistress of the world, in civilization, science and arts. But her political heavens have passed away. Remember, too, Jerusalem and ancient Babylon, they have fallen, their heavens have passed away.

But to return home. O what a great political and religious heaven is ours. But I fear that too many from fallen positions are being received into this political heaven of ours. Behold ships from a distant land bringing millions of all grades into this great heaven. O! see that man that was banished from his own native land for violating the law of God and of man, ascending into our political heaven. My brethren and friends, I tell you, of a truth, that this great American heaven is in great danger of hell-fire. Behold Kansas! look north, look south, look all around at State and church, and then tell me, as honest men and women, if

you do not see something that resembles hell. But we leave this subject in the hands of an all-wise God.

Adam was the first man of his order, but we cannot believe that he was the father of all the different races of men; that climate has caused the different complexions among the different nations of the earth. No—God created a first black man as well as a first white man. We read, in this old book called the Bible, (in Gen. 6th chap.) of Giants, who were a different race of beings, and in the process of time the children of Adam intermarried into this family of giants, thus contaminating the races of men; and this was one of the causes of the deluge on the earth.

The first paradise was located on the earth, called by God the garden of Eden, and in which Adam and Eve were happy, but lost their felicity and home, by violating the commandment of God, who cast them out of this happy place, into a hell of thorns and thistles. So we see how hell was found, and paradise lost. God has not transferred either from earth to the celestial world. God in his wisdom made the worlds, and located man on the earth, and fixed the bounds of his habitation, beyond which he cannot go; his celestial boundary line passes through the ærial region, beyond which man has no business to call him away from his home; below this great boundary line are our cares and responsibilities, our sorrows and our pleasures, our heaven and our hell, our rewards and our punishments. Yes, below this line are the histories of nations, the graves of all the dead; the spirits, too, of all mankind live below this line which separates this lower world from the celestial. Let the inhabitants of the starry world possess their own country, undisturbed and unmolested by the citizens of earth. Let us stay in our own country, living or dead, in the body or out of it. O why desire to fly away and be on earth no more? why shut the eye and stop the ear on all the charms and melodies that this world afford? It is, as I believe, the desire of all men to remain in this world, the old would be glad to be young, the sick wish to get well. If we judge men by their actions, we are bound to say, that they are pleased with this lower world. My friends, would you not be glad to know that you are to stay for all eternity in this world? that our heaven is a part of this world, or if you please, is in this world? Well, my friends, I am happy to inform you, that it is the will of God that we should all remain in this world. Was it not the will of God, that man should possess the earth forever, seeing that it is so stated in the

title that God gave him to the earth. David said, "The heavens are the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men." I doubt whether any one can show that man has a lawful title to the upper world to possess it forever. Has God given man a title to the sun, moon and stars? No! And had he done so, according to the teaching of this age, his title would soon be worth nothing, since they say that all creation is soon to be annihilated. But our friends that teach us that we are to go to the high heaven after death, also tell us that we will all again return to the earth. So you see they cannot forget this lower world, they expect to come back. Now, would it not be better to remain all the time on the earth? Now, is it possible, that we are all located, are at home, are all in our own land, and do not know it? Such is the case with the most of men living.

Many of the spirits of the dead are this day in the church on earth. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. See Heb. i: 14. Doubtless many good men and women have done more for their friends and the country since their deaths than they did in life. Do not think that men have quit the field, the rostrum, the bar, the parlor, the world, because they are dead. That great man, Dr. Ben. Franklin, has, in my opinion, made and communicated to the world many important discoveries in the use of electricity since the day of his death, and although dead, yet he lives. The improvements of the earth are, in part, the work of the illustrious dead. They are somewhat attached to the earth, and, in some instances, desire to prosecute their discoveries and inventions commenced in life, and in order to do so, they are permitted to animate the body of some living person, and to use such a one as their agent or workman to do their work; and in such a case the spirit is as happy, perhaps more so, than when in its own body. The world has been made to wonder at the success of many poor young men who were destitute of means, and living without an education in the fashionable world. But unexpectedly they are risen to distinction—they are the great men of the nation. They have risen, and others of means and opportunities have fallen. Now, in many instances of this kind the success of such men has been owing, in part, to spiritual aid, they have only been doing the work of some illustrious spirit, and in this way we find employment and pleasure for the dead!

Better give your son or daughter a good and energetic spirit than dollars and cents. The young man that gets the spirit of

the wealthy energetic dead person is far better off, in some instances, than those that get his property. Thousands of eminent men are preached out of this world by ministers who locate their spirits in the high heavens, thus placing them beyond the possibility of assisting the living, they set them down in the stars of heaven to do nothing; but this will not suit the energetic spirit, it would be misery instead of pleasure. Such, perhaps, would please the indolent, the man without a nerve, just such an one as hid his lord's money, being too lazy to loan it out, to put it to work; just such persons would be willing to go to any place, if they knew that they would have nothing to do. The spirits of all men, as I believe, are in this world, and, my friends, it is my opinion, that when we die our spirits will continue in this world, and that we will be happy or miserable, as is the case with those who have gone before. Our happiness after death depends on the life that we now live. I do not wish to disturb my friends who have long been preparing themselves with wings to fly away to a home in the stars of heaven. Then permit me to say unto you that yours is a great undertaking, something that you will never perform.

Christ and the apostles met with demons, or the spirits of wicked dead persons, on the earth, and not in another world. And the disciples often talked about spirits being on the earth. Now it is impossible for a spirit to be on earth and in heaven at the same time. Spirits or demons anciently afflicted the living in various ways. See Luke xiii: 11.—“And behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could, in no wise, lift up herself.” Now, what caused this affliction? Was it not the spirit of some dead person that afflicted this woman? But we will hear the testimony of Dr. Adam Clarke on this subject. Said he: “God has often permitted demons to act on and in the bodies of men and women, and it is not improbable that the principle part of unaccountable and inexplicable disorders still, come from the same source. In ancient times the spirits of dead persons sometimes destroyed the intellect of living persons, as will appear by an examination of Matt. xvii: 15—“Lord have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic and sore vexed; for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and into the water.” This is another case of the power of spirits to afflict and torment the living; in this case the intellect was impaired by a wicked spirit. Now, if wicked spirits impair the intellect of men, why should not good spirits strenghten the intellect of

men? Wicked spirits have, in some instances, added to the pecuniary interest of the living, as will be seen in the 15th chap. of the Acts of Apostles: "And it came to pass as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her master much gain by soothsaying." This was the spirit of some dead person that was soothsaying through this damsel, who, it is said, brought her master much gain. The damsel of herself could do nothing in this art; but the spirit of this dead person could do as much in the art of soothsaying through this damsel as he could have done in life, and when in his own body. Perhaps this spirit was acquainted with the owners of this damsel, and wished to do them a favor. Or, it may be that this spirit, when in its own body, had contracted a debt with the owners of this damsel, and died, leaving it unpaid, and now proposes to pay it through this damsel. Now, if wicked spirits were permitted to assist the living in a pecuniary point, why should not the spirits of good persons be permitted to do as much for their friends in this life?

We now propose to examine Matt. xii: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places seeking rest and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out, and when he is come he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there," &c., &c.

In this case we find in one living person eight spirits, seven of which were called to assist one to regain his home in the living, which he was about to lose. So we see that demons assisted each other in afflicting and tormenting human bodies; the last state of this man was worse than the first, yes; all of seven degrees worse than his first state. Poor, unfortunate man was this, in hell on earth. The spirits of wicked dead persons were destructive to swine in the days of Christ, as will appear from the 5th chapter of Mark: "And all the demons besought him, saying, send us into the swine, that we may enter into them; and Jesus gave them leave, and the unclean spirits went out and entered into the swine, and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and were choked in the sea." Were these spirits the souls of wicked dead persons sojourning on earth after death? Yes, I think they were. So you must admit, if you say they were the spirits of dead persons, that this doctrine would have been true if preached in the days of Christ. But if it were true then, it is also true to-day.

What a mystery this, two thousand hogs destroyed by wicked dead persons. Yes, many thousands of dead persons took a part in this slaughter.

My friends, I ask you to lay by your religious prejudices, your fears of becoming unpopular, religiously or politically, and honestly examine this subject for yourselves. My friends, in the discussion of this wonderful and time-honored subject, I do not expect to add unto my present standing as a teacher of the ancient oracles of God. Had such been my object, my experience of human nature, of the religious world as it was, and now is, would have led me to a different conclusion. My object is to find the truth, the home of my fathers, the land of departed spirits, the occupation of the spirit after death, and to save the world from an awful pulpit conflagration.

We have no proof that those spirits are at this time confined in a hell in some other world unknown to them in life. The last account we have of them leaves them in this world. Now, if they are in some other world in hell-fire, as is often said by the religionists, I call for the proof. Can you produce it? If not, then you must admit that thousands of the dead are living in our midst, and if so, then you must find a hell for them in this world. In Mark xvi, we have an account of seven more spirits which were cast out of Mary Magdalene by Jesus. But in this case we have no proof that they were cast out of this lower world into a hell in some other world. The Scriptures inform us that Jesus went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah. In this case the spirits had been disobedient when in their own bodies, but after this disobedience, and after the death of their bodies, and after the death of Jesus, they were preached unto by him. But where did he find them—in this world or out of it. I answer, in this world. Jesus often conversed with the spirits of the dead, before his death, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that he did talk or preach unto the spirits after death. We read, that on one occasion, after the death of Jesus, that he conversed with the disciples about a spirit, and showed them the difference between himself and a spirit, separate and apart from the body. So you see that ours is a world of spirits, that we are surrounded by the spirits of past ages.

In this world are heavens many, and hells many. It would not be a difficult thing to find hundreds of living persons that are living in hell, yes, a hell of torments, of sorrows,

and of woes. I have seen a great many people in my time, in hell, and I have endeavored to keep many from going into hell. Men often cast others into hell. Remember that Jonah, a preacher, was cast into hell by the men of the ship. His hell was in this world, he went down into the deep sea. So you see that preachers go to hell in some instances, as well as other people. Remember poor Judas who fell from a high place, who found a hell in this world. Remember, too, St. Peter, with a bad spirit in his heart, he too was about to plunge into that awful place; yes, a few more denials and oaths would have ruined him. I knew a young man who was cast into hell, more than fifteen years ago, by an old gambler.

David said, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me. I found trouble and sorrow."—Ps. cxvi: 2. Now, where was David when in hell? was he not in this world? The Apostle James speaks of a tongue set on fire of hell; yes, a tongue in the mouth of a living person. So we have hells in the present state, and no doubt, but some will find a hell after death. O! how painful is the thought of living and dying in hell, and going into hell after death; to find no enjoyment on the great earth, nor on the wide sea, nor in the spirit-land. Man, by his wickedness, makes his own hell, digs his own pit. And man, by his good deeds, by observing the law of his God, walking by the golden rule, finds his heaven, his bliss, his peace of mind.

O this is a beautiful world of ours—it has ten thousand charms. Are you never delighted with the song of the bird? are your ears deaf to the notes of the whippowil? have you no taste for this world of flowers? See those young ladies and young gentlemen, gathering sweet pinks and flowers, they are happy now, they find some bliss in this world. Behold the bride and bridegroom surrounded with youthful friends. Behold, too, the bride-cake; and tell me if this world has no charms. O what a pity that men will abuse this lovely world! Some call it "a poor old deceitful world," "a howling wilderness," "a lonely desert," "an uneven and rocky shore," "a vain and delusive world," "a cheat," "a trick," "a bite," "a nibble." Yes, say they, we are disgusted with this world, we wish to go to the sky. Yes, say they, this poor old world will soon be destroyed. Now, is not this awful? O is it not too much? David said, "The heavens declare the glory of God;" but religionists say, that which declares his glory will soon be destroyed. Say they, "the stars of heaven will soon fall, the sun and

moon refuse to shine." O yes, you are destroying the things that declare the glory of God. Well, my friends, you will be retained in this world after all. A great many persons want to leave this world just to get rid of an industrious life. They have long been looking for a place where men live without working for food and raiment. Our spirits will, no doubt, find employment after death.

Many ministers rely on 2 Cor. xii, to prove that men go to the starry world after death. In that chapter we read of a man that was caught up into the third heavens. This man could not tell whether he was in the body or out of it at the time of this vision. Now, I am of the opinion, that those heavens were in this world; those that say they were in another world do not propose to stop in the first one, all wish to go on to number three. But let us remember that this man was injured seriously by going into those heavens—he was wounded, he was in distress—he besought the Lord to remove the thorn from him. Now suppose your minister should go to Lynchburg, Va., and return wounded in his side, and in great misery, would you not suppose that he had been in a difficulty?

Dr. Clarke, in his comment on Rev., 12th chap., says: "Heaven is God's throne, they therefore who are advanced to the supreme authority in any state are very properly said to be taken up into heaven, because they are raised by the favor of the Lord."

Now, according to the Doctor's view of the above subject, the President of the United States was raised to heaven in March, 1857. But the most of Bible readers take all heavens to be above, not considering the heavens below. It appears that some persons do not believe that this lower world has any heaven or hell, all are located in some other world by them. But when men contrast countries, or speak of America politically it is then a great country—a land of liberty, a great place indeed. Yes, the good old North State, the good old Virginia shore, live forever. But as soon as the subject of religion is mentioned, this world becomes an old howling wilderness, a barren shore. Now is not this so.

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

Now, this wonder was among the people of the earth, and not among the inhabitants of the starry world. The woman was not in the literal sun, nor in the literal heavens, but on earth, perhaps she was a queen in political power,

and the writer, to describe her high position among the nations of the earth makes use of the sun, moon, and a dozen stars.

In this same chapter we have an account of a war in heaven. "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon," &c. This war was on earth as well as this heaven. The angels were citizens of earth; Michael was also a man, a noted officer, one skilled in military tactics; Michael is a family name; are you not acquainted with Michael? The dragon was a man—a citizen of earth, a noted chieftain of ancient days—one perhaps actuated by demons.

The ancient fathers frequently gave to the mountains the epithet eternal, because they are ever the same, from the creation. In the early ages of the world, men were of the opinion that the mountains were everlasting places of retreat and safety. Many, doubtless, looking up into mountains, called them heavens. Thus we read of the everlasting hills, the holy mount, the mountain of the Lord, holy hill of Zion. The Mosaic law was given on Sinai, and we suppose that many looked upon this place as a heaven, a sacred and holy place. Said Dr. Watts:

" Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood
Should fright us from the shore."

Now I ask, where did Moses stand? Was it not on a mountain? And was he not, last of all seen on a mountain many years after his death? And was not Elijah, too, seen on a mountain on earth long after his translation? Thus we find men, supposed to be in the starry world by many, yet in this lower world. Our good friends, who tell us that they expect to go to heaven above soon, also tell us that they will come back after a while. Now would it not be better to remain all the while, and thus save the great trouble of climbing up and down. Many are growing tired of this world, they want to fly away to a starry world just to sit down and do nothing. Adam, in his best days, worked in the garden; but this generation think too much about doing nothing. We shall find as much to do after death as in life.

O what a pleasure it must be to the old, to know that they will soon be young again, and find happiness in this world! O do permit the fond mother to remain in this world with her children, as a ministering spirit. We have

an account of the spirit of the dead returning to the living in this world, and contending for the property left children by a will. I think there is a case left on record to this effect, in one of the States of this Union. Let no one suppose that he is out of danger of a person because he is dead. Remember that a spirit may call on you through a second person, or set up its claim in a court of justice.

At the time that St. Peter was imprisoned, many persons were surprised on being informed that he stood at the door of a friend's house, having been lead out of the prison. Some said it is his spirit. And some writers inform us that the disciples may have supposed that Peter was killed in the prison, and that his spirit had called to inform them of his death. But it turned out to be St. Peter, spirit and body.

Says Dr. Clarke, "Many of the Jewish doctors have believed that the souls of Adam and Abraham have successfully animated the great men of their nation." And Philo says, that the air is full of spirits, and that some, through their natural propensity, join themselves to bodies, and that others have an aversion to such a union.

Our Saviour also declares that Elijah had already come in spirit in the person of John the Baptist. That is to say, that Elijah's spirit was in John, and if in him, then it was not in the stars of heaven, as it is impossible for a spirit to be in the sky and in a body on earth at the same time.

It is a fact, that the early inhabitants of this world did not expect to emigrate to the stars of heaven after death; and it is also a fact, that they lived and died without having thought for the first time in all their lives, that the heavens and the earth were to be destroyed.

Poets and orators have taken great liberty with the Bible. Let us remember that religion has been established by law, and that the Scriptures have been revised from time to time by men. Let us also remember that learned men are not always honest men. Let us depend more on self, and that that appears to be contrary to sound judgment and nature, let us receive it cautiously.

The study of man in this age appears to be that of learning to live without working. The State and church are filled with professional men. In State it is give me a fat office; in church, a large congregation and a fat salary. The Scriptures speak of sowing and reaping, and as such, professional men and ministers would do well to walk through the field occasionally, in order to understand such business. God said, work six days and rest on the seventh.

Work six days and go to church on the seventh, is a good doctrine.

In conclusion, I would say, that this is my view of the subject, and not that of any church known to me. I am now fishing with my own hook, and select my own bait from the Bible and the great gospel field, where are many fish. I felt unwilling to live and die without expressing my religious sentiments on this great subject. Let us live with the fond and pleasing hope of appearing again in the ages to come, among the children of men on earth. Let us spend the remainder of our life in making arrangements for our reappearance in the land of our nativity. O let us remember that our felicity and honors on our return to our race will be determined by what we now do.

May you all be crowned with present and future enjoyments.

The first part of the book is devoted to a general
 introduction of the subject. The author discusses
 the history of the subject and the various
 methods which have been employed in its study.
 He then proceeds to a detailed description of
 the various parts of the subject, and finally
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A DISCOURSE,

SHOWING THAT

ESAU WAS THE ANGEL

THAT WRESTLED WITH JACOB:

PREACHED AT

WAKE BETHEL,

ON SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 1858,

BY ELDER J. P. NEVILL.



RICHMOND:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY WM. H. CLEMMITT,
1858.

A DISCOURSE.

“And he said, let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.”—GEN. XXXII : 26.

MY FRIENDS :

You would naturally infer from the history of this nocturnal wrestle, that two distinct persons were engaged in it. But we should remember that persons and things seen in dreams and visions are not such in reality. Perhaps nothing in christendom has confused the minds of the people so much as that of taking dreams and visions for realities. Many persons in the church to-day read the dreams and visions of the men of the Bible as realities—as matters of fact, without having thought for the first time in all their lives, that they were the dreams of men and women long since dead. Some of the most important events seen and read in the sacred books had their origin in dreams and visions, and must be so considered by the church. It will require much attention and close study to separate the dreams and visions of the Bible from its realities. If you take a dream for a reality, you will make the Bible the most unreasonable of all books. Jacob's wrestle with an angel has long been considered by divines and Bible readers generally as a matter of fact. They suppose that an angel descended from the celestial world, and, after a long wrestle, maimed Jacob, and then winged his way to worlds many millions of miles from earth. But this is not the case, as I hope to show you in this discourse.

Jacob's wrestle, as well as his long ladder, extending from earth to heaven, were dreams of his. If the ladder were a dream, then the angel seen and contended with was also a dream. The angel that wrestled with Jacob was his brother Esau, seen in a dream, not Esau in reality. The cause of this dream was a dread on the mind of Jacob of twenty years' standing, which was powerfully impressed on his memory by being informed that he would meet Esau soon. The fear of Jacob in this case was caused by a threat from

Esau, that he would kill him, and it was this that caused him to leave his father's house. This unpleasant difficulty had not been settled from the time that Jacob left his home up to the night of his wrestle; therefore Jacob did not know but what Esau would kill him. He knew that his brother had an army of four hundred men with him. The blessing sought by Jacob in prayer, as well as that sought in his wrestle, was, to be protected and saved from the threat of Esau. This assurance he obtained in his wrestle, which caused him to rejoice, and to go on his way with a full assurance that he would meet Esau in peace, which he did. The Scriptural account of their meeting is very affecting, and does honor to the memory of Esau, for no one living or dead ever acted more honorable than he, in receiving his brother Jacob, and freely forgiving him for all the injuries he had done him in youth. But strange to tell, the church has never had the least sympathy or commendation for Esau. We often hear eulogies given to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Rebekah, but no soft words for Esau, who acted the part of a Christian and brother. Many good deeds go unnoticed by a blind and prejudiced community.

Jacob said unto his brother, "I have seen thy face as though I had seen the face of God." But when was it that his face appeared so lovely in the eyes of Jacob? Was it not at the time he saw him in the wrestle, as well as at the time he ran and embraced him?

The children of Israel seeing Jacob halting upon his leg soon after his wrestle, passed a prohibitory law which condemned that part of the kid or animal corresponding with Jacob's wound as being unfit for food. Was there not a cause for this? and if so, we should make an effort to find out what that cause was. I believe that the children of Israel believed that Jacob received his wound from seeing Esau in a dream, and that they believed that it was caused by the kid that Jacob took, and whose skin he wore at the time he obtained the blessing from his blind father. The sorrow of Rebekah, and the fear of Jacob, caused by this family difficulty, should admonish all persons of that ancient maxim taught long before Christ, and which he adopted as a part of his system of religion, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." It was a departure from this rule in Isaac's family that caused this unpleasant difficulty between brothers. But for all this Rebekah suffered, being deprived of the society of Jacob, her darling son.

Little did she think, when putting the goat skin on her son, that she was endangering his life and happiness, and

preparing sorrows for her own heart. Little did she think, when sending Jacob away to remain for a short time, that she would see him no more,—that death would come to see her before the return of her son. Let us remember that justice will pursue all that wilfully do wrong. Such has and ever will be the case. Many divines pursue some ungodly men beyond the limits of the gospel. Some men have placed themselves where they cannot be saved by the gospel, forgiveness is not to be obtained by them from the fact that their crimes are so numerous—their liabilities so great, that a life time is too short to satisfy and pay the debt. A man like Herod, who caused hundreds of precious little boys to be murdered, cannot be saved by the gospel and made a happy man in this life. The Scriptures say that some men are past feeling, and I would add, past the line of salvation. I have been disgusted by seeing the gospel offered to men under the gallows, with ropes tied to their necks for the worst of offences. Brethren, stand back, do not undertake such miserable cases. The following lines were composed by a minister at the funeral of a man who was killed by a fall from a horse:

“ Between the stirrup and the ground,
Pardon sought and pardon found.”

I must confess that I have no faith in such conversions; they only deceive the youth by flattering him with the idea that he may obtain forgiveness as he passes swiftly through the valley of death. Many important discoveries have been made in dreams in all ages of the world. It was through a dream that Joseph and Mary were put in possession of Herod's cruel design to put Christ to death. It was the dream of Pontius Pilate's wife that influenced him in favor of Jesus of Nazareth at the time of his trial. The Messiah, as well as the apostles and prophets, was a dreamer. It was the art of dreaming and interpreting dreams, that promoted Joseph, Daniel and others. St. Peter was instructed in a vision to go and preach unto the Gentiles. This vision was as simple as many things that men dream in this, our day. Yet the salvation of the world depended upon its interpretation. The gospel and all its ordinances have come down to us through Peter's vision. Let us remember how we looked in this vision before its interpretation. We looked like four-footed beasts, wild beasts, creeping things, and fowls of the air. John the Baptist said unto some persons that attended his meetings, “O, generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee the wrath to come.”

A young lady, on the eve of marriage, dreamed one night that she and her lover were walking along a pleasant path, side by side. When wide spreading trees waved their lofty branches above their heads, her lover turned to her with a smile and asked, if he should show her the home which he had provided. She longed to see it; and they pursued their journey. They came to a tangled thicket, through which they found a difficulty in passing. At last they suddenly came to an opening. A grave lay open before them; the eypress and other dark evergreens were seen on every side. Her lover pointed to the grave, and said, "There is our home." She awoke in violent agitation. The dream made a dreadful impression on her, and in a few days after, her lover's death was announced to her.

Afflicted persons have frequently dreamed of remedies for their diseases, which proved beneficial on being resorted to by them. An eminent Scottish lawyer had studied an important case for several days. One night his wife observed him rise and go to his desk, where he wrote a long paper, after which he retired to bed. In the morning he told her that he had a dream, in which he conceived himself to have delivered an opinion on a case which had perplexed him; and he would give anything to recover the train of thought which had then passed through his mind. She directed him to look in his desk, where he found the whole train of thought clearly written. This paper proved efficacious in the subsequent conduct of the case.

A gentleman of the law in Edinburg had mislaid an important paper connected with the conveyance of a property which was to be settled on a particular day. Most anxious search had been made for it for many days, but the evening of the day previous to that on which the parties were to meet for the final settlement had arrived, without the paper being discovered. The son of the gentleman then went to bed under much anxiety and disappointment, and dreamed that at the time when the missing paper was delivered to his father, his table was covered with papers connected with the affairs of a particular client. He awoke under the impression, went immediately to a box appropriated to the papers of that client, and there found the paper they had been in search of, which had been tied up by mistake in a parcel to which it was in no way related.

Another individual connected with a public office, had mislaid a paper of such importance, that he was threatened with the loss of his situation if he did not produce it. After a long but unsuccessful search, under intense anxiety, he

also dreamed of discovering the paper in a particular place, and found it there accordingly.

The art of dreaming has never been lost, and I see no good reason why we should not have as much confidence in the dreams of men now as we have in those of past ages. My father once dreamed when many miles from home, that several persons broke into his smoke-house. The next morning he related the dream to several persons, and on his arrival at home some time after his dream he found that the house was entered on the same night of his dream.

The account given in the scriptures of Jonah being swallowed by a fish, and three days after being thrown up, must be a dream of his. That a fish swallowed him is a dream. But that he preached to the citizens of Ninevah is a reality. The scriptures say that he was fast asleep when discovered by the mariners, and thus the great probability that he had been in a vision for some time. The voice of one saying unto him, "O, sleeper arise," changed his position, and it was about this time that he was released from the confinement in the fish. I believe that Jonah suffered more in this dream than he would have done had he been in a literal fish. It is impossible for a man to live three days in the abdomen of a fish. What was the object of God in placing Jonah in this condition? Was it not for the purpose of punishing him for his disobedience in order to make him a better servant. The account of the gourd that come up over Jonah is also a dream that he had near the city of Ninevah, after he had preached unto them. The gourd came up in a night, and perished in a night, it grew and matured in an intellectual soil, and was cut down by an intellectual worm. Many good men and women take these dreams for realities, and in this way make the book of Jonah one of the most unreasonable books now extant.

The friends of the Bible, so to speak, have inflicted its most injurious wounds. Christendom freely bleeds to-day from the wounds inflicted in the dark ages of her history. The layman continues to feel in all dominions the priestly yoke of other countries, and even his liberty in the American world has not made him free indeed. The Bible is freely circulated but not so freely investigated. O, how many live behind the curtain, afraid to express their opinion; afraid of their popularity—afraid that they will lose some votes—be defeated for some office. It is evident that many join the church for the purpose of obtaining the influence of her members.

The scriptures say that Jonah was three days and three

nights in the whale; but it has been ascertained that a whale's throat is too small to admit a human body, and that whales are not often found in the waters over which Jonah was passing at the time of this event. Thousands believe that the witch of Endor called up Samuel from the dead, but this is a great mistake caused by taking the witches' dream for a reality. What was it that caused Saul to seek for Samuel through the instrumentality of the witch of Endor? Was it not from the fact that the Lord had ceased to answer him by dreams, by Urim, and by prophets? Being dispossessed, for a time at least, of information through dreams, he sought for one possessed with a familiar spirit, to assist him in obtaining the information through one that was at rest in the grave. The witch asked Saul who it was that he wished her to call up; he said, bring me up Samuel. It is evident from this conversation, that both Saul and the witch believed that Samuel was in this lower world, that he would come up, not down. Had they believed that he was in the starry world, they would have invited him down, and not up. But did Samuel come up out of his grave, and complain that he was disturbed? No! no! It was not Samuel of the grave, but Samuel of the intellect. Samuel coming in a dream—Samuel's voice and mantle. The fear of the woman on seeing Samuel goes to prove that she was in a vision, in which state she detected Saul, who now appeared in his true character undisguised. The scriptures inform us that this event transpired in the night, and this we offer as additional proof that Samuel was seen in a dream. The condition of Saul at the time he enquired of the dead respecting what would be his success in the future, was calculated to depress his spirit, and to unnerve him on the battle field. Said Samuel unto Saul, "You and your sons shall be with me to-morrow."

The bravest of men have seen their defeat in dreams just on the verge of an engagement. Men and women frequently see in dreams approaching calamities, and even death. Who has not been warned in some way in dreams? Our misfortunes are at times seen in the dreams of others. I remember when it was the custom to relate dreams to the church. The ministers fifty years ago believed that calls to preach the gospel came through dreams and visions, and it was through this medium that the old folks received their ministers, and in whom they had unbounded confidence. Never was the church more pure, nor the ministry better supplied with honest-hearted men than in those days of dreams, when she had no money to give. Strip her of her money, and her

ministers by thousands will forsake her. Have they not already said in many places, "Increase my wages, or I will leave you." The first thing to be done in many places in order to call a minister, is to see how much money can be raised. Sometimes the church says, we like a little more money. Can't you help to raise it? We are only waiting to get it; and just as soon as it can be had we will call him. I speak of this only to show the difference between ministers in the days of dreams, and ministers of the present time. The time has been when it would scare a minister to offer him money for preaching. You could not get him to touch it. Such a gift would have been more bitter than the wild gourds in the great pot at Gilgal. We have heard of some ministers in this country who years ago were urged by friends to receive gifts of money for preaching, but suffered so much from having received it that they declared they would never receive any more. I only refer to such cases to show how things of this nature have changed.

God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Behold, thou art but a dead man for the woman which thou hast taken, for she is a man's wife." Abimelech took Sarah, Abraham's wife, to be his sister, an unmarried lady; but detected his mistake in a dream. Was not this sufficient to prove to the satisfaction of this man that Abraham and Sarah had not fully and fairly represented the subject to him? Was this not also calculated to make Abimelech a strong believer in dreams? Solomon's future honor and wisdom as a king, were the results of a dream in which the following conversation took place between himself and his God: "In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast shown unto thy servant David, my father, great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth and righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord, my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father, and I am but a little child, I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give, therefore, thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this, thy, so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him:

Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment: Behold I have done according to thy words. Go, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart. So that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee, shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. And Solomon awoke; and behold it was a dream.”

I have read this nocturnal dream to show you how men and kings of past ages were instructed by God. In this dream Solomon refers to his father David, then dead, also to the children of Israel as being a great and numerous nation. He also saw himself in his dream, and compared himself to a little child. We are all bound to admit the fact, that Solomon's wisdom and riches were the results of his dream, and he, no doubt, often looked back with pleasure on his dreams. I believe that thousands of men and women living to-day have been blessed through the medium of dreams. One hundred years ago ministers of the gospel generally taught the people that a call to preach came to men in dreams and visions, and that a voice was heard commanding the man to go forth. Such impressions were of lasting duration, causing the man of God to live near the cross of Jesus of Nazareth. One hundred years ago the church believed in dreams and visions, which were frequently related in church and approved of by the wisest and best of men and women. But now dreams are rejected, since benches have been introduced into the altar as the place for sinners to receive the forgiveness of sins. The old folks saw God when dreaming; but now the people see him when excited in a great revival, as they say. But I must confess that I have more confidence in dreams and visions than I have in many of the long protracted meetings of this age. People are not so apt to be deceived in dreams—have but little chance to pass themselves off on the public for saints, when they are not such—have no chance to show off to an advantage, by exhibiting a fine dress or a lovely face—cannot cast a sheep's eye to an advantage—cannot start an excitement by groaning and shouting—have rather a bad chance to effect the hearts of the people by telling how fa-

ther, mother, brother and sister died. The impressions made on the mind in dreams and visions are sufficient to lead men to believe in a spiritual life, and to strengthen our faith and confidence in the testimony of the divine books, that originated, in part, in dreams and visions. If we had never experienced anything in dreams of our own, we would not be so well prepared to appreciate the dreams and visions of the men of the Bible. Who is the author of dreams and visions? God or man? Who first taught men to dream? Was it not that being that made the night for sleep? I consider that God is as much the author of dreams as he is the author of the human language; if he first taught man to speak he also first taught him to dream. That God is the author of some dreams and visions is sustained from the fact that many parts of the Old and New Testaments are composed of dreams and visions in which God himself is made to appear and promise to give great and precious blessings unto men. Why not have as much faith in the dreams of men now living as we have in those of men long since dead? Why not believe that God has continued to bless men and women in dreams and visions in all ages of the world's history?

It is said that a youth in the north saw, in a dream, his brother in the Pacific Hotel, in St. Louis, on the same night that it was destroyed by fire, and gave the alarm in his dream, exclaiming in a loud voice, "The hotel is on fire, and brother is burning up!" Had this youth lived in the prophetic age he would have attracted the attention of the world. But things that promoted men in other ages and countries, now pass away almost unnoticed.

Job said, "Why dost thou strive against him, for he giveth not account of any of his matters; for God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream—in a vision of the night—when deep sleep falleth upon men in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instructions, that he may withdraw man from his purpose and hide pride from him. He keepeth back his soul from the pit and his life from perishing by the sword."

We have quoted largely from Job to establish the following facts: 1. That God speaks to men on their beds when asleep. 2. That the object of his speaking is to benefit man by turning him from his intentions and designs, and in so doing saves him from the pit and from the sword; yes, saves him from plunging headlong into hell-fire; saves him from

coming into collision with the sword, pistol, musket, and clutches of warlike men.

Again, Job said, "Fear came upon him which caused him to tremble, and all his bones to shake. Hear, hear, and a spirit passed before his face; the hair of his flesh stood up. The spirit stood still, but he could not discern the form thereof. An image was before his eyes; then was silence, and he heard a voice, saying, shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?"

We have quoted this part of Job's vision to show you how men were operated on anciently, in dreams. Judging from the contents of this part of the history of Job's trials, we conclude that his frightful situation, at the time that a spirit passed before his eyes, was to instruct him in relation to approaching trials and persecutions. Poor afflicted Job, among other troubles, had at home a devil in the shape of a wife. It is reasonable to conclude that it was the powerful impressions made on his mind in dreams, that enabled him to stand steadfastly amidst all of his temptations, and afflictions, and losses.

The notion that all divine instruction and spiritual influence come through written words or through preaching, is, as I believe, a false position, effecting the spiritual interest of a large portion of the human family. It does not require an education in order to receive spiritual aid. Nor does an education exclude any one from receiving divine and spiritual communications. It is evident that the gospel was first given to the illiterate, and that it has come down, in part, at least, through them. Yes, we find that the keys of the kingdom were first in the hands of an illiterate fisherman, by whose faithfulness the world has been blessed. The gospel is a plain, simple narrative, that all men may understand. It was called foolishness in the days of the apostles. By its simplicity many persons were saved. It is said that men and women went every where preaching—all knew what the gospel was, and all felt at liberty to preach it. In those days there was no money in the gospel. As such, women as well as men felt at liberty to speak for Christ. But now, the gospel is swollen with the precious metal; yes, its wealth has added many to its cause. The question now is, who is entitled to preach, and who is entitled to receive, and how much shall he have? The gospel was committed to the hands and keeping of poor illiterate fishermen, by its author, and we have all received it through their instrumentality. I have frequently been disgusted by seeing poor, honest-heart-

ed, illiterate men excluded from the rostrum, for no other reason than the want of an education. If any one desire to speak, let him speak. If he say that God has appeared unto him in a vision, let him tell the people all about it.

It is surprisingly strange to see how the church has departed from original principles. She has lost her love, and her original banner has been pulled down and concealed beneath the dust of gone-by times. The church is too apt to condemn innocent amusement. Is it a sin for young people to attend a decent party? No! no! I have been disgusted on seeing young ladies called up in the church to acknowledge to the church that they were sorry for having attended and participated in the amusement of a party. I contend that the church has no lawful right to interfere in such cases. I have seen an innocent young lady in great trouble on being denied the right to attend an innocent party. Many are depriving themselves of pleasure in this life, hoping to be rewarded in the life to come for so doing, but this is a great mistake. Let us remember that heaven is in this world, and that the natural wants of the people must be supplied, in order to enjoy happiness. It is impossible for man to be happy deprived of eatables, raiment and society. God has provided for all our wants, and if we will only use the means that he has given, we shall be happy in this life as well as in that to come. O, what an alarming state of suffering has been caused by the doctrine that threatens to cast men and women into a deep pit of fire and brimstone, to burn for all eternity. Many persons have been threatened from the stand by being told that God would cast them into this awful furnace if they did not join the church. Many grieve on account of believing that their departed friends and children have been dragged out of this world by the devil, and cry day and night for water to cool their tongues. Thank God our departed friends continue to sojourn in this world. Yes, it is in this world that the wicked dead suffer for the deeds done in the body, and it is in this world that the righteous dead enjoy felicity. Let us rejoice that we live in a land surrounded by the spirits of the dead of all ages. O, let us rejoice as we approach the hour of death, that we shall soon be associated with the spirits of those who have gone before. Many persons now in this congregation have raised the dead, but you may ask how. I answer, in dreams and visions of the night. You cannot deny the fact that you have raised up the dead and conversed with them on various subjects. You cannot lay your hand on your heart and say that you have not seen the dead long af-

ter their death. And inasmuch as you have been permitted to raise up others from the shades of death, it is likely that when you die some one of the living will call you up from your tomb in dreams and visions, and entertain you with the news of the day. So you see that you are at home in this world. If you go away, the living will bring you back in their visions. In the days of the prophets and apostles it was common for the dead to be raised in this way. In addition to this, let us not forget that the dead were raised in various other ways. The prodigal son was raised from a death of poverty, starvation, sin and debauchery. Said the father unto him, "This, my son, was dead, but now is alive." The poor man Lazarus was raised from a death of poverty and affliction, by friends, called angels in the Scriptures.

If you will only read the Scriptures you will agree with me, that a large portion of it is made up with the dreams and visions of men; that many of the most popular texts now preached from, had their origin in visions. Cornelius, the centurion, received his first lesson on the subject of religion in a vision. Ananias was instructed in a vision to go to the house of Judas, to instruct Saul. And Saul was informed in a vision that Ananias was coming to see him, that he was at that time on his way to instruct him. Thousands of men and women now living have been instructed in dreams in a singular way, that is, have seen their friends and relations in dreams coming to see them. Only as late as last summer, I had the pleasure of seeing Elder John L. Clifton in a dream coming to see me, and in less than twenty minutes after I awoke he was at the door. Now, it is impossible for me to have more faith in the dreams of the men of the Bible than I have in this my own. The subject of dreaming, says a late writer, is unfortunate in its being so much a matter of vulgar wonderment, for intelligent inquirers are thereby repelled from it. When regarded apart from all absurd marvelling, it is evidently a very curious department of psychology, and one which deserves careful investigation. By a proper collection of facts on this subject, I have no doubt that an important advance might be made in the science of mind. If the Bible is to be the test of our faith, then we must admit the fact that much of the testimony of the Bible on which our faith is based had its origin in dreams and visions, and in the beginning was first related as such. The question may now be asked: Is there a reality in any other dreams and visions, save those seen and read in the Bible? I believe that the art of dreaming has not been lost by the human family. If God con-

versed with men anciently in dreams, he does so at this time, and will continue to do so as long as the human family has a being. It will not do to reject all dreams because some dreams are suggested by casual disturbances. Nor will it do to reject all dreams because some dreams appear to be made up of foolishness. Joseph said unto his brethren: Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed. For behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and so my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and behold your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. In this dream it is stated that Joseph and his brethren were binding sheaves in the field. In what field did this binding take place? Was it not in Joseph's mind, and did he not put his brethren to work in this intellectual field? And did not the sheaves stand erect in Joseph's head, and not in a literal field? In this next dream he makes the sun, moon and eleven stars bow down before him. Now if you take this for a reality, you will have the high heavens in one man's head. It would be quite an easy matter for a man in a dream to swallow an elephant or to be swallowed by him. The book of Revelation abounds with visions seen by St. John, on the island of Patmos, many ages ago, but now read by thousands on the American continent for realities. Have you ever stopped to separate the dreams of the Bible from its historical events? If you have not, you will on doing so be surprised to find so large a portion of it dreams and visions. The visions of St. John are the most beautiful of all visions found in the sacred writings. They embrace almost the entire book of Revelation. Indeed we may say that the church has been furnished by St. John with a beautiful religious book of visions, which was for a time rejected by the church. We find this beautiful vision in Revelation, 22d chapter: "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yieldeth her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." O, what a lovely river was this to the dreamer's eyes? What a difference in this and Jacob's dream. His was full of excitement and fatigue. But this was as calm as a May day. Yes, it was pleasant to see future blessings on their way to supply the wants of the people.

From what has been said on this subject, and from the several dreams and visions referred to; can you not say as I have said, that much of the Bible is made up of the dreams

of men and women long since dead? This view of the subject makes the sacred writings more plain, and will, as I think, meet with the approval of all unprejudiced minds, who will examine the subject for themselves. I feel thankful that I have lived to fill this appointment of several months' standing, and that you have lived to meet with me on this occasion. The contents of this discourse have been collected in the midst of much business of a temporal nature. I feel thankful to you, my friends, for the attention that you have given me on this occasion.

“The discourse to you is new.
Yet you may find it true.”

21

A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, IN THE CITY OF RALEIGH,

ON THE SECOND LORD'S DAY IN MAY, 1859,

BY J. PARKS NEVILL.

THE HISTORY OF THE

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A DISCOURSE.

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”—HEB. IX: 27.

MY FRIENDS—

Our present state is marked by many mighty changes. Have we not already passed through many? Are there not many more couched in the short journey to the land of death? In the course of events one thing continues till its work is complete, when it expires, and from its dust a new order of things begin. Death is one of the fixed principles in God's economy of creation. Man is no more the author of natural death, than of life. God, his creator, is the author of both. Yet man has often abused both. Adam and Eve were made to die, as well as to live. Their bodies returned to the dust, not for any thing they said or did, but to fulfill the law of God. It was not in their power to live forever. It is just as much in your power to live forever as it was in the power of your father Adam. The posterity of Adam and Eve do not die on the account of any defect in their conduct, but because they were born to die. Natural death is just as necessary in the world as life—it is your friend and conductor to spiritual enjoyments. When he comes for you do not be alarmed, but gladly go with him, as did Simeon. It is only man's short-sightedness that causes him to shun his friend—natural death. It is an untimely death that we should strive to avoid. It is probable that every natural death is to some extent succeeded by better circumstances. Had none died, what an innumerable multitude of old, infirm persons would be tottering around every hearth this morning. God, foreseeing the future, has in his wisdom provided better things for us. He has given each of his children a home beneath the green sod, as well as above it. The one in its proper time is just as important

as the other. Our ancestors had but little dread of death, therefore many of them lived for hundreds of years.

The resurrection of the dead commenced with death, that is, the first that died was the first to rise from the dead. If Abel be the first that died, then he was the first that rose from the dead. His death was a violation of the law of God, inasmuch as he was killed by the hands of Cain. His resurrection, however, was in accordance to the law of the resurrection; that is to say, man shall rise from the dead when he dies, without regard to the cause of his death. There is nothing in the nature of death that can hinder man from rising at the time of death. Therefore we believe that the resurrection of the dead takes place at the hour of death. When Adam and Eve died, their spirits rose up out of their dead bodies, and so with all others. Therefore, the body is not the subject of the resurrection. The dead body is the grave, so to speak, out of which the spirit rises. We presume that it will be admitted by all professors of religion that no spirit has ever risen up out of a dead body in the grave; that the union of the body and spirit is dissolved in the moment of death, and not in the dark grave. The question then with me is, Is this union dissolved forever, or is it for a limited time? We believe that it is forever.

The five thousand years that this dissolution has continued, with Adam, Eve, Abel and others, go to prove that it is forever. The fact that all human bodies are now mortal, and have ever been. We naturally infer that such was the case with Adam in his original state.

Thousands of good people believe, as they tell us, that man made himself mortal. Now if he possessed the power to change immortality into mortality, then on the same principle he could change mortality into immortality. If man were made immortal, and has by sin made himself mortal, then we may say that he has frustrated the design of God in creating man. There was mortality in the world before man violated the commandment. The birds and beasts of the field were made subject to death; therefore, they would have died had man never sinned. The snake was as poisonous before man apostatized as after. His sin had nothing to do in the way of changing the nature of snakes or animals.

It is believed by numbers of christian people, that the heavens and the earth are doomed to destruction, because man violated the commandment of God. But this idea is objectionable, since they were made, and laws given for their regularity and durability, and that too before man was

created. Now, if they are to be annihilated through a sinful act on the part of man, then it will appear that he has frustrated God in all his works. It is absurd to say that God will destroy all things just because Adam and Eve violated a commandment concerning the fruit of a certain tree that stood in their garden.

A child may be taught to kill, plunder and steal, believing it to be a part of its duty to do so. And it is from this principle that men appear to rejoice in war and bloodshed. Many of the evils that now exist in our country can be traced back and fixed on men long since dead. The deeds that men do live a long time with posterity. False doctrine may in the course of ages become so popular as to deter men from investigating it. It is from this principle that spurious tenets have quietly descended from age to age.

We sometimes see imperfections in the deeds of some of the prominent men of the Bible, but are deterred by the popular opinion of them from pointing out those imperfections. Who is so blind as not to see imperfections in David? Was the square before his eyes when he commanded Uriah to be placed in the front of the battle? David was not perfect in all things. Who can approve of all he has said in the 109th Psalm?—"Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children." Here is an instance of a great man under the influence of a bad spirit.

Laws have frequently been enacted to deter religious man from expressing himself on certain points of doctrine. We find in the Blue Laws of Connecticut the following on religious restrictions:

1. No one shall be a freeman or give a vote, unless he be a member in full communion with one of the churches in this dominion.

2. No one shall hold an office who is not sound in faith, and faithful to his denomination; and whoever gives a vote for such a person shall pay a fine of £20 for the first offence, and for the second shall be disfranchised.

3. Each freeman shall swear by the blessed God to bear true alliance to this dominion, and that Jesus is the only king.

4. No lodging or food shall be offered to a Quaker, Adamite, or any other heretic.

5. If any person turns Quaker, he shall be banished, and suffer death on his return.

6. No priest shall abide in the dominion. He shall be banished, and suffer death on his return.

It has been through such channels that original Christianity has been corrupted.

The dead body is not the subject of future punishment, nor of future happiness. As a body, its pleasures and sorrows cease in death. No approaching event can molest the sleeper in the grave. In the grave are no distinctions. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master."—Job, iii: 17. Death in Job's eye was the final end of oppression, servitude and fatigue, with all dead bodies. Speaking of himself he said, "When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return."—Job, xvi: 22. Thousands of years have passed away since his death, nor has he yet returned. Job, thou hast gone to thy grave, not to return! Nor would thy spirit desire to be again re-united to thy tranquil dust.

Immortality cannot die, therefore nothing that has died was immortal. A person once in possession of immortality will always be,—can never lose it. Immortality, however, can be dispossessed of mortality. The spirit of Adam was put in possession of his body, and not his body in possession of his spirit. Therefore his body was inferior to his spirit. Now if the dead body is to be raised immortal and equal to the spirit, then the one cannot possess the other, inasmuch as the possessor must be superior to the thing possessed. The spirit is the subject of the future judgment. The body will be in the dust at the time of this judgment. In life there is a judgment constantly going on, which is the only one that can effect it. There is nothing in the grave that now suffers, or will ever suffer. The dead family have ceased from bodily suffering. It is that sensitive thing, the spirit, that suffers after death. Indeed it is often a continuation of punishment commenced in the lifetime of the body. Now, if the judgment do commence in the lifetime of a sinner, and it is possible for him to reform and to obtain forgiveness before death, is it impossible for his spirit to be saved if he fail to repent in life? Is the spirit's future happiness suspended on the nature of death? Is it altogether impossible for a spirit to reform? Must it always continue wicked and miserable because death has separated it from its body? It is often the case that ministers hold out in-

duancements to men in the hour of death, by exhorting them to look unto God that their spirits may be saved. Now, if a merciful God can save a spirit from eternal woe when the body is in a state of death, and that too after the legs or arms have been amputated, why suppose it impossible for the same mercy to be extended to the spirit after the death of the remaining part of the body? If a spirit can be saved when in the act of leaving the body, and that too without baptism, or without membership in the church, why can it not be saved in the spirit land?

Many young persons die soon after arriving to the years of accountability. Now, let us suppose that fifty such young persons are passing on the railroad to attend a religious meeting, and are thrown from the cars and killed; do you think that a God of love and mercy would cast them into a lake of fire and brimstone forever, without giving their spirits an opportunity of becoming happy?—seeing that their days were few in life? Again, let us suppose that a young man finds a difficulty in deciding which is the church of God, out of the hundreds professing to be, and in this condition is killed by lightning, do you believe that God would punish his spirit for millions of years in flames of fire, for not obeying the gospel in confusion? Children who die in infancy are made happy in the spirit state without the gospel. Their spirits grow in knowledge and happiness. They are not in their bodies, but out of them, therefore their deeds are spiritual, as well as their lives. Great, indeed, must be the progress that infant spirits have made in the spirit state, since many of them have been students in the spiritual school for thousands of years. We believe that the infant spirit is progressive before and after death; nor are their spirits judged after the death of their bodies.—Why judge an innocent child, that knew no evil, that left its mother as innocent as the sweetest flower that fades? Many ministers have disgraced the pulpit, and made themselves contemptible, by preaching children down to hell. Although this infant damnation or condemnation was preached in the past, it is now generally repudiated.—Time will continue to throw new light on the doctrine of the church. Positions of long standing, advocated by great and popular men, will meet with opposition in coming ages, out of which the world of mankind may be benefitted. We have lived to realize much pleasure in our effort to sift sectarianism. Who believes that any one of the different religious denominations is correct in all its doctrines? All have truth mingled with error.

The idea that all punishment after death is to continue forever, without increasing or diminishing, is objectionable. Why is the punishment in life more severe at one time than at another, and the punishment after death always the same, without the least mitigation? The sorrow of a wicked spirit after death is fluctuating to some extent—its grief may be greater to-day than it will be to-morrow. The circumstances with which a departed spirit have to contend, may have something to do in the way of increasing and diminishing sorrows. In this respect there is a striking resemblance between the present and future state. In the present it causes remorse to see those persons we have unjustly persecuted; how much more so when we shall meet with them in the land of spirits? The changes that the nations of the earth have passed through, have, in all probability, effected wonderful changes with many of the spiritual family. The death of one individual sometimes effects the condition of a spirit long separated from its own body by death. A reformation in the morals of a man may, under some circumstances, effect the condition of a departed spirit. It is also probable that the spirits of some dead persons possess the power to effect the happiness of living persons. In Matt. xii: 43, we have this singular case—“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.” We have in this case an instance of a wicked spirit seeking rest after the death of its body. We also have proof that it, in company with others, entered into a living person and dwelt there. Those spirits could have been dispossessed of their home in this man in several ways—1. They could have been cast out by Jesus, or by the apostles. 2. The man could have dispossessed them by reforming his life. 3. They were dispossessed forever at the time of the man’s death, if in no other way.

Eighteen hundred years ago the spirits of dead persons were numerous at different places on the earth. Why suppose that such is not the case at this time? If they have been banished, we would be pleased to know the cause—to see the law that condemned them to banishment. If those wicked spirits were here eighteen hundred years ago, then

hell was on earth at that time. If, however, there were no hell on earth at that time, then those wicked spirits were going at large, unrestrained and unpunished. The religious world to a great extent oppose the idea of the transmigration of the spirit from one body to another. But notwithstanding, they teach about the same. Say they, the spirits of the dead will be sent back into their same bodies in the resurrection. Would not this be transmigration, inasmuch as it is said that their bodies are to be new ones. The idea advanced by the churches of this age is, that Adam will rise up from the dust, and his spirit will come down from heaven and enter into his body, and dwell in it forever, and so with all his godly posterity. As to the wicked, they say that their spirits will come up out of hell fire and enter into their bodies as they rise from the grave.

Then these extremes of heat and cold
Will stand before the Judge's throne.

Although the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is now denied by the church, it is older than the New Testament, and was taught in Asia long before the advent of the Messiah. The Jewish Rabbins have believed in the transmigration of souls from the very remotest antiquity, and many of the Jewish doctors, as wise as our American D. Ds., have believed that the souls of Adam, Abraham and Phinehas, have successively animated the great men of their nation. We may suppose that the believers of this doctrine were as honest, and enjoyed themselves as well as thousands of professors of religion at this time.

It is argued by some, that the doctrine of transmigration is false, from the fact that there are more spirits than human bodies. But even this would not prove the doctrine false, from the fact that many spirits have animated the same body at the same time. Mary entertained seven, and a certain man accommodated eight. In addition to this, it will be seen from an examination of the New Testament, that spirits lived separate and independent of a human body. A spirit having once animated a living body, claimed it as his—called it his home. Such was the case with the unclean spirit already referred to. The restlessness of those wicked spirits after the death of their bodies is proof that they had been judged and condemned, and that their place of suffering was in this world. Why send a spirit to some distant world to be judged and punished? Why not judge it in the land of its crimes, and if guilty, punish it there?

In some cases, it is probable that punishment will be for a term of years, and not for all eternity. We cannot suppose that a just and merciful God will punish a man of few sins as long as one of many. It is said by those who teach everlasting punishment in all cases, that it is measured by degrees, not by time. Now, if this idea be correct, then we may say that there is but little difference between some in hell and in heaven. The objection to measuring by years appears to be this, It will not do to let a parched and smoked spirit come out of hell into heaven. It is said, that great men are not always wise, and we would add, not always merciful. With many, a moment's repentance saves the soul from punishment for all eternity. But a million of years with them, are not sufficient to punish the soul for failing to repent in that moment. In the present they say,

“And while the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return.”

But in the future they say,

And while the brimstone holds out to burn,
The least sinner cannot return.

We cannot believe that such doctrine emanated from that God of love and mercy. The time is coming when the religious world will be driven to the necessity of changing her position of future punishment, as she has already done on other subjects. I am a strong believer in a future punishment. I believe that the spirit is judged immediately after the death of its body, and that all of that punishment is measured by time, and that its length of time is determined by the nature of the deeds done in the body. Wicked men often experience in life, and particularly in dreams, a foretaste of that suffering that will be endured by the spirit when the body is asleep in the grave. You remember how miserable you were—how your spirit was excited—when you were running in your dream from the pursuer. You remember how miserable you felt when detected and exposed to the eyes of many persons—how miserable you felt on seeing those you had injured. Such may be a partial representation of that state of suffering after death. The suffering of a spirit in the future state will be owing to a combination of wicked crimes—the linking in one chain all of the evil of a long and wicked life. Crimes long concealed will constitute a part of this sinful chain. The spirit will be con-

strained after death to review the deeds of life, which will constitute a part of its sorrow. The features of the murdered person will be seen just as they were when killed. The voice that cried for life will be heard again.—Not by the innocent, but by the perpetrator. Those objects were in the first instance realities, but after their destruction they were often the impressions made on the mind of the perpetrator, tormenting him in life; and such will be the case with the spirit after the death of the body. In the spirit state, ten thousand painful reflections may grow out of reviewing one isolated crime. In reviewing cases in the spirit state, the grief is in proportion to the nature of the case. All sins reviewed do not cause the same amount of remorse; therefore a spirit may be in more pain to-day than it will be to-morrow. If we knew the case that a departed spirit was now engaged in reviewing, we could form a pretty correct opinion of its condition, having been acquainted with the character of the case, as well as with the person in his life-time. We may suppose that punishment in the future state, in some cases, is alleviated from the fact of its having commenced in the lifetime of the person, and that too in his youthful days. Is there not a difference in the punishment of one who commits murder in his youth, and is punished by the law, and one who commits the same offence in his old age, and dies unpunished by the law? Do you suppose that two such persons would occupy precisely the same position after death?

It is generally believed that all men will stand before God to be judged on the same day, which is called the judgment day, some say the great day of accounts. What is meant by the judgment day after death, is nothing more than a series of events resulting in the condemnation of evil-doers. God has placed within each human breast a monitor, and whenever man runs counter to it he is certain to be rebuked. Such was the fact in the case of Cain, the eldest son of Adam and Eve. It was not a written law that caused him to be a fugitive and a vagabond, but the law of his nature violated. His punishment was caused by running contrary to the monitor within his bosom. If men would only observe the workings of this monitor, they would save themselves from much sorrow in life, and would be much better off in the spirit state. Many have been judged, and are this day suffering their punishment, without having ever seen God: therefore, we conclude, that no one will see him in the future judgment. The place of judgment is in this lower world, and it is here that the guilty will be punished and

the just rewarded. Such have already taken place with all the dead. Judging from the number which die each day, we may say that the judgment is daily, Sundays not excepted. Some spirits will enter into heaven to-day, while others are entering into hell.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us, that hell is a place in the world not regularly finished—a subterraneous region, in which the light of this world does not shine.

After all that has been said in the way of locating hell, we will add, that it is in all places where men do wrong. There is a hell-fire burning to-day in many hearts. We would recommend sobriety, industry and economy, as some of the means of preventing men from falling into hell. We often see men at one time prosperous and happy; at another time we see them unprosperous and unhappy. Such changes are often the results of bad economy. If all men were well provided for, and the evils that corrupt the morals of society and destroy the livings of men were better regulated, there would be much more enjoyment in the community and less vice. Millions of dollars are yearly thrown away in erecting costly monuments over the graves of dead men. Is this good christian economy? Are not the poor and needy more justly entitled to it? Give me the money that is extravagantly spent in the grave yard, and I will provide for the wants of all the poor and needy in this world. A plain slab is sufficient for the grave of any one, and christians should not encourage anything beyond it. Let us give to the living. Let our ears ever be open to the cry of the poor and needy. Let us be economical for their sakes. Let it be a part of our doctrine to do all we can for those in distress. Such appears to have been the desire of the Samaritan doctor in dressing the wounds of the unfortunate man who had been left half dead, and whose situation failed to attract the attention and aid of a certain priest and Levite. It is said that this man was half dead. Suppose the translators had, through mistake, left out the word half. What a wonderful man would this omission have made the Samaritan! And had the omission been made, how few would have known it!

It is admitted by thousands that the common version is imperfect and erroneous. Thus have the leading men in almost all of the denominations been driven to the necessity of making alterations in the Scriptures. One man, John Mills, collected no less than thirty thousand different readings, that is, he marked thirty thousand different places in which those manuscripts varied from each other. John

Wesley made a new translation for his denomination. Dr. Boothnoyd of the Congregational church, England, made another translation for his denomination. Dr. Conquest, a layman of the same denomination, made a translation, in which he states that he had made twenty thousand emendations. English Unitarians have published a number of new versions of the New Testament. There is now being made in America, if not completed, a new translation of the entire Bible. Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists and Disciples, all contend, and by their actions prove, that they believe that the common version of the Scriptures is not correct. Therefore, it is not likely that the common version is correct on the resurrection, and incorrect on thousands of other subjects. But the question may be asked, Are those men competent to correct the errors of the Bible? Are they not as liable to err as those translators were who have preceded them? If they should err, will the people know it? Who shall correct their translation? And has God commanded them to do this thing? Living in an age of confusion, error and prejudice, it behooves all persons to be directed by the powers of intellect and conscience. If we cannot read and interpret the Jewish Scriptures; if we cannot comprehend all that is written in Greek and Hebrew, or in the English, Spanish, Latin, French and German translations; we have nature's book, seen and read by King David ages before the origin of those translations.—“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.”

Death has long been set forth under false colors, causing much unnecessary excitement and injury to mankind. It is often called the “grim monster,” the “frightful king of terrors,” the “universal foe of mankind,” &c., &c.

Why should we start and fear to die?
 What tim'rous worms we mortals are!
 Death is the gate of endless joy;
 And yet we dread to enter there.

There is evidently too much excitement connected with the subject of religion and death, for longevity and happiness. Many of the religious excitements of this age are caused by the fear of death depicted in the sacred stand. The big tears generally start on hearing the obituary part of a discourse, descriptive of father's mother's or some fond

lover's exit. It is the relating of death-bed scenes in sermons, that influence multitudes to join the church. It is not uncommon to hear from five to ten in one discourse. The gospel in former times was glad tidings. The people then went to church to rejoice, but now they are expected to cry and lament like those in distress. It is high time that something should be done to correct this injurious custom in church. We abridge life by our imprudence. We go to the grave too soon. But few die a natural death. The fear of disease is often more injurious than the disease itself. Never suffer yourself to be alarmed by the approach of disease and death. A strong resolution is frequently worth more than a strong dose of medicine. The present age is living too fast to last long.

We have said that the dead body is not the subject of the resurrection. Christians often refer to the case of Eutychus to prove that St. Paul restored a dead body to life. Acts xx: 9—"And there sat in a window a young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep. And as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down and fell on him and said, Trouble not yourself, for his life is in him." Now, if his life was in him, it was not out of him. The writer has given us the report that was first made of his death by those who took him up, although they were mistaken; and after this he gives us the testimony of Paul, who said he was not dead. Just such dead men as Eutychus have been restored to life in all ages. Eutychus was not dead; therefore it is wrong for any one to say he was—to give Paul credit for something he did not do.

The Damsel—Mark v: 35. "While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he said unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid; only believe. And he suffered no man to follow him save Peter, John and James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in he said unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep! The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." The death of the damsel was first reported by a messenger from the father's house; but Jesus, on his arrival at the house, corrected the mistake.—"She is not dead." In Matthew it is written, "My daughter is even now dead." In Mark it is

written, "My little daughter lieth at the point of death." And in Luke it is said, "She lay a dying." It is one thing to believe the testimony of messengers, but another thing to believe the words of Jesus, whom we introduce to prove that the damsel was not dead. It is not generally known, that an effort was being made to restore the damsel at the time Jesus arrived. The minstrels were offended at Jesus for saying "she is not dead." They laughed him to scorn. It was a custom in those days, with the Greek, to make a great noise on funeral occasions, with brazen vessels; and the Romans made a great outcry, called conclamatio, hoping either to stop the soul which was now taking its flight, or to awake the person if only in a state of torpor. Customs of such universal use—of such long standing, must have been attended with some little success. Therefore, persons said to be dead were restored to life by those customs before the advent of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we believe that Jesus made an important improvement in those ancient customs. It is a fact that persons are frequently interred alive through mistake, in this enlightened age; how much more so in those countries where men knew but little of the human system—perhaps never felt the pulse, nor knew but little of the circulation of the blood. The law of Moses in certain cases prohibited persons from touching the dead body.

There now lives in this state a colored woman who dropped down and was declared to be dead. A grave was ordered to be dug for her. Fortunately it was ascertained that she was not dead, just in time to escape from being interred alive. Was she not just such as the apostles raised to life? It is a fact that the apostles never attempted to restore a beheaded person to life. No effort was made to restore John the Baptist to life; nor was an effort ever made by any apostle to restore to life any very old man or woman. They made no effort to restore to life any one who had been killed on the field of battle, or murdered on the highway. The art of restoring the supposed dead to life was in use ages before the days of the apostles, as will be seen from an examination of the case of the Shunamite's son, by Elijah, 2 Kings, iv: 34. He put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and stretched himself upon the child, and it revived. It is evident that Elijah believed there was life in the child; his object was to restore warmth to the body of the sick child. Christ and the apostles made an improvement on Elijah's art. They frequently excited their subjects into action.—Peter said unto the lame man at the gate of the temple, "In

the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And he leaped up. We have often heard of sick persons, in a low state of health, being aroused by the cry of fire, &c. And on this principle, small boys have carried large burdens from burning houses, which they were unable to move after the excitement had subsided. Some of the religious excitements of a late date have been of such a nature as to require the strength of two or three able men to hold one delicate young lady. Could not such excitements be extended so as to affect the sick and halt? We may suppose excitement had something to do in causing the death of Ananias and Sapphira his wife. See Acts v. Men and women have frequently died under similar circumstances since the death of Peter. The apostles were in possession of the art to handle venomous serpents, without being injured by them, but are not men in possession of a similar, if not the same art? We have not time to-day to say more on this important subject. We now leave with you what we have said, with our best wishes for your present and future happiness.

THE POWER TO FORGIVE.

A SERMON

DELIVERED BY THE LATE

REV. JOHN A. GREYER.

BEFORE THE

PRESBYTERY OF ORANGE,

AT WASHINGTON, N. C.,

DECEMBER, 1849.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THAT BODY.



FAYETTEVILLE, N. C. :

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1859.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT.



THIS SERMON was originally delivered by special request of Orange Presbytery, before that Body, at its sessions in Washington, N. C., December, 1849. The impression produced on the minds of those who heard it on that occasion, was such as to create a desire that it might be preserved in a permanent form for the edification of the Church. If the life of the author had been spared, the sermon would, doubtless, have been prepared for the press, under his own direction. A constant succession of pastoral and pulpit duties, followed by a protracted illness, and closed by death in 1853, prevented the accomplishment of this work, in the lifetime of the author. The desire for its publication was by no means extinguished by that mournful event. In addition to the reasons previously existing, in the eloquence of the sermon, its profound reasoning, the importance of the doctrine, and its special adaptation to the times, a new motive was furnished by the natural and earnest desire which the author's friends felt for the possession of some memento of his great worth and usefulness.

The memory of JOHN A. GREYTER, is precious to the heart of the Presbyterian Church of North Carolina. In every relation of life, as Pastor, as Preacher, as Counsellor in our Ecclesiastical Courts, and as a friend, he was honored and beloved.

By a singular coincidence in the place, the Manuscripts of the Sermon were presented by Mrs. Greyter to the Presbytery at Washington, November, 1858.

The following minute was unanimously adopted :

"The Committee appointed to examine a Manuscript Sermon by the late Rev. JOHN A. GREYTER, on the "Power to Forgive," beg leave to report that they have examined the same, and find a good deal of difficulty in reading the manuscript, but have learned enough of the Sermon to conclude that it is worth the publishing, provided it can be done. Therefore

Resolved, That this Manuscript be placed in the hands of the Editors of the *North Carolina Presbyterian* to be published by them in their paper, and also in pamphlet form, provided they can do the author justice in so doing."

The publication has been subject to a brief delay, from the fact that the sermon was not complete in any one manuscript, and the Editors found it necessary to compare and compile from several. They have taken no liberties with the author's views or phraseology, and while to them their work has been a labor of love, they send forth the sermon from the Press with the prayer that its perusal may be greatly blessed in comforting and confirming the hearts of the people of God.

SERMON.

Matt. ix: 6, 7.—“But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house.”

Among the crowd which gathered around the person of Jesus of Nazareth in his journeyings in the land of his birth, the sacred writers frequently make mention of some separated from the rest by their bitterness towards him and his doctrines. These men, wrapped in an overweening conceit of their peculiar devotedness to God, could not brook the thought of being eclipsed by the superior lustre of another religious teacher as unpretending in his manners as he was ardent in his piety, and as illustrious in his deeds as he was obscure in his origin. These Pharisees, the learned Doctors of the law, (for it is of these I speak) with a jealous eye, watched his every motion, and stood ready to carp at all he did, and wrest all he said, if possible, to his destruction. Neither awed by his power, nor attracted by his wisdom, nor subdued by his beneficence, each successive manifestation of his more than human greatness, only goaded them on to fiercer hatred and more shameless opposition, till at length we hear them crying around the cross “if he be the Son of God let him come down.” Not a few of these men in pursuit of their victim had assembled at Capernaum and might have been seen seated quietly amid the despised Galileans—when a palsied man, all other mode of access barred by the pressure of the crowd, was let down by his friends from the roof of the house immediately at the feet of Jesus. This was a spectacle calculated to touch every heart in the vast crowd. Much more so would it affect the compassionate Jesus. He at once said to the poor paralytic—“Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.” Language

like this sounded strangely in the ears of the Doctors of the law, who said in their hearts, "Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And they secretly charged him with blasphemy. To convince them that he actually possessed the power which he pretended to exercise, and that their accusation was accordingly false, Jesus now spoke again to the palsied man bidding him take up his bed and go to his house, and the man was immediately enabled to obey the command.

It may seem a little remarkable, that our Lord should have noticed a charge brought against him, in this way. Though of a serious nature, it was entertained only in the bosoms of some of his hearers, and had he not brought it to light, it had probably never been known, save to those who preferred it. Yet it is obvious that according to the views of these men, Jesus had laid himself open to such a charge. In professedly exercising the authority to forgive sins he had assumed a prerogative of the Godhead—being a man, he had made himself equal with God. Besides, the secrecy of the accusation afforded him a fair opportunity of rectifying their false views relative to his true character. He read their very thoughts and thus proved himself to them, the great searcher of hearts and trier of the reins of the children of men. And yet farther, while exposing to public gaze the sentiments of these men that he might show their falsity, he was at the same moment extending the hand of mercy to the wretched man before him and rewarding the faith of friends so clearly exhibited in their efforts to bring the object of their solicitude in reach of his healing influence. Thus our Lord in vindicating himself from this charge gave to his hearers more exalted views of his character, confounded his enemies by a peculiar manifestation of his Godhead, and conferred a rich boon on a poor sinner who had sought his aid. It was worthy of him thus to notice it.

Again, we must not overlook the circumstance on which this accusation was founded. *This* was the language of Jesus addressed to the sick man, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." The expression seems to be rather ambiguous. It may mean either "thy sins are forgiven," or "let thy sins be forgiven," i. e. the verb may be either in the indicative or imperative mood. In

the one case the phrase would be a simple declaration that his sins were forgiven—so Campbell understands it; and substitutes *are* for *be* in his translation. In the other it would be the efficacious word which secures forgiveness, manifesting the will of him who has the power to forgive—analogous to the word which said, “Let there be light and there was light.” Nor does the word in the original remove the ambiguity; it is a particular form of the verb which has given some difficulty to grammarians. Vater says it is the perfect pass., a form unknown to the Greeks. Bretschneider regard *sit* as an Ionic form for 2 Aor. middle, subj.

In the former it means “thy sins are” or “have been forgiven;” in the latter “let them be” &c. We find, however, that the Pharisees understood him as actually forgiving sins, for they said in their hearts, “Why doth this man *thus* speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?” (Mark ii: 7.) This, however, does not *prove* that the expression used by our Lord was authoritative, but it does prove that an unconditional declaration of forgiveness is, so far as the individual himself who makes it is concerned, a daring invasion of the divine prerogative, and in all respects to his case, tantamount to an authoritative forgiveness. So thought the Pharisees and our Lord endorsed their opinion.

The course here pursued by our Lord in view of the umbrage taken by the Pharisees at his conduct is conclusive that he was willing at any rate to be regarded as having claimed the power to forgive. It follows then, in whichever way these words of our Lord be rendered that *an unconditional declaration of pardon to an individual* is an offence as heinous as that of claiming the full authority to forgive. Once more, we invite attention to the manner in which Jesus vindicated himself from the accusation of the Pharisees. “But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house. And he arose and departed to his house.” Than this, we can conceive no surer proof of unlimited power. The word which speaks, and it stands fast, is not only a word of power, but it is the word of the Creator. The being, between whose declared will; and the effect produced, there is no intermediate circumstance, and no intervening conceivable time, is the Being, who is girded with Omnipotence.

He who wills and it is done; whose *fiat* instantly secures the result aimed at, is and must be to our conceptions the Lord God Almighty. There is no more certain indication of Almightyness than this. There may be brighter and more dazzling coruscations of this glorious perfection in yon world of glory, which sin has never darkened; there may be here on earth more overpowering exhibitions, but there are none which can more surely certify us of the presence of the arm which none can resist. He then who says to a paralytic, "Arise and take up thy bed and go to thine house," when instantly the man in view of all around arises and walks; this one, man though he seem to be and though he actually be, must at the same time be clothed with the power of doing whatever he pleaseth. If this be not a manifestation of Omnipotence, there can none be given to us: then is all distinction between the Infinite and finite annihilated to our view. Let us now return to the history. It is admitted on all hands that Jesus on this occasion gave evidence that he had power to forgive sins on earth. "Here was an ocular demonstration" says Dr. Campbell, "of the power with which the order was accompanied, and therefore was entirely fit for serving as evidence that the other expression he had used, "thy sins be forgiven thee" was not vain words, but attended with the like divine energy, though from its nature, not discernible like the other by its consequences. To say the one with effect, where effect was visible, is a proof that the other was said also with effect, though the effect itself was invisible." Again it will not be denied that Jesus here also showed himself to be one with the Father, equal in power and glory. If now it be farther taken into consideration that this manifestation of divine glory so clearly evidencing our Lord to be at the same time God and to have power to forgive sins on earth, was given to clear himself in the eyes of the Pharisees, who had said that none can forgive sins but God only,—the conclusion is almost irresistible, that Jesus meant to sanction the truth of the doctrine on which these men had proceeded. In other words, Jesus here showed himself to be God. For what purpose? That he might prove he had power to forgive sins on earth. Was the proof sufficient? It is not denied. Was it necessary? Would not an evidence short of this have answered every purpose? Was it essential to prove his Godhead to con-

vince his hearers that he had made no false pretensions? To this we reply that it was certainly necessary, so long as the Pharisees maintained the views they then held—that none but God can forgive sins. Were they in error on this point? The presumption is, they were not, otherwise Jesus would have corrected that error. All correct apprehensions of his character forbid the belief that our Lord would have thus manifested his glory, if the same end could have been reached without it, and that in the exercise of this discretionary power, he declares his righteousness that he may be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. These are truths written so legibly and so frequently in the glorious gospel of the Son of God, and so unspeakably precious to poor sinners, that we may for the present assume them as undeniable and not stop to establish them. But that God only can forgive sins—that the power of forgiveness is not only inherent in him, but reserved entirely in his own hands, is a point which some deny and we affirm. This point will form the subject of the present discussion.

However clear may be the fact that powers of the highest offices may be and continually are delegated to others—yet it is obvious that there must be a limit somewhere—there must be some prerogative peculiar to the Sovereign and reserved in his own hands, which cannot be transferred—otherwise all distinction between the supreme and inferior power is confounded.

Lord Bacon in some excellent remarks on this subject, has pointed out this limit, as it seems to us, in the clearest manner. He regards the prerogative in two distinct branches. In the one the King's pleasure is reserved in the Sovereign's hands to be exercised in each case according to his personal and private discretion. According to this distinction it is obvious not only that there is a prerogative which cannot possibly be transferred, but the reason why is equally manifest. A prerogative entirely controlled in every case by the private pleasure of the sovereign must from its very nature be incommunicable, because, 1st. the private pleasure of no man can become that of another, and 2nd., because if it were possible, such a transfer invests a subject with a power to rule his fellow subjects according to his own pleasure, i. e. makes him most absolute sovereign.

These remarks apply with much more force and truth to the

Jehovah of the Scriptures, the King of kings and Lord of lords—the Blessed and only Potentate—doing his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. It were preposterous to suppose that in a Sovereign wielding such a sceptre, there were no powers in themselves inalienable or none which a creature is totally unable to wield. Besides, a divine prerogative in some of its branches may require for its execution, the presence of some of the distinguishing attributes of the Godhead, and cannot accordingly be delegated to another without confounding the distinctions between the Infinite and the finite—the Creator and the creature. The exercise of the power may involve the presence of attributes, the transference of which is the investiture of the being to whom they are transferred with the distinguishing excellency of the great God. And if these distinctive perfections may be bestowed on another who is not God, how can the Holy One manifest himself to his creatures so as to be known from and above them all?

The possession of the divine excellency is to us the evidence of his presence and agency; the manifestation of those attributes which constitute the divine excellency must then prove that the Being in whom they shone forth is God and not another. Omnipotence, for example, belongs to God alone. He who can do whatever he pleaseth in heaven or on earth, for whom nothing is too hard, he can be none other than the Lofty One, who inhabits the praises of eternity. This is an attribute, whose presence defines to our faith the Being who made and upholds us, and to whom we are bound to render our highest services. Again: To search the heart and try the reins of men is another perfection of the Deity. “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” If then the Scriptures are our rule in faith and practice, he who discerns the thoughts and intents of my heart is Jehovah, and as often as he does this, he calls me to own and acknowledge him as the only true God. These and others which might be mentioned are, what have been called by an old divine, so many royalties of the divine nature—such as no creature can share in. He who is clothed with these is *He*, whom we need not fear to worship as

the Lord God. Though to the eye he may seem to be man, yet if he is girded with Omnipotence, infinite in knowledge &c., he is our Immanuel, God in the flesh. Such indeed was Jesus of Nazareth. He was a man in outward appearance. He was encompassed with all the infirmities of our nature. And when he claimed to be God, the thought seemed almost incredible. Strange indeed was it that one like ourselves should claim to be the God who made us. Yet he proved himself to be all he claimed to be—he showed his fearless majesty in the displays of the distinguishing perfections of the Godhead he put forth. Thus we know him to be our God and Saviour. The indwelling of the divine excellency leaves no doubt on this point. “The word was made flesh and dwelt among us” says John, “and we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of God.” We see then that a divine prerogative may be limited in reference to its exercise by any other, both from its nature and its requiring in its execution the presence of such attributes as cannot be committed without breaking down the enclosure which separates the Great I AM from the creatures of his hands. And the question we now wish to settle is whether the power to forgive sins is such a prerogative.

In order to reach a satisfactory answer to this inquiry, let us for a few moments consider what we are to understand by the forgiveness *of sins*. This will prepare the way for our entrance on another enquiry: what is implied in the power to forgive? from which it will be comparatively easy to return a categorical reply to our main question.

1. What is forgiveness of sins?

“Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God.” It accordingly implies a moral agent, a law, and a lawgiver. It may therefore be regarded in these three different relations, in each of which it presents a different and important aspect. Considered simply in reference to the agent, the sins of an individual are nothing more than his thoughts, feelings, words, and deeds, and form but just so many items or facts in the records of his history, or to use the language of Scripture in “the Book of God’s remembrance.” Here they are “written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond”—here they must ever preserve their place, and are of course imperishable and indestructible. In relation to the law, the standard of right

and wrong, sin is a deflection from the mark it sets up, a deviation from the path it defines. This constitutes its sinfulness and gives rise to its ill desert. The law of God being holy and just and good, every violation of its injunctions or departure from its requisitions must be evil in itself, and attach moral turpitude to him who is chargeable with such violation. This law being further inflexible and immutable in its demands, this feature must be an inseparable adjunct of sin. The sinner then deserves to perish, and will forever deserve to perish, if dealt with according to his personal deserts. Again, the Lawgiver, being the vindicator and guardian of law, and the law binding to obedience and in default thereof to punishment, there arises another important aspect of sin, as laying the individual chargeable with it, under *obligations* to suffer at the hands of the Lawgiver. In this aspect sin is a debt of suffering which the sinner owes God, as the avenger of the claims of his law. So our Lord has taught us to regard it in the prayer he has given us as the model to which our petitions should be conformed. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." This debt, however, is simply a legal claim, and if that claim can be otherwise satisfied than by the personal suffering of the sinner, it is obvious that this obligation will no more remain. This obligation to suffering arising out of sin, called in technical language guilt, is a feature, though not inseparable from it.

Thus we see there are three views of sin distinguishable and distinct from each other, viz: the act, its sinfulness and its guilt, or the liability to suffer which it induces in the agent, and of these only one can be separated from it. But as we are anxious to be fully understood, we will illustrate what has been said by an example taken from human law. We will suppose that a man having killed another, is arraigned on the charge of murder. The first inquiry will be into the fact. Did he commit the act? Did he kill the individual supposed? This is a preliminary step which cannot be dispensed with, and brings the crime before the view of all concerned, simply as a deed or act on his part. This, however, being settled and the deed proved to have been committed by him, it does not necessarily follow that he is a murderer, or in other words that he is criminal. This point requires a separate investigation and is to be decided

by the voice of the law. He is to be brought, as it were, along side the law and viewed in the light which it sheds upon him. If then, though a competent number of witnesses shall have declared that he committed the act, it shall be seen that he did it in self-defence or accidentally, the law attaches no criminality to the deed, and the man is declared innocent, he has not violated the law. Supposing however, he has killed his neighbor with malice aforethought, and thus in the eye of the law, deserves to suffer, there is yet another step to be taken. Sentence must be pronounced by him, who appears as the guardian and upholder of the law. This sentence is but the authoritative voice of the law fastening on the head of the criminal the obligation of punishment. He is liable to death. But this liability to suffer—a legal obligation to punishment—may be removed by the interposition of the executive or monarch. In the exercise of his supreme power, he may put forth his arm between the law and the head of the criminal and set aside this obligation. The man then, though he killed his neighbor, and in so doing violated the law and was exposed to punishment, goes unpunished. No one can molest him. In this process we see three different steps—each one bringing the crime into different relations and consequently presenting it in different aspects as a deed, its criminality and the obligation to punishment. The first two are necessary to constitute it a crime, and in this light cannot be separated from it—the last may or may not abide in connection with it even as a crime. Who can doubt that the matter of Uriah the Hittite is truly as blameworthy, as base now, as it was when Israel's king under the lashes of an awakened conscience cried out in anguish, "Deliver me, O God from blood guiltiness?" Who doubts that it will be as true, and as vile in all the rolling ages of eternity, and that David will never be able to stand before the throne of God on the ground of his personal deserts? Yet David's blood guiltiness has been removed and Uriah's murderer lives—he lives in triumph and glory.

Let this illustration suffice to show, that there is one and only one element of sin, which is capable of being separated from it, and this is its guilt. This, we think, must appear obvious to all on reflection. In reference to sins which are registered among the deeds which are past, no one can suppose that they shall

ever be blotted out. They must forever abide in the presence of *Him*, with whom there is no past. Nor can we for a moment believe that their sinfulness will be separated from them, for this is an essential element of their nature as sins. Take the sinfulness out and they are no more sins. Unless then the lapse of ages shall make that which was once sinful no longer so—or unless the Law of God shall be changed—then this element must abide. There remains then as we have seen only the obligation to suffer which sin fastens on the agent, which can be removed. The taking this obligation to punishment off from the head of the sinner, or the removal of his guilt, in consequence of which under the government of God, no punishment, though deserved, will or can follow, is what we mean by the *forgiveness of sins*. This essential view of forgiveness is too frequently presented in the Scriptures to escape the notice of any who read them understandingly. Certainly no idea was more familiar to the Jews than that of the transference of his obligation to suffer in consequence of sin, to the head of a victim, which because of this transference suffered in his place. When he brought his victim to the altar, he was required to lay his hands on its head and confess his sins, then having slain the victim—the animal suffered in his place—he went away guiltless. Atonement was made for him, his sin was forgiven. These victims prefigured “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” and according to the peculiar polity of the Jews, according to which every offence incurred the penalty of death, were accepted as substitutes in the place of the offenders. The idea however of cancelling guilt was prominent in their minds in all aspects. Laying the hands on the head of the animal, confessing sins and then slaying the victim, were all significant of a passing over of something on the part of the offender from him to an innocent creature, in consequence of which that creature must die. That something which is thus transferred, is that which renders it proper in the eye of the law, that the innocent should suffer which is guilt. This being put on the head of another, we see at once why it should die according to law. Now according to the method of salvation revealed in the Scriptures, this obligation to suffering is not removed from the sinner by a sovereign act setting aside the claims of the law—but by a judicial act

upholding its utmost rigors by declaring it to be fully satisfied in his case. This is the peculiarity of the scheme of redemption. This is its exceeding glory. The sinner is not simply pardoned, he is justified—pronounced to be just in the eye of the law. The law is not disregarded, but its honor vindicated and magnified. All its claims are acknowledged and satisfied, and therefore no more rest on the sinner. And the Lawgiver himself stands forth to view as the just, yet the justifier of the ungodly. All this however presupposes a sufficient satisfaction made to the law for sinners, which in each case of forgiveness is reckoned to the individual. In consequence of this imputation of a righteousness to him, the sinner himself becomes righteous and there is no more condemnation to him. His sins are covered and can no more rise up against him. God has bestowed upon him the righteousness of his Son and the gift of faith whereby he has received this righteousness. “Blessed is he,” says David, “whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” Paul tells us that David is here describing the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works. Thus we are taught that transgression when forgiven is covered and no more imputed—and it is covered by a righteousness without works on the part of the sinner, a righteousness which God imputes to him. It is important here to observe that in this procedure God has done two things for the pardoned sinner. He has officially declared him to be righteous and free from all demands of the law. He has also reckoned to him a righteousness which is not his own by works but which has become his through the faith of Jesus. In the one of these God has proceeded on his own previous act, i. e. in pronouncing the sinner just—he has done so because of the previous imputation to him of the righteousness set forth in the Gospel—the full satisfaction made to the law in the person of Jesus Christ.

Such we believe to be the scriptural view of forgiveness. Let us now attentively consider it for a few moments—that we may discern the nature of the act itself. I observe then,

1. Forgiveness is an act of supremacy. As has been already mentioned, there are in each act of forgiveness two acts implied,

separate from each other, because in each God appears in a different capacity, yet both concurring, and necessary to the same result. In the one, God shows himself the judge giving utterance to the declaration of the law; in the other, he proceeds as a sovereign conferring the most precious gift on an undeserving wretch. But for this gift instead of justifying the sinner, the judge would have demanded the awful sentence of the law—everlasting death as abiding upon him. Thus by an act in his sovereign capacity, he reverses what he would have done in the other. He turns the sentence of the law away from the poor wretch and fastens its claims upon another. This is most clearly the exercise of a prerogative above law. For why does not the law still maintain its claims, and demand the punishment of the sinner? He has violated its precepts. He has incurred its penalty. Its condemnatory voice was lifted up against him, and conscience echoed back that voice. But suddenly all is changed; there is now no more condemnation. The Judge whose duty it is to vindicate the law and enforce its sanctions, pronounces sentence of acquittal and acceptance. Why is this? Because of an act which has not set aside the claims of the law, but has fixed them on another, in whom they were all satisfied. This then, though not against law, nor regardless of law, is plainly an act above law. It is the highest act of government. We can conceive of no higher stretch of dominion; it is an act of supremacy.

“The law binds first to obedience and in neglect of it to punishment. Not only the lusts that break forth are evidence of, but inward inclinations contrary to the law are, sin. From hence results a guilt upon every sinner, which includes the imputation of the fault and obligation to punishment.

The forgiveness of sins contains the obligation of their guilt and freedom from the deserved destruction consequent to it. This is expressed by various terms in Scripture. The ‘not imputing sin’ is borrowed from the accounts of servants with their masters, and implies the account we are obliged to render the supreme Lord for all his benefits which we have so wretchedly misimproved; he might righteously exact of us ten thousand talents as due to him, but he is graciously pleased to cross the book and freely to discharge us. ‘The purging from sin’ implies it is

very odious and offensive in God's eyes, and has a special respect to the expiatory sacrifices, of which it is said, that "without blood there was no remission."

It is the high prerogative of God to pardon sin. His authority made the law, and gives life and vigor to it, therefore he can remit the punishment of the offender.

This royal supremacy is more conspicuous in the exercise of mercy towards repenting sinners, than in the acts of justice upon obstinate offenders. As a king is more a king by pardoning humble suppliants by the operation of his sceptre, than in subduing rebels by the power of the sword, for in acts of grace he is above the law, and overrules its rigor, in acts of vengeance, he is only superior to his enemies * * * It is the peculiar prerogative of God to pardon sin, for it is an act of empire. The judicial power to pardon is a flower inseparable from the crown, for it is founded in a superiority to the law, therefore inconsistent with any depending authority. The power to pardon is an efflux of supremacy and incommunicable to the subject. A prince that invests another with absolute power to pardon, must either relinquish his sovereignty, or take an associate to share it. It is not presumable that the wise God should invest men with that authority which they are utterly incapable of exercising.

Grace is exclusive of all merit and dignity in the subject, and of all obligation in the person that shows it.

Repentance in order of nature is before pardon, but they are inseparably joined in the same point of time. David in Psalm xxxii is an instance.

The repenting sinner who is under the strong conviction of his guilt, and his being always obnoxious to the judgment of God and eternal misery, the consequences of it, values the favor of God as the most sovereign good, and accounts his displeasure as the supreme evil. Repentance inspires flaming affections, in our prayers and praises for pardon. The sinner is obliged to suffer the punishment of his evil deeds in his own person, therefore it is clear, that the punishment cannot be transferred to another without the allowance of the sovereign, who is the patron of the rights of justice. There is a judicial exchange of persons between Christ and believers, their guilt is transferred to him and his righteousness is imputed to them."—*Bates*.

2. Each act of forgiveness is a discretionary act of supremacy.

“God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy,” yet, though forgiveness flows from his gracious nature it does not follow that he will pardon every one. For he saith to Moses, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” So Paul—“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” Ep. i: 5, 6. There is, in each case, as it arises, a special interposition of his will. He is at liberty to exercise his grace or not, as seems good in his sight. He chooses the subjects towards whom he extends the sceptre of mercy. Besides, since pardon must be bestowed at the discretion of some one or more, being an act above law, we ask at whose discretion can it safely lie? The majesty of the law—the glory of the Most High and the stability of the government, working the happiness of countless multitudes, are all concerned in its exercise. Who but Jehovah is sufficient for these things? Whose will would here afford any guaranty against sudden and sure destruction? If there be a prerogative which from its nature must inhere in the sovereign, surely this must be that prerogative. True, he has promised forgiveness to every believing sinner, and herein he has relaxed his severity. But he has done so, only to magnify his sovereignty, for the promise to which he has bound himself is the gift of his grace. “For ye are saved by grace, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God.” “The wages of sin is death.” Thus he still exercises his pleasure, and at his discretion alone is pardon bestowed.

3. Forgiveness is the most amiable act of supremacy.

The pardon of sin is beyond all doubt the most precious boon that can be bestowed on a sinner. It rolls back the sentence of the law, lifts off from his soul the overwhelming burden of guilt and lights up his pathway with joy and peace unutterable. It dissipates the sorrows of death and mitigates the pains of hell, and in their place fills the mouth with the song of praise. No blessedness like this to a sinner—compared with it, his creation may be forgotten, for without it, that creation were a curse.—When then the sovereign dispenses it, he presents himself to the

view of his subjects in the most endearing light. Touched with pity for the misery of his sinful creature, and unwilling that he should perish—he stretches out to the sinner at his feet his sceptre of mercy and bids him live—live forever. What can more endear him to his fallen creature? Can such a display fail to touch the springs of any generous bosom? Will not the sinner be bound to him by the strongest ties? Can he ever forget it, that he sought and found pardon? Will he not forget the hand that created him in his own glory, in love and admiration of the hand that pardoned him?—Who can doubt it?

4. Forgiveness in each act necessarily implies the exercise of Omniscience.

The penalty of the law varies both in kind and degree, in proportion to the heinousness as well as the number of the sins committed. “And that servant that knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”

In order then to the adjustment of the penalty to the offence, it is necessary to estimate properly the heinousness as well as know precisely the number of transgressions. Again, the heinousness of sin is affected by all the circumstances attendant on it, among which not the least important is the state of the sinner’s mind. To estimate it, accordingly, requires a thorough acquaintance with all their transgressions, especially with the heart of the individual.

Now since forgiveness is the entire removal of all guilt or legal liability to punishment, and punishment is proportioned to the number and nature and aggravation of sins, its exercise presupposes and demands a perfect knowledge in this respect. He who dispenses it, must in an especial manner, be able to fathom the heart, to know the thoughts and feelings and purposes of the sinner’s mind—to give the three their relative place and weight among all the other aggravating or modifying circumstances, which go to make up the aggregate of his guilt. Indeed, he must search the heart and try the reins

of the children of men. If he does not possess all this knowledge, he may fail to set aside the claims of the law in their full extent, which remaining still on the head of the sinner, must bring him to punishment, i. e. he is not forgiven.

But the scriptures explicitly assert that this kind of knowledge belongs to the Omniscient one alone. God claims it as his sole prerogative to search the hearts, so as to intimate guilt and to apportion to each one the punishment due to his sins. Hear his own language—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?"

"I the Lord, search the hearts, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings."

The same knowledge is claimed by Jesus as the Eternal Son of God, "and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to his works."

It follows therefore that the exercise of forgiveness must always be attended with that of Omniscience.

5. Forgiveness in each act also implies the exercise of Omnipotence.

The pardon of sin, which in itself simply denotes a change of relation, is in the plan of salvation revealed in the Gospel inseparably connected with a radical change of character. He, whose sins are forgiven is a believer—"To him, i. e., Jesus, gave all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth on him, shall receive remission of sins."

Besides, forgiveness is always associated in the Scriptures with repentance. Thus our Lord told his disciples, "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, beginning at Jerusalem." This we imagine will not be questioned for a moment. And if so, it follows that the forgiveness of sins must be associated with the exercise of the power to give faith and repentance. So in fact, Peter represented it to the Jewish council, when, speaking of Jesus, he said, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel and the remission of sins."

And without this power it is obvious that the power of forgiveness would be a nullity.

But repentance and faith are the points of that change in the heart which the Scriptures denote by the terms creation, resurrection, a new birth, the taking away of the heart of stone and giving a heart of flesh. Such terms, if they have any meaning, must denote such an exertion of power in producing this change, as is implied necessarily in bringing all things at first out of nothing, or in raising the dead or in infusing life into an inanimate mass. And who can doubt that these are in our view among the most unequivocal acts of Omnipotence? Who doubts that the power which creates, which calls the dead from the deep slumber of the tomb, which brings on the stage of life thousands who before existed not, is the putting forth of the Almighty arm? All this is necessary to convey the precious boon of forgiveness to sinners, and hence the act of forgiveness must be associated with Omnipotence, or it is nothing worth.

II.—THE POWER TO FORGIVE SINS.

From this view of the act of forgiveness, it is not difficult to discern the nature of the forgiving power. This is the source whence these acts proceed. Each act of forgiveness is but an exercise—an efflux of the power to forgive. The acts of forgiveness are the streams—the power to forgive is the fountain—and from the streams we may go up to the fountain.

If then, these acts, as we have seen, are acts of supremacy—and special discretionary acts of supremacy, and the most amiable acts of supremacy—if, moreover, these acts involve the exercise, both of omniscience and omnipotence, then is it manifest that the power of which they are but the mere exercises, must not only be a branch of the supreme power—but of that supreme power in its most distinctive aspect: God as invested with it, enrobes himself in the vestments of his high sovereignty, and comes forth to the view of all his creatures in the most awful and imposing manner—putting his hand on the head of a poor sinner, turning aside from his head the just sentence of his holy law, and sending him forth big with hope on the pathway of life and glory and immortality. Never is he so much an Almighty Sovereign, shining forth in his peerless majesty to our view, as at such a moment and in such an act. Never does he tower so far above all the creatures of his hands, and leave at such an im-

measurable distance below him, Gabriel, Michael, and all the lofty ones who burn and shine around his eternal throne—as when he says to the poor condemned ruined sinner, “Thy sins are forgiven thee, arise and go in peace.” Then His authority rises above the law, and then is he seen holding in his hands the eternal destiny of the fallen children of Adam.

And such being the nature of this power, how can we avoid the conclusion that *He only can forgive sins*—that he reserves it entirely in his own hands—that he will not, that he cannot intrust it to any creature. If there be a power inseparable from his Godhead—one in which, more than in any other, he appears to us as the blessed and only Potentate—the Independent Sovereign, wielding the eternal destiny of his creatures—it must be this. If the exercise of this power—which is an exercise of sovereignty, involving both Omniscience and Omnipotence, does not define the *Eternal I Am* to our view—then may we utterly despair of ever being able to distinguish him from his creatures, and live in constant dread of rendering to a finite being that homage which is due to the Infinite One, and consequently, of incurring his heaviest displeasure. But no, this cannot be. To forgive, is the prerogative of Jehovah—a right which he enjoys alone—a right belonging to *Him* in contradistinction to those which belong to his creatures. “I, even I, am *He* that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name sake.”

This is the flower of his crown—will he pluck it out and give it to another? It is his crown itself—will he take it off and put it on another’s head? Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Thou shalt be over my house, according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou.” But to bestow the power of forgiving sins on a creature, would be to do more than Pharaoh did to Joseph. It would be to put the crown on his head, and make him greater in the throne than Jehovah. It would be to reserve no greater power to himself.—And will God give his glory to another? Besides, should he be willing to give his crown to another—what head could wear it? Could Gabriel? “Could he read the heart and try the reins?” Could he new create the soul? Could he dispose of seats in glory? No! beneath such a load, he would bow down—sink—be crushed, aye, annihilated. The sceptre then, which extends mer-

cy to the sinner, in the forgiveness of his sins, is the sceptre to which all heaven bows, and at which all hell quakes. We need not fear to fall down before Him who stretches it out to us, and worship Him as the Lord God Almighty, which liveth and reigneth forever.

A.—EXAMINATIONS OF THE PRETENTIONS TO THIS POWER.

We think we have established our point, and shown the power under consideration to be in its very nature to be inalienable. It now only remains that we make a practical application of the principles involved in the foregoing discussion, by making use of them to examine the pretensions which have been put forth to the possession and exercise of this power. These pretensions, must in order to any appearance of validity, be based on the assumption that this power is delegated, or, that the power still residing in God, is exercised through or in connexion with the agency of certain individuals. The former is the ground on which the church of Rome rests her bold claims, and shuts the kingdom of heaven against all who will not bow to her dictats. The other is that preferred by high churchmen, who, fearful of proceeding all the length of the Mother of abominations, are yet desirous of retaining in their creed this dogma as far as possible, in order to impart dignity and importance to the ministry. Let us, then, examine the views of both parties, and see how far they are sustained in them by Scripture and reason.

1. Is this power ever delegated to any finite being?

This question, it would seem, might easily be answered from a right view of the nature of the power. This has been the burden of all our preceding discussion. We have seen that it is according to Bacon's distinction, a branch of that absolute prerogative which resides in the Godhead, according to his private will and judgment. We have seen, further, that its effect in every case, necessarily implies the presence of Omnipotence and Omniscience. On both these grounds, we have declared it to be incommunicable—incapable of being transferred to any mere creature, and therefore is not delegated to any such, because it cannot be. But let us suppose for a moment that such a thing were possible, what would be the necessary result? Would not that being become *ipso facto* supreme? Supreme power delegated,

renders him to whom it is delegated, supreme.² Omniscience delegated, if such a thing be conceivable, invests the individual with a power to know all things. Delegated omnipotence is omnipotence still.³ And can such powers reside in a creature? Is not the Supreme one God over all, blessed forever? Does not the exercise of omniscience and omnipotence, flowing from a power resident in Him mark out the High and Holy One, whom all are bound to adore. If not, how shall he ever claim our allegiance in any manifestation he may or can make of himself. The absurdity of this conclusion shows the falsity of the supposition.

But we will here be confronted by the passage in John xx: 23, in which this power is expressly said to be bestowed on the Apostles. This text will come more fully under consideration in a subsequent part of this discourse. For the present, it may suffice to say, that while we admit such to be its most obvious meaning, yet an interpretation so much at variance with the views every where advanced in the Scriptures, and so inconsistent with right reason, cannot be sustained unless it can be shown to be the only one of which the passage is susceptible. And that this language may be otherwise understood, is evident from the fact that a great multitude of pious and learned men have so understood it.

II.—IS THIS POWER EXERCISED THROUGH HUMAN AGENCY?

This view seems, at first, to be free from all the objections arising from the nature of the power as inalienable, admitting that God only can forgive sins, and claiming simply that he exercises it in connexion with human instrumentality—while therefore it apparently shields its advocates from the danger and guilt involved in those daring pretensions, it leaves them certainly in the same condition to all practical purposes; for so long as pardon can come only through the ministry, our souls are in their hands. This point, accordingly, demands a careful examination. And the more so, too, because this view, it is contended, is supported by many examples in the Old and New Testament. Thus, we read that Moses laid his hands on Joshua, and the spirit of wisdom came down on him. But it should be noticed that Moses acted in accordance with a special revelation of God's will

“And the Lord said unto Moses, take thee Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hands on him. And thou shalt put some of thine honor on him. that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.”—Again Annanias was sent to Saul in Damascus, that he might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. But Annanias, too, acted in obedience to a special disclosure of God’s will made to him, and this fact he declared to Saul at the time, and so in all similar cases. Now, this special revelation we regard as essentially necessary. For how otherwise would it be possible for the ministry to know when and where, and towards whom, God would be pleased to put forth his pardoning mercy? Or how would the individual to whom the minister was sent know that his sins were forgiven? The only ground of assurance would be the word of a man, a ground utterly insufficient, unless he proved himself to be a messenger from God. A revelation from God would be all that was requisite, but it is indispensable. Each case, as it arises, would demand a special disclosure, and thus the minister would need to receive constantly, new revelations of the mind of God. But, so far as we know, this special privilege is not claimed by those with whom we are now at issue. They make no pretensions to new light from above, or to plenary inspiration. They are accordingly constrained to abandon this position, if they are ready to submit to sound argument.

But, perhaps, we may be told that there is no need of a special revelation; a general one is all that is sufficient; and that is given us in the sure word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. If this can be shown, we are ready to submit without any further debate. Before, however, proceeding to examine the Scripture passages supposed to maintain their views, let us inquire what is meant by this general revelation, or by a general revelation authorising the belief that God exercises this power through or in connexion with a specified human agency. If this were so, then God, otherwise at liberty to pardon whom he pleases, binds himself to exercise his prerogative only through a certain mediation; of course he is no longer free to exercise his pleasure in each case. Pardon is no more according to his private will and judgment. The will of man becomes essentially necessary, and thus his declaration to Moses no longer remains true: “I will be gra-

cious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy," Ex. xxxiii, 19; because God has bound himself to exercise his will in every case in which these, his appointed instruments, are pleased to exercise theirs. It is not, then, according to God's good pleasure, but according to that of the ministry. Their discretion regulates the course of procedure. And is not this to all practical purposes, an assumption of this power? Is there not a delegation of it to the ministry? And, accordingly, does not this opinion lie open to all the objections we have raised against the first opinion? Most assuredly it does, in our judgment, and we can see in this belief, nothing more than an attempt to escape these objections in theory while they still retain all their force in practice. We regard, then, such a binding himself up, in the exercise of this prerogative, as utterly inconsistent with its nature, and impossible in the nature of the case. But our opponents here say all this reasoning is set aside by the plain declarations of Scripture, such passages as John xx: 23: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."*

* "The Holy Catholic Church hath in all ages, referred to this passage as a commission to the most important spiritual functions. It was ever understood to mean what its language literally imports. It is the explicit sense of our church that the power of remission and retention is as permanent as the ministry, and is an essential prerogative of the sacerdotal office. Wherever remission of sins is spoken of, we attach but one idea to the expression.—*Dr. Curtis' Sermon*, pp. 5, 6.

Nature of the power to forgive as thus bestowed on the Ministry.

This is not an independent or intrinsic power, * * * *. Such power belongs to God alone. It must, therefore, be a ministerial or instrumental power. God having appointed an order of men in the world to accomplish his gracious purposes of mercy to mankind, makes them his agents in conferring the blessings which he has in store for them. He has *entrusted to them certain powers*, whose proper exercise he has engaged to ratify.

The ambassador of an earthly monarch, in treating with revolted subjects, may be invested with the power of settling the conditions of reconciliation, as well as of promising to all who will submit to them. Although the original source of pardon and its final ratification are with the sovereign, yet, if his agent or minister has kept by the articles furnished him, he has so far, acted in place of his sovereign, who will ratify and confirm the acts of his minister, as much as if done by himself. * * * Through the ministry as the agent and instrument, are conferred all these benefits which are implied in the ordinances. These, when rightly administered, and duly received, are as effective of their purpose, as if administered by the independent or supreme power. * * * * (This is all pretty well; our friend has his eyes open while speaking directly on the nature of this power, but as we shall see, he waxes bolder and bolder as he proceeds.)

Matthew xviii, 18: "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. xvi, 19: "And I will give unto thee (i. e. Peter) the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Before proceeding to the consideration of these passages, it may be well to remember the purpose for which they are introduced by our opponents—not to prove that this power is delegated to the ministry—this is repudiated; but to show that God limits his own exercise of it by the discretion of a regularly authorized ministry. This is all we have to do with this. Our business is simply to show that they cannot be brought forward to substantiate such a view.

It is contended that these three passages contain the same idea, which is most clearly, because literally, expressed by John, and therefore are to be interpreted by it. If so, i. e., if we are to take the language of John in its most obvious and literal sense, then it explicitly teaches that the Apostles were endowed with the plenary power of forgiveness at discretion.

Now this, in the eyes of our opponents is very different from the idea that God made use of them and now makes use of the Christian ministry as a special mediation through which he dispenses pardon. And it will not do to meet all the formidable objections which are raised to the grant of any such power to

* * * And hence, it may be urged, of what special and positive value is a ministry if its service be only of incidental benefit, such as not ensues from the sober action of any man whatever, and not of an appointed and certain efficacy; one to which mankind, encouraged and fortified by the promises of God, can confidently resort as the divinely authorised agent for dispensing grace to the soul. (The power for which Dr. C. contends then, whatever may be its nature, must be such as to engender in an intelligent mind the conviction, that the ministers in whom it resides, or through whom it flows, are so authorised to dispense pardon, that their declaration is an infallible ground of assurance of pardon.) If the ministry be an appointed office, it must have an authority and efficiency, which does not belong to those who are not invested with it. This authority, though delegated, is competent to all the purposes for which it was bestowed, and when actually given, is as efficient to its end as though it were original and independent. A true authority implies either an inherent or accompanying power, which is competent to all the purposes for which it is held. And, although a delegated authority implies a derived and limited power, yet that power is in its effects precisely the same as if original or exercised by the supreme power.—*Dr. Curtis' Sermon, p. 9, 11, 12.*

the ministry, by saying that all that is meant is, that God makes use of them as the appointed channel through which he himself conveys pardon, and then appeal to these passages in proof of the doctrine as thus explained. Their literal import is that the apostles were impowered to forgive sins at their discretion—and only in proof of such a pretence can they in their literal view be fairly urged. They may thus be quoted by the advocates of the claims of the Romish church, and are thus often appealed to in defence of their claims—but none who are not prepared to go all the length of these followers of the Man of sin have any right to appeal to them. Our reply to them has already been given. But those with whom we are at issue now disclaim such views. These contend merely that the ministry are the agents or instruments through whom the benefit of forgiveness is bestowed. Such is not the literal import of the passages above cited, which are consequently of no avail to establish these views.

We remark further, that whatever may be the power here granted, it cannot be proven to have been granted to the apostles exclusively. It is clear from John that the occasion on which these words were spoken was on the evening of our Lord's resurrection—when the disciples were gathered together in Jerusalem with closed doors for fear of the Jews. John tells us that the disciples were present and were the persons addressed, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my father hath sent me even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit," &c. Now Luke (24: 33) tells us, in speaking of the same occasion, who these disciples were—they were not only the eleven apostles, but they that were with them—i. e., all the disciples—so that the power here granted was not granted exclusively to the ministry, but given to all the disciples. The passage then can with no show of fairness be alleged in proof of any special power conferred on the Romish ministry.

Once more—granting that the apostles were the individuals here addressed, though other disciples were present, and that to them alone was this power given. Yet since this power is granted or promised in immediate connexion with the conferring of the Holy Ghost significantly alluded to by our Lord's breathing on them, it cannot be shown that it was not granted to them as

inspired men and that none possess it but those who have such supernatural gifts. On such a supposition, we see no difficulty in the exercise of such a power on their part. For being endowed with the power of discerning spirits, they could infallibly distinguish such as were real penitents and believers, and their authoritative declaration based on this knowledge would be only an annunciation of what God had already done. It would in reality be no more than a declaration to others of a disclosure of the exercise of the power of forgiveness on the part of God made to them by the direct communication of the Spirit. But such a grant as this avails nothing to advance the claims of such as now pretend to exercise the power of forgiveness, unless they can show themselves inspired men. So that the text viewed in all its meanings, in no one of them answers the purpose for which it has so often and so exultingly been quoted. And this being the main and sole prop of this dogma, we are warranted to conclude that there is no revelation made in the Scriptures of any purpose of God to confer pardon through the ministry as a special mediation. None in which they are warranted to say to a sinner, thy sins are forgiven thee, and this declaration thereby be an evidence that his sins are really forgiven.

But we contend further, that the pretensions, which men set up to the power on earth to forgive sins are not only false, but blasphemous. That these pretensions put forth in any form are high, their advocates candidly acknowledge. It is for the avowed purpose of investing themselves and the ministry in general with a great degree of authority, and giving themselves elevation in the eyes of the church, that they are put forth. They are, however, in our view, not only high and arrogant, but blasphemous.

If the conclusion reached in the foregoing discussion be correct, then it has been shown that the claims advanced are such as if true, demand at the hands of all, the reverence and homage due to the supreme and Mighty One. They are claims of the possession of the highest prerogative of supremacy, and of attributes which cannot inhere in a finite being. If these claims however, are false, which on principles laid down is obviously so, then those who make them must be under the serious charge of a bold assumption of the prerogative of God. These men attempt to mount up and occupy the throne of God and profes-

sing to be seated there, they call on others to confess their sins unto them in order to forgiveness. Pretending that they sit upon the throne of grace, they invite us to come boldly to them that we may obtain mercy and find grace in time of need. And alas! how many thousands and myriads of poor ignorant deluded souls are led away by their craft. If any one more wise say to one of such pretenders, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" is there one, a single one of them, that can say to a palsied man, "Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house," and the palsied man will arise and do so? Is there one who can substantiate his claims to the authority to forgive sins on earth, by such or a similar faith? Jesus did not hesitate to do so—to show his authority; and surely since the servant is not above his Lord, his legitimate successors should not hesitate to follow his example.

But we repeat it, is there one that can or will do it. If so, where is he? Let him come forward and produce his strong claims. Till then we may be pardoned for replying to one and all of such claimants, "Jesus we know, Paul we know, but who are ye?"

Did I ask who are they? Did I inquire who are such as pretend to say to a poor sinner, thy sins are forgiven thee and expect that it will be even so according to their declaration? Why need I ask a question answered long ago, to guard us if possible against the danger of ignorance on this point? Look at 2nd Thess. ii. We read of that man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that which is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God." Can we fail to recognize in these features the likeness of these pretenders? Could description be more accurate in its main points? Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped? Is not this precisely what we have proved to be the amount of their pretensions? Have we not shown that they exalt themselves to supremacy in its highest and most distinctive exercise? So that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Have we not also shown that they show themselves to be God, by their calling on men to seek forgiveness at their hands, occupying places of trust and honor in the church on earth.

We therefore conclude that these men are guilty of blasphemy. Does such a conclusion startle us? Do we shrink back and pause before we can be persuaded that men could be carried so far in their zeal to maintain their influence and increase their authority? Why should we? Has not the apostle accounted for it? He declares that they are given up to strong delusion, to believe a lie that they may all be damned, and this because they believed not the truth, but take pleasure in unrighteousness.

Those given up to judicial blindness, may proceed to any length in the way of iniquity and absurdity. And surely it is reasonable to suppose there is no sin which God would be more ready to punish with an unsparing hand than that which makes so bold an onset on his dearest prerogative—as one which would pluck the flower from his crown.

The force of these remarks is not at all weakened by the reply that the power claimed is only conditionally effective. If by this it were meant that the ministry possessed only the power of declaring the sins of the true penitent forgiven, then all objections to its exercise would be obviated. But that such is not the meaning we are to attach to these terms, is obvious from the consideration that this is our authority, which every one with the Scriptures in his hands, is at liberty to exercise. The Scriptures declare in the plainest terms that he who repents is forgiven. Any one, then, who reads and understands, can declare upon the authority of God, that if an individual is a true penitent, his sins are forgiven. This, however, is not a power which satisfies such claimants. It does not invest the ministry with any peculiar authority above others, and consequently, does not answer the purpose for which such pretensions are made. The conditional effectiveness thus turns out on examination to be without a condition, i. e. a real and unconditional effectiveness. The reply is accordingly a mere evasion, and the charge stands unreputed.

But it becomes not only those who advance such claims, but those who are disposed to hearken to them, to beware.—They are so high, so daring, so far above all claims, ordinarily set up by men—they are moreover so opposed to all proper views of Scripture, so derogatory to God, and so degrading to man—that there must be guilt in entertaining them for a moment.—

The poison is so violent, that the slightest quantity is fatal. The pretensions should at once be resisted, and every good and true man is bound to show their fallacy and impiety.

Finally, while we deny this prerogative to any mere man or finite being, we cheerfully acknowledge it as belonging to Jesus. We claim it for him at the hands of all others. The Son of Man hath power on earth to *forgive sins*. High and sacred as is this prerogative, it is not too much so for Him. He is the Son of God—the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. He is clothed with every divine perfection, because possessed of a divine nature. In this wonderful person, then, this Jesus of Nazareth, this God and man in two distinct natures and one person, we see one able to receive and wield this power. Besides, as the one Mediator between God and man, he has purchased by his obedience unto death, the right to give eternal life to as many as he will. It is his righteousness which makes the sinner just. It is his blood which delivereth from all sins, his death which stands in the stead of the sinner. He assumed our relation to the law, and all our legal responsibilities rests on him. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and cancelled the guilt of every believer.

The Father has accepted him, and all power in heaven and earth is given unto him. We may well, therefore, concede to his claims. If they are controverted, he can easily substantiate them by the exhibition of these very divine attributes necessary to the exercise of the power. So he did on the occasion alluded to in our text. He read the thoughts of the heart. "Why reason ye thus in your heart." He displayed his omnipotence.—Arise, said he to the palsied man, take up thy bed and go unto thine house; and he arose and departed to his house. By an effect, which was palpable to all, he showed that he could produce another of equal difficulty—though not discernible to others. His pretensions, therefore, were not false—his claims were valid. All must know that he had power on earth to forgive sins.

Let us then, my friends, as poor sinners, come to Jesus for pardon. Let us receive our forgiveness at His hands. Those that would stand between us and him, and proffer to us their aid in securing forgiveness, let us thrust aside and refuse their aid. Let us know that while Jesus can forgive, none other can. Then let us cry with broken hearts to Him, and learn from experience that Jesus has power on earth to forgive sins.

ADDRESSES

OF

REV. DR. H. M. SCUDDER,

OF THE REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH, ARCOT, INDIA ;

AND OF

REV. DR. RICHARD FULLER,

OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH, BALTIMORE, MD.,

AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN TRACT
SOCIETY, NEW YORK, MAY, 1860.

REV. DR. SCUDDER'S ADDRESS.

THE earlier compositions belonging to the Hindoo literature differ materially from the later ones in this, that they are characterized by extreme conciseness and brevity. And there is a maxim among the Pundits, the learned men of India, to this effect: "That an author rejoices in the economizing of half a short vowel, as much as he does in the birth of a son." I shall try to conform to this heathen maxim—to the spirit of it—in so much, at least, as to be brief.

Here are two resolutions. They open a great territory of subject before me, and it is impossible for me at this time to enter upon it so as to do justice to the important questions involved. But there is one little word which juts out like a promontory at the end of the first resolution. It is the word ABROAD; and I shall take it as my text. What is the Tract Society, and what is its work? What has it wrought? What are we to do for it? These are seemingly trite and simple questions; but they are worthy of our consideration. The work of the Tract Society, as I understand it, is this: It is a channel-

digger. It is not a fountain; it does not originate truth. It is not Divine, but human. It is not a creator, but a worker. The Bible is the fountain—pure, vivifying, inexhaustible. And as one mode of leading out its waters upon the heart and the life of the world, the Tract Society digs channels. All over the earth it has opened such channels. Through them the water of life trickles down the fair, verdant slopes of our mount Zion, and by them the living stream has permeated heathen deserts, causing beautiful oases to spring up on surfaces once bleak with spiritual barrenness.

If you ask, What sort of a work is the Tract Society doing in the earth? I say, It is a noble work. I have been sixteen years a missionary, and I have had an opportunity of seeing what the Tract Society has done in the great country of Hindostan. A sublime work is the Tract Society performing on the earth! Here is the Bible, a world of spiritual truth, with its oceans, its towering mountains, its free, glad-springing rivers. Over the whole the Tract Society moves—everywhere a worker. In the ocean of Scripture it goes down like the diver, and brings up pearls. Into the bowels of the mountains of Scripture it pierces like the miner, and brings forth ores to build, and gems to deck palaces of spiritual beauty. In the river-beds of Scripture it stoops and searches, and it comes up the banks with its apron full of golden sand. Everywhere it is a worker in the domains of Scripture, and every thing that it collects and brings forth is for the renewal and the garniture of souls, immortal souls. Its pearls and gems and wisely wrought jewels, what are they but adornments of imperishable loveliness which it confers upon souls? Truly, this is a noble work.

What has the Tract Society wrought out? I may claim to be a competent witness in regard to a part of the heathen world. Sixteen years ago, I went to India. I returned from there nearly two years ago. I have had an opportunity of knowing what assistance it has been to missionaries there. Has not the Tract Society been to us a helper? Do we missionaries not value its agencies? How shall I describe the aids and supports which this Tract Society has extended to me as a missionary? Why, as I look back, they seem to me to stand on either side of my path through the wilderness of heathenism like great protecting hedges mantling with roses—walls full with beauty, full of fragrance. And I have never yet met the missionary who was so hopelessly stupid as to be insensible to the assistance

rendered us by this Society ; and I know none so ungenerous as to withhold the acknowledgment. I ask if there are not recorded results which justify me in saying what I have said, and which would justify me in saying a great deal more of what this Society has accomplished in foreign lands. Its archives are the records of Christian churches, planted in many a spot between Cape Comorin and the grand old Himalayas. Go through the annual reports, and read the summaries of missionary witnesses. Pass from year to year, from the earlier and feebler efforts to the maturities of wider scope and enlarged labor ; and gazing back from the platform of its present position, add up the triumphs, and see how God has blessed this Tract Society.

There is a tract in India called THE JEWEL MINE OF SALVATION. I have packed up my things ready to return to India, else I would have brought a copy of it here. It exists in many languages. I do not know who composed it, but probably it was a native. It has been adopted and published by the Society. That tract has a marvellous history already in India ; it has worked its way from the remotest north down to the extreme south, passing from language to language, perpetually demonstrating its power and its usefulness. Its whole course has been a career of triumph. Why, its footsteps have been marked everywhere with flowers of peace and beauty springing up, and by the sides of the paths it has trodden have ripened rich clusters of fruit, and triumphal arches have spanned the highway of its advance. That tract has been the means of a great many conversions. There are souls to-night in the kingdom of heaven, whom this tract taught where to find wings for so lofty a flight. That tract is in poetry, for the Hindoos are very fond of poetry. An assembly can be collected in the streets at any time by chanting. I will chant a verse of it in Telugu, which will show you the sweetness of one of the vernacular languages of India. [Dr. Scudder then chanted a verse in that tongue.] The meaning of it is this : " O sirs ! read this true, spotless book of God ; O sirs ! discerning its truth with love, take hold upon Jesus Christ ; thus, O sirs ! at last go clear of the dreadful hell, and joyfully reach the blest abode in the heavenly world."

Hindoos have actually sung away their prejudices against Christianity, as they chanted the stanzas of this tract, and as the truth stole in upon their hearts and consciences through its mellifluous cadences. The stanzas of this tract have been heard from night-boats as they floated down Gunga's broad tide. They have been

heard beneath the banian's shade at noontide, issuing from the lips of the resting traveller, who found, in the flowing verse and the loving thoughts, the solace of his weariness. And don't you think, as the sweet utterance swelled up from the river shore and from under the shady palm-tree, that the sympathizing angels came to the very brink of the battlements above, and looked over, listening to the strain, and murmuring back their happy echo? If there is any work which I thank God for permitting me to accomplish in India, it is that I succeeded in introducing that tract into two languages.

That will live on. Yes, its star-rays will continue to beam out upon the night sky of India, until, sweetly blending, they shall lose themselves in the all-eclipsing effulgence of that millennial morn which we all believe is speedily coming. It has often been to me a subject of marvel, that a little tract like that can accomplish such wonderful results. The only way in which we can explain it is, that God energizes it, that there is a spiritual power which God gives to it. Take a haughty Brahmin. That tract flies up to him like a little bird, and flaps its wings in his face. He gets angry, and would strangle it. But it expands into the form of an eagle with piercing talons and striking beak, and that Brahmin and all his superstitions become in its presence like a company of squeaking chickens. How mighty the power of a God-commissioned tract! It grapples with the intellect of a Brahmin; it flings that man's intellect just as a giant would fling a stripling. It goes down into the dark caverns of his heart, where a knowledge of God has never entered, and lets in rays of light from the Sun of righteousness, lets in a new story—the story of the Crucified One—and that man's heart becomes a palace in which God resides; it brings all his thoughts into obedience to Christ, and sends him out to preach the gospel. What a marvel is this! There is none so high that a little tract, if God pleases to own and bless it, cannot bend and break him; and there is none so low that it cannot lift and bless him, no matter whether he be a sneering Brahmin on the banks of the Ganges, or the dairyman's daughter in the Western world. The same tract now is the lightning-bolt that rives the proud, uplifted, defying crag, and now it is the dew that fills, and the sunbeam that quickens a withering flower. I believe we shall see what tracts have done, when we reach the shores of eternity.

In India there was a man preaching under a tree. A lad about sixteen years of age asked him for a book. The missionary pu

tract into his hand. He began to read. He read a page or so, and came to the word—that wondrous dissyllable that floats upon our banners, JESUS—he came to that word, and he looked up at the missionary, and said, “This may be the very book that my father got a great many years ago.” “How is that?” asked the missionary. “Why,” says he, “my father lived away in a distant town, far from any white man, and he received a book which had that name in it, and having read it, after some months he threw away all his idols, and shaped his course according to it; and when he died, JESUS was the last word that trembled on his lips.” Did not that man go to heaven? I ask. There shall be wondrous and joyful meetings at the last day, between missionaries who have labored in this work, and redeemed souls whose redemption they never knew of while they were on the earth. In that day a man will come up to another, and say, “Perhaps you don’t know me, but I know you. I heard you preach in such a year on the earth, and you gave me a book, and I never saw a white man’s face again. But the book was the means of blessing to me; it was the one plank which carried me to the shore.” Then shall those two fall on each other’s neck, and kiss each other with kisses of affection.

But we can trace tracts not only in the overmastering power which they have exerted on individuals, but we can point, in India, to a new community springing up, like a fresh creation, from the energy of a single tract. There is a mission in India which grew out of a tract on the Decalogue. It fell into the hands of a wandering priest. He was a Brahmin of high standing, and a band of disciples followed him. They had abandoned their idolatry; they yearned to know something better than was furnished in the foul mythologies of Hindooism. I have been asked, in this country, this question: “Did you ever meet a heathen who seemed really to seek for the mercy of God, and for the truth?” I think these men come as near to it as any I ever heard of. If a man shall seek for God, if his heart shall pant after truth and the love of God, God will meet that yearning of his heart. He will call a man in this country to go and announce salvation through Jesus to him. He will find the person to build a ship to carry him. These men yearned for truth. The little tract containing the ten commandments met them; they found at once that there was a power in it. They recognized this power, just as the ass of Balaam recognized the power of the angel. They said, “Why, we have never seen any thing

so pure, so simple, so majestic, so far-reaching as this." They seized hold of it like a sword. They pressed it against others; for still they roved through the villages, continuing their work of teaching, though now teaching only this. They found that they had a two-edged sword, and it cut them, as well as others. It became a schoolmaster; it led them up into the temple of the New Testament, and introduced them to the great High-priest the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God over all. They found out where the tract came from. They went and got a Bible, and some of them are now ministers, and nearly all of them were brought into the church. That single tract was the germ of a whole mission in India. What has the Tract Society done—this Tract Society, and the Tract Society of England? What have they done, do you ask? I answer, They have begun to span the sky of heathenism with a galaxy in which the stars are converted souls. Since I left India, two years ago, through the agency of a tract of this Society, a movement has commenced in our own mission, which will, I trust, result in the organization of a Christian church.

Now, what shall we do? Shall we go back? Never! Shall we sit down? Never! Shall we deflect? Never! What shall we do? We shall go forward, no matter who opposes. The true Christian fears neither man nor devil. If a man is a true Christian, what has he to fear? Nothing. His watchword is, Forward! People may tell him, "This is a feeble agency. Nothing is more absurd than to try to convert a person by giving him a tract of four pages. "It appears to be absurd, and worldly people sneer at it. In the olden time, on the walls of the city of Jericho, were there not great sneerings and hootings among the people as they talked, and said, "Who are those queer fellows blowing rams' horns?" But when the long blast came which the Lord commanded, did not the city fall flat? So it will be with these. The tracts are the rams' horns. I have heard it remarked, that "distributing tracts is like sowing seed on the surface of a river. What will become of it?" We shall admit the figure, for do we not read of one river, the swelling Nile, with its rolling stores of liquid wealth, on which the inhabitants of that region do cast their seed? And the sound of the rising, rolling wave—what is it? Is it not the prophecy of the harvest-song? From the bosom of those waters there shall come up an abundant harvest, and the smell of sheaves.

People say, again, "Will not our efforts meet with opposition"? What if they do? Opposition only glorifies the gospel. If we have got to overcome opposition, it develops our muscles. The church, which is intrusted with the dissemination of gospel truth, is the grandest military organization in the universe. Our great Captain is Jesus Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and that man is a traitor in the camp, who will not follow when Christ calls. The angels themselves delight to be pioneers and camp-followers to the church. But let him beware who withstands the gospel, for it will upset him. A man had a stream that ran pleasantly through his meadows. "I will not have that stream any longer," he said. So he got together stones, and built a huge dam. The stream looked at him, and laughed; and swelling into a vast lake, it burst the barrier, and its accumulated waters came into this man's premises with the rush and roar of a giant, and that man and his chattels were never heard of again. That is the way with the gospel. The natural course of Christ's gospel is kind and gentle. It is like a stream purling through the meadow, murmuring hosannas in its gentle ripples; but let a man meddle with its flow, and it will gather up its forces, rush in upon him, and sweep him away, and all opposition, with a roar like that of our own Niagara. God's promises are the foundation upon which we rest. We don't care whether man opposes or not; we trust God; his word is enough for us. No matter how great the storm may be, we ride over the angry crests in the life-boat of the Divine promise.

How can we carry forward the work of God? Every individual must work, and recognize his power in Christ's kingdom. For myself, am I not bound to find out what my work is, to gird up my loins for it, to shoe my feet, to have the sword in my hand, and the helmet on my brow? So are you to work, my friends, every one of you. If every Christian were but a trimmed lamp, what a light would be shed abroad upon the world. If every Christian soul were a tuned instrument, what blessed sounds would swell the universal strain. What glorious results we should then behold. Oh, for a heart and life of love! The very same wind that howls as it moves through the canebrake and the dismal swamp, when it falls upon the strings of an Æolian harp evokes the sweetest melody. The unloving heart is the canebrake and the swamp. The loving heart is the Æolian harp, and when the breath of God touches its strings there is melody; the life of that man on the earth is a strain of music.

REV. DR FULLER'S ADDRESS.

Resolved, That the national and catholic spirit of the American Tract Society, and its influence upon the literature of the land, ought to make it dear to every Christian and patriot.

It is Seneca who says, that the sources of large rivers are sacred, and altars should be built there. If such reverence ought to be given to fountains from which fertilizing streams issue, how ought we to venerate those great institutions which enrich and bless the earth with heavenly truth and spiritual influences.

In some ages and nations, the danger has been from a superstitious idolatry of every thing established. And this bigotry to system is certainly most deplorable, as it dreads all improvement, and rivets on the mind a blind devotion to falsehoods in religion and government, simply because they are hoary with age. In our day, and in this country, there is little peril from this quarter. The most reckless spirit of innovation "raves, recites, and maddens round the land." *Good* is at all points assailed by its old insidious enemy, *Better*. Nothing is so venerable that it escapes the restless mania for tampering and tinkering, and pulling down and destroying. And yet it seems to me that this rage for disorganizing would find itself rebuked, if people would only study the past, and examine the biographies of the noble men who founded our religious and civil institutions, and read the record of their toils, self-denials, anxieties, prayers, and sacrifices.

From infancy we have been accustomed to our national privileges and blessings, and we feel as if this happy union of states had always existed. But let any patriot reflect upon the condition of this country before we had a Constitution. Let him then explore the history of that instrument. Mr. Webster intended to write such a history, and Mr. Curtis of Boston has nobly fulfilled the task. Let him begin with the first convention in Annapolis, to which only five states sent delegates. Then let him mark the proceedings in the body which adopted the constitution, and the conflicts through which the friends of this republic had to pass, before the ratification of that glorious charter. Let any man who loves his country examine these pages of our annals, and he will acknowledge that, in the formation of the general gov-

ernment, a victory was achieved almost as arduous and sublime as that which crowned the Revolutionary campaigns; and he will confess, too, how hopeless must ever be the effort to reunite these states, if—which may Heaven forbid!—folly and wickedness shall succeed in dividing them.

These remarks apply to our great religious organizations. We meet, and mingle our prayers and counsels, and exclaim, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” And we feel as if it had been always thus. But it would touch any heart to hear, from those who were present, the narrative of the inauguration of this enterprise and of others kindred to it: how a few men of God met; how they inquired whether it was possible that those who had so long been arrayed against each other could unite; how they knelt down and prayed for light and harmony; and how they wept for joy at the great triumph of Christian love over sectional and sectarian littleness. For my own part, as I have heard those apostolic fathers speak of these things, my very heart has burned within me; and I have been filled with amazement and sorrow, that servants of Jesus, north or south, should desire to enlist such institutions in any partisan warfare.

I have travelled from Baltimore to this city simply that I might enjoy the pleasure and honor of being with you to-night. But you do not wish me, I am sure, to pronounce any eulogium on the American Tract Society. The time has passed when that could be needed. There are, however, one or two traits in its character which ought to make it dearer and dearer to us every year. Upon these I would say something.

And, first, this Society is NATIONAL—national, not sectional. It is more. It is one of the few grand conservators and bonds of union which are left us. Once, all our influential religious denominations were accustomed to have their respective anniversaries, when, from every part of the land, Christians came together, glowing with love for each other and with a common loyalty to Jesus. And I need not say by what ties of love our national Union was thus compacted. This harmony of feeling and action has been for ever destroyed in the two largest religious bodies; and unless God interposes, it will soon be violently broken up in all our religious communions.

[Dr. Fuller proceeded to ask what were the grounds of these de-

plorable disruptions, and affirmed that, practically, there is little difference between good men on any of the questions which have produced these fatal mischiefs. These separations of those who once embraced each other had not been caused by any alienation in the great masses of the denominations. He had not words to express his sense of the folly and madness of disunion. He loved and honored this Society because it had stood nobly aloof from these unworthy bickerings and disputings.]

If we deserve to be American citizens, this Society will engage our warmest interest because it is superior to all sectional feeling, because it recognizes no North, no South, no East, no West; but is, in its entire character, in all its objects, wholly American, embracing with the same tender solicitude, every portion of the land.

He knows little of man who can make light of the religious sentiment implanted in our nature. It is the deepest and most uncontrollable element in society; and like those central fires which cause earthquakes and convulsions, it can subvert the foundations of any government. There is no danger to this land, there is no principle at work, so threatening to the permanency of our civil institutions, as a misguided, fanatical spirit. It is, in itself, a desperately mischievous thing; insinuating distrust among brethren; sacrificing the noblest undertakings, the most venerable charities, to any blind, wild, headlong, chimerical impulse which inflames the passions. And politicians are ever busy stimulating it, for their own ambitious, mercenary purposes. This widespread and portentous evil can be counteracted only by a sound, healthy religious influence: by the diffusion of the Gospel, God's remedy, working slowly—not as some men wish to do things; for as the smaller the insect the more rapidly it multiplies, so the littler the man the greater the haste in which every thing must be done—working slowly as God ever works, but working surely, to cure all the maladies which afflict our fallen race.

Another characteristic of this association endears it to my heart. It is CATHOLIC—catholic, not sectarian. Its motto is, Unity in things essential, liberty in things indifferent, and charity in all things.

Here, again, I repeat, in effect, what I said as to the proper love of one's native state. If we are sincere, we of course prefer our own communion. Macaulay and others have laughed at simple parson Adams, who, after exhorting his hearers to become religious, added,

“And when I say religion, I mean the Christian religion, and by the Christian religion, I mean the Protestant, and by the Protestant, I mean our own.” The proverb says, that if the faults of the best men were written on their foreheads, they would all pull their hats over their eyes. It may be that some of us only conceal what this good man was frank enough to proclaim. However that may be, we can all comprehend and respect his sincerity. But when a man loves only his own church; if he cannot love the image of Christ in his brother, wherever he finds it, and on whatever metal stamped, why, then I question whether that man's heart has ever been changed by the Holy Spirit. A man who loves his sect more than the image of Christ in his brother, really loves his sect more than Christ, and loves himself more than all.

Those who refuse to coöperate with Christians of other denominations, because there is some difference of opinion as to forms and rites and sacraments, are no doubt quite sincere; and sincerity is so rare a virtue, that I honor it wherever I see it. But when such persons call themselves Protestants, they are guilty of palpable self-contradiction; they might as well pretend to be in Rome and Geneva at the same time. On this subject there can be only two consistent courses: that of Rome, which forbids all coöperation with others, because there is an infallible church; and that of Protestants who allow coöperation, not because the points of difference are unimportant—for nothing is unimportant in religion—but because they do not recognize an infallible church.

I wish this principle of coöperation were more distinctly understood. It is impossible for those who have the spirit of Christ not to love each other. I appeal to all such, whether at the period of their conversion they did not enter into the apostle's language, and say, “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” But a scrupulous conscience may afterwards be perplexed by the suggestion, that to unite with others is a compromise of the truth. Let it ever be borne in mind that there is no surrender, no letting down of any truth. We were Christians before we were identified with any denomination; and our union in this Society is not a union of denominations. It is something higher and nobler—it is a Christian union. We meet to carry forward the great enterprise of salvation, to diffuse the great essential doctrines in which we all agree. A man,

and that man my brother, is sinking in your river. I hear his bubbling cry, and leaping into a boat, I look around for some one to take the other oar. In an instant a noble form is at my side, ready to bend to his work. But I first catechize him : Are you a Baptist ? Do you believe in immersion ? in close communion ? With tears he looks up to me : " See, see ! " he cries, " your brother is perishing ; let us save him before it is too late. " But I refuse. He does not agree with me on the doctrines of my church, and I prefer that my brother should sink rather than coöperate with him.

The melancholy reactions of Protestantism described by Rankè, are to be ascribed mainly to these baleful animosities ; and the great solvent of our sectarian prejudices, that which can melt and fuse them into love, can cement us and make us cohesive, is coöperation. I am weary of hearing homilies on brotherly love. Let us work together, let us fight together, and we shall be one—one in counsel, one in heart, one in sacrifice for our common Redeemer. The parting prayer of Jesus will be answered, " That they all may be one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me. " At the battle of the Peiho in China, about a year ago, Commodore Tatnall looked on for a while ; but as the war waxed more fierce, he could stand it no longer ; " It is no use, " he exclaimed, " blood is thicker than water ! " and dashed into the fight. And you remember the effect of his conduct upon England. " Well done, Americans, " they cried ; " this act will do more to bind us to you than all the treaties of diplomatists. " We Baptists are sometimes thought to be rather fond of water, somewhat amphibious in our creed. But, friends, once for all understand us ; we really do not believe that the pure milk of the word is water. We feel that blood is thicker than water. It is blood which draws and unites us to you. And this hour, when we stand here side by side, and the coming campaigns—in which, wherever the conflict shall be closest, and the sword of the Spirit shall flash fastest and brightest, we pledge ourselves not to fail you—these, these will do more to unite us than all essays and plans of Christian union which the whole college of apostles could devise, if they were now on earth.

One other excellence of this Society is mentioned in the resolution. I refer to its influence upon THE LITERATURE OF OUR COUNTRY. May I be permitted to say a word as to this ?

The living ministry is God's ordinance to save them that believe.

Therefore I have no sympathy with those who give the press precedence to the pulpit. Still, who can measure the power which the press exerts? An ounce of lead moulded into a bullet and put in a Minnie rifle, with a little black powder under it, will, if it meet no obstruction, go some two miles, and do its errand very sufficiently upon a man. But that same piece of lead, cast into types, and put into one of Hoe's lightning presses, with a little black liquid over it, will mock at obstacles and do its mission, not on one man, but on millions, and though mountains, continents, and oceans intervene.

A steam printing-press! I feel something like awe as I stand before one of these wonderful engines. It seems to me almost as if it were a living thing—one of Ezekiel's living creatures, "with the hands of a man, and the noise of many waters, and the spirit of the living creature in its wheels." How it strips itself for its work! It requires no nourishment, knows no weariness, but on it toils, with a strength which would mock to scorn the might of a giant, with a clamor as if it would shiver in pieces any substance within its grasp. And yet, with a precision and delicacy unattainable by human muscles, it receives a fabric which any rude touch would rend, and impressing upon it, in the twinkling of an eye, thoughts which it cost the most active mind hours to compose, flings off page after page to instruct, delight, regenerate, and bless the world.

None of us appreciate the potency of the press as an agent for the diffusion of knowledge over the land, in heavy tomes, in journals, above all, in the daily newspaper, that wonderful modern institution which has revolutionized not only the literary, but the commercial and the political world. Constitutionally there are only two estates in Congress, but a third estate has sprung up, occupying a higher seat than members either of the Senate or House, while Congress is in session, for it presides in the galleries, and continuing in session after Congress has adjourned, in session all the year, and all over the country. It is composed of the representatives of the press. They form and shape public sentiment; and at this day when the world is, as never before, under the influence of public opinion, they wield a power transcending that of both the constitutional bodies combined.

I wish I had time to say something of the singular power with which the press has invested the public speaker. We talk of the grandeur of ancient oratory, but how far did its influence extend?

Demosthenes ascends the bema. He delivers one of those masterpieces of eloquence which are logic on fire. He ceases ; how many has he reached by his appeals ? Athens was a little place, with about one hundred and forty thousand inhabitants. Not more than ten thousand have felt the burning words of that prince of orators. Nor can he send his thoughts abroad through the land. There are no reporters, no telegraphs by which he may "fulmine over Greece." How different the potency of speech now ! In Congress or in Parliament, the audience really occupies but little of the speaker's concern. He addresses the millions who, in a few hours, will be reading and pondering the words which he has uttered.

Think of the power which the press gives to written words, especially the word of God. Niebuhr and others maintain that the ancient writers wrote only for a circle of friends, to whom their books were read. Indeed, if you think of the materials for writing which they possessed, you will feel that their readers could only have been a select few. As to the Scriptures, we find more than one epistle ending with a charge that they "be read to the churches." Contrast with all this the facility now furnished by printing, when the compositions of a writer are, in a few days, distributed over all the land, and when the word of God is in the hands of the poorest child on the mountain top, of the savage in the depth of the forest.

I need not tell you how diligently the enemies of God have availed themselves of these facilities ; and if the press were left to them, we might well, with the German legend, ascribe the art of printing to the devil. Even our most respectable booksellers have to cater to the diseased taste for pernicious novels ; and the press groans incessantly—Sunday giving it no rest—with works either openly or secretly assailing the gospel. It would be an unheard-of delinquency if the church did not make this powerful engine tributary to the cause of the Redeemer. And I do not hesitate to say that the vehicles we employ for the circulation of truth are the most effectual, are indeed the only effectual antidote to the poison which I have just mentioned. But I have already detained you too long, and may not dwell upon this topic.

Let me only remind you, that when Eternal Wisdom devised a plan to counteract the evil in the world, it selected the publication of tracts as the most effective expedient. The Bible is a collection of

tracts written and distributed by God. When the period had come for the Great Reformation, God disclosed the art of printing, without which Luther would have failed. And when Baxter, Bunyan, and Rutherford were shut up in prison for the truth, with what sway did they not employ the press. A man may not preach, he is not properly ordained to preach. Very well. But he may write a book. For this no priestly manipulation is necessary. If God have laid his hand on a man's head and heart, he may write a book. And a man who writes a good book is a priest, a bishop, an archbishop, though he may never have been to Rome, or Geneva, or Lambeth, or Princeton, or Andover, or Brown University. What would the Sunday-school do without a religious press, without a library? In our families we cannot and would not keep our children from reading: what a blessing it is, that we can fill our houses with works in which the noblest intellect and most refined taste have been consecrated to Jesus. The individual Christian is now endowed with a talent to do good which cannot be overestimated. He may be ignorant, he may not be able to say a word, he may be a deaf mute, but he has the gift of tongues, he can speak with the learning and eloquence of the most illustrious saints who have adorned the church and pulpit; for he can distribute their best productions.

In a word, and not to weary you with details, look at the masses of busy, restless life around you—the multitude whose steps “beat the murmuring walks like autumn rain.” Who are they? Where are their homes? How fatal are the influences which encircle them! How can they be visited by the ministries of salvation, except through your agency? There is no accommodation for them in the churches, and thousands would not enter the house of God if there were. What is to become of them? God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son for its salvation. Yet they will perish, unless you go to their rescue.

But they must not perish. “Let them alone?” No, no; God forbids that. Jesus does not say, “Let them alone; wait till they come to you.” He says; “Go”—“Go, preach the gospel.” In faith let us obey that command. Men and brethren, it is impossible for us to look back, without thanking God and taking courage. Those who prayed and wept over the cradle of the American Tract Society never anticipated such results from its maturest vigor as we

have already witnessed. They never even hoped that it would scatter such blessings over this country ; that it would be such an ally to the ministry ; that it would infuse such strength into the churches ; that it would so penetrate the dark places of our land, and shed light there ; that it would take the emigrant as he lands upon our shores, and lead him to the Cross ; that it would plant Sunday-schools and churches in wildernesses and desert places ; that it would so powerfully reinforce the cause of Temperance, the Bible, the Missionary enterprise ; that from Maine to Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, in the valleys, by the rivers, all along the mountain ranges, it would comfort the afflicted, enlighten the blind, restore the fallen, and lead the erring in the paths of salvation.

Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. Because he hath been our help, therefore under the shadow of his wings will we rejoice. No weapon formed against us shall prosper. It is the cause of Him, in whose hands are the resources of the Universe. Let us but have faith, and a glorious future beckons us on. Faith—faith in the human soul, which is endowed with powers transcending the conceptions of an angel, and which, though fallen, still retains a dim longing for its original dignity and purity—faith in the gospel, which meets all the profoundest necessities of the soul—faith, above all, in Him who is, this night, here present, to animate us ; who is saying, “Fear not ; Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” This faith is all we need to cover this whole continent, to fill the whole earth with the trophies of redeeming grace.

Faith, mighty faith, the promise eyes,
And looks to that alone,
Laughs at impossibilities,
And says, It shall be done.

27
THE CHIEF EXCELLENCE OF FEMALE CHARACTER.

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE GRADUATING CLASS

OF

Oxford Female College, N. C..

MAY 30th, 1860.

BY

ELDER JAMES McDANIEL,

OF

FAYETTEVILLE N. C.

AND

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST

OF

THE YOUNG LADIES.

FAYETTEVILLE, N. C.:

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1860.



S E R M O N .

“Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.” PROVERBS 31 : CHAP, 30 VERSE.

More than two thousand and eight hundred years ago, as sacred history informs us, there lived in Palestine a Jewish Lady of great intelligence and piety. As the Moon, though not equal to the Sun, goes forth along the planetary sphere as an Orb of light, possessing and exhibiting great distinction and obvious excellence, so passed along the sphere of life that illustrious Jewess. Understanding the true and chief excellence and adornments of female character, she selected them as her theme on a certain occasion, and sung in living and immortal notes her thoughts upon this subject to the fair Daughters of Jerusalem, and those who should succeed them in every age to the end of time. One of her brilliant sentiments, which is worthy to engage the attention of every lady, is that presented in the Text. “Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.”

My aim, dear young ladies, in addressing you on this occasion, will be more your permanent profit than your transient entertainment. While happiness is Heaven’s bestowment, your own, and that of many others will, in a great measure, depend on the part that you may act on life’s grand, eventful stage. It is conceded on all hands to be a solemn and important thing to *die*, but it is a more solemn and important thing to *live*. For, the manner of life is the *seed*, from which the future harvest of happiness or woe will eventually grow. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.”

Woman’s act at first affected herself and all the world—a kind of pre-
sage of what her influence would be in every age, while the wheels of time shall continue to run. Much more depends on female character and influence than is generally supposed and understood. There is quite as much truth as poetry in that little familiar song, in which woman is represented as ruling the lords of creation. A distinguished writer has advanced the idea that the ladies determine *manners*, and he might with equal

propriety have added *destinies* too.) Invested with a magic power, woman's influence, like Moses' rod, achieves wonders in the production of evil or good; it fills the land with plagues or makes the beneficial stream from the rock to flow!

Youth is the appropriate season in which this mighty principle is to be fitted for the position it will assume, and the sphere it will occupy. This is the season for the pursuit and attainment of those elements of character, which will afford a blessedness to yourselves and to others. Some of these I propose to bring to your notice in this exercise. [My theme is

THE CHIEF EXCELLENCE OF FEMALE CHARACTER.

“Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.”

In discoursing on this Text, I shall consider,

I. Those things which by many are estimated, yet *erroneously*, the chief excellence of Female Character. And

II. Those which are truly and positively the chief excellence of Female character.

I. Let us consider those things which are by many estimated as the chief excellences of Female Character, but which are in reality only *negative* excellences. The principal of these are the two specified in the text—*Favor* and *Beauty*.

I. The first is *Favor*. “Favor is deceitful.” The value of favor depends on the source from which it emanates. To have the admiration of the vain, the thoughtless, the worthless, deserves not so much as a wish or desire. Such favor is *deceitful*. And yet there are multitudes of both sexes who covet this vain admiration or favor, as the chief excellence. The means of attaining it, becomes an object of absorbing interest to them. One of these means is gaudy and extravagant equipage. Hence that extravagance in dress, which characterizes the present age, and threatens the happiness of millions for time and eternity. Eighteen hundred years ago, the inspired Apostle uttered a prohibition of it, in all the eloquence, zeal and pathos of an ambassador from the Heavens. Hear him—“Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting of the hair, and wearing of Gold, or putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

A stranger as I am to nearly all who are present, I may not be presumed to charge extravagance to any of this audience; yet, if the charge were made, happy for all, if no one might require an artful, eloquent, and im-

passioned advocacy to secure a verdict of "not guilty," from a discriminating public. If no youthful mind here present is affected by this vanity of such general and wide-spreading influence, yet the danger that they may become the victims of it, is sufficient to justify a friendly warning.

It is a fact, written with the clearness of a sunbeam on the very face of society, that the Milliner and Mantua-maker, with all their inventive genius, can scarcely keep up with the demands of the fair sex, for varied fashions and new styles of dress. The Manufacturers of fine and costly fabrics, with all their industry and energy, can hardly furnish new and attractive styles, with sufficient rapidity to gratify this passion for mere display or vain show. And all this is to gain admiration or a favor which is *deceitful*. In many instances estates are wasted, and families beggared by this extravagance in dress. It is like the last one of the evils which escaped from Pandora's Box to afflict the world. It is the *plague* of the present age. Where the remedy or cure of it is to be found, is a problem, the solution of which is much more important to society and individuals, than was that which gave Archimedes his immortal fame.

Scarcely may we look for its cure to our Seminaries of learning. Their power has already to some extent been tried, and it has proved almost as uninfluential as an astronomical Lecture delivered to the raging storm. The *Press*, that mighty power which creates and governs political worlds, has made some effort at reform in this particular, but to little visible effect. The *PULPIT* in too many instances, with a *cowardice* or *negligence* unworthy of its office, has winked at it rather than attempted to correct it. How the evil is to be checked or removed is the problem to be solved.

The *origin* of this extravagant display in dress is hidden in the remote ages of antiquity. There is good reason to believe that it contributed much to induce that defection which brought the Deluge on the world. Sacred History tells us that the Deluge was occasioned by that sin which originated in the intermarriage of the Sons of God with the Daughters of men. Attracted it is believed by this vain show, this gaudy plumage in which the Daughters of men arrayed themselves, the Sons of God admired them and sought their companionship. An union was thus formed which was displeasing to God, and ultimately resulted in the ruin of men. That admiration or favor based on this vain display, proved *deceitful* and ended in ruin. God never intended that men should be allured by such vain show, and he has uttered his prohibition of it in tones so audible and impressive, that all may understand it. See Isaiah 3 CHAP: 16-24.]

Too many of the fair ones seem to think that if they can succeed in adorning themselves in gaudy and costly attire, they cannot fail of admi-

ration and favor. Hence, it often is the *one thing needful* in their desire and pursuit. Their great solicitude is about dress, wherewith they shall be clothed. There is an unhallowed rivalry among many, who shall excel in artificial adornment. Like Tarped, the deluded Roman Maid, they will risk their very soul for costly attire. But, remember well that the favor that is won by this means, the favor that is based upon this foundation, is *deceitful*. Not even all who run into this extravagance succeed in the attainment of that admiration or favor to which they aspire. Many of those extravagant ones live year after year, ignorant how little real worth is appropriated to them by the wise and reflecting. This explains the secret how it comes to pass that so many fine Butterflies, decked with golden adornment, live so long upon the wing without the offer of a hand or home. Some it is true, by this means inveigle and ensnare the giddy and the vain like themselves, and the conquest proves a dire calamity to both. For such "favor is *deceitful*." [I am no enemy to all due personal adornment. Nay, I encourage it,—I only condemn it when it extends to extravagance, and is sought as a basis of favor.]

[A second basis of deceitful favor is *riches*. Worldly wealth exerts a magic power in the creation of admiration and favor. "The rich hath many friends," is the announcement of inspiration. In this age, almost the first question concerning a young lady is this, *Is she rich?* And if it be ascertained that she has *riches*, she rarely fails to have admirers. Favor will spring up amid riches, or the anticipation of them, as a plant in a hot-bed. It will grow up as quickly as did Jonah's gourd. Pour a quantity of honey on the ground, and if there be any flies in that region, many of them will collect thither. There are many flies in human form, which are on the wing and scent for the honey of wealth. They will be sure to entertain a *favor* towards the *wealth* possessed, whether they have any love for the possessor or not. Many a lady possessing only a common portion of wealth receives the offer of the hand by those, who would spurn the idea of making such an offer were it not for the property she has, or which is anticipated with her. The *morals* of many of those admirers are far below the point of respectability, aye, they are sunk to infamy.] And there are others whose indolence and prodigality are such as to render them but little more deserving than the dissipated. The favor of a lazy spend-thrift, who lives merely to eat and wear, and waste, is nothing worth, and she that values it is reckless of her happiness. Yet, too many fair ones never think seriously about the *morals*, *motives* or *propensities* of admirers. They assume it as a prospective certainty, that under their plastic influence, all will go right. They follow such delusive dreams, and

at length prove by bitter experience the realities of unanticipated deception. Such "favor is *deceitful*."

2. The second thing estimated by many, but erroneously so, the chief excellence of female character is "*beauty*," personal beauty. This is greatly admired, and often ardently sought. Though numbered among the chief excellences and adornments of Female character by the masses, yet it is really not one of them. Vain and unworthy persons sometimes attain to positions and exert an influence of which they are unworthy. And as it is with persons, so it is with things—so it is with *personal* beauty, it holds a position and wields an influence in many instances beyond its desert. The spirit of truth has announced this fact. "Beauty is vain." How generally are those who possess it, rendered vain by it! In its *effects* it is *vain*.

Its basis is vanity. A fever or some attack of sickness will mar it. Declining health will be sure to spoil it. But, if none of those occurrences which are so common in our world, and from which so few are exempted, shall befall beauty; yet time or age will certainly bear away its charms, and consume its loveliness. So vain, so precarious is *beauty*.

And how vain is beauty when it constitutes the foundation of admiration or favor! How deceptive the admiration or favor that rests upon such a basis as beauty! When the foundation is removed, what becomes of the structure that rests upon it! Could the grave, where now sleeps many an once *beautiful* one, be penetrated by some omnipotent and resuscitative voice, and the departed be recalled from her calm repose to tell the history of her own experience, what a tale she would tell of fugitive affection! What an account she would give of the sorrows she felt, when deserted by that affection which was founded only on personal beauty! What hours and days did she spend in pensive sadness, when her beauty had departed, she sat as in the Autumn of life, and sighed in strains like these—

"The trees of the forest
Shall blossom again,
And the song-bird shall carol
A soul-thrilling strain;

But the heart fate has wasted
No Spring shall restore,
And its songs shall be joyful
No more—never more—never more!

At length the flower from which the beauty had gone, itself drooped and died, and dropt from its stem to mingle with the ground! *Beauty is vain!*"

II. I shall dwell no longer on the negative excellence of Female character, but pass to consider—

Those which are truly and positively the chief excellencies.

“A woman that *feareth the LORD*, she shall be praised.” The fear of the Lord is the grand embodiment of the the chief excellence of character. In it certain *mental* qualities are embraced. I will specify the chief of these :

1. The first is *good taste*. And the fear of the Lord may hardly be regarded as existing where there is not good taste. This is a creature of the mind. Circumstances, associations, and Education may, and do exert a considerable influence in the formation of taste. But, after all, its pater- nity is traceable to the mind. It depends upon the qualities of the mind. And where incorrect taste exists and prevails, it springs mainly from some defection in the mind. It is of mental origin.

There are multitudes who have no *taste*—no *relish* for solid and useful reading, or, for such as lays the mind under the necessity of labor to digest what is read. They have no relish for a train of thought which requires diligence to pursue and comprehend it. They dislike all solid literature. But, they are delighted with a mere romance or story, which is wholly fictitious, and from which not a solid or useful idea can be gleaned. NOVELS of the least merit are those most admired by them. I do not condemn all literature in the style of *Novels*—far from it. There are some productions written after the style of *Novels*, which contain great *principles* and inculcate great *morals*. I speak in condemnation rather of those works which discuss no important principle, and contain no good moral. These corrupt the mind and spoil its good qualities. I never knew a lady possessing this mere dust-catching mind, that ever did much for her own happiness, or that of others. Such give poor evidence indeed that they fear the Lord !

And there are scores who have as little taste or relish for proper conversation, as for solid literature. Their themes of conversation are of the most *trashy, superficial, peurile* kind. Vain remarks about others—foolish criticisms on dress, or persons—childish sayings make up their conversational store. Not unfrequently a lady from a Seminary or College, will entertain for a considerable time, one, two, or more gaping gentry, with a conversation abounding in *trash* enough to sicken twenty persons of *good taste*.

And not a few there be, who have no taste, or relish for industrial employment. They have an utter aversion to the use of the seissors and needle. If any garment is to be made or mended, a seamstress must be hired for

the work. They cannot bear the idea of addressing themselves to the care and task of keeping the house in proper order. And in their estimation, it would be an everlasting reproach, enough to exile them from the state of *ladyship*, to superintend the preparation for the table! They would blush and squirm, your speaker knows not how long, for it to be said that they had ever entered the kitchen and superintended, or aided in cooking a meal.—They are satisfied only with dressing up their persons, in such finery as they can procure—receiving and “paying calls,” and acting their full part in the *gossiping* of the day. Now, *good taste* is the very reverse of all this. It is the fulfilment of that Apostolic advice, given in the 4th chap. of Phil. and 8th v: “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things!”

2. The second *mental* quality included in the fear of the Lord, is *discretion*. Many an one does not consider or reflect on what she says or does. She may mean no harm. She puts on certain *airs*, and a few extra *cants*, not intending by these things in any wise to render herself ridiculous, or vain; but only presuming this to be the means of attaining an enviable notoriety, or distinction. Yet, the result is the very opposite of what she hopes to realize. She often speaks disparagingly of others without proper cause, not intending thereby to do harm; but it is the spontaneous effusion of a mind and heart stored only with trash and vanity, and “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” She does not intend by such a course to render herself odious, and make her society a curse to community; but such is the result. Indiscretion is a characteristic too frequently found in character.

Then be careful to avoid all those airs which have the aspect of pride, vanity, or self-importance, remembering that the exhibition of them is offensive in the sight of God, and will inevitably lower, instead of elevate you in the judgment and esteem of all the discreet. Never indulge in evil-speaking. The practice is not only odious, but it is also corrupting. “Evil communications corrupt good manners”—you will thereby corrupt your own minds, and contract a despicable habit. If you cannot speak well of an individual, touch his or her character but tenderly, except where the turpitude existing is monstrous and manifest. Remember the golden rule “As ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.”

3. The third *mental* quality included in the fear of the Lord, is *decision*, and *firmness*. How many there are who have no mind of their own!—

Theirs is a kind of *compilation*, a little from one, and a little from another, until, in the aggregate, their mind is a perfect *medley*. They have no settled principles—they do not know what they believe, nor why they believe what they pretend to believe. They resemble the *toy-skiff* which the little boy has built and rigged, and placed upon the bosom of the pond, While his attention is for a moment turned away, there comes a puff of wind which bears it out upon the deep, where it is driven and tossed about as wind and wave may direct. So multitudes have no decision and firmness. If one have their friendship or favor, no reliance may be placed upon it. Their affection is a mere cob-web. They are children of *caprice* or *whim*. And each one of such, is a little world of *whims* and *notions*. They can bear no disappointment,—no cross—no trial—no opposition—no test of principle. These unavoidable circumstances with which they meet, sour them, and the acidity is imparted to the cup of life. Thus they act a part like the man in Israel who gathered *green gourds* for pottage, and when the company tasted of the provision, such was the bitterness, they exclaimed, “O, thou man of God, there is Death in the pot!”

But, aspire to decision and firmness. Have a reason, and a good reason, for what you believe and do. Let such solidity ever characterize your conduct and words, that all acquainted with you, will feel that you may be trusted. Be ever scrupulous to speak the truth, in all things, carefully avoiding misrepresentation, exaggeration, and mere fabrication. Deliberate falsehood on the lips of man, is enough to make humanity weep; but falsehood on a woman's lips is enough to make an angel blush!

4. The fourth *mental* quality included in the fear of the Lord, is a *fixed determination to merit universal admiration by the attainment and exhibition of all those excellencies which are within your power*. There are many who demand esteem without the merit of it. Their claim is unjust, and it passes unheeded. However much you may merit universal esteem, you will share it only from a part. If you become the embodiment of all those excellencies which challenge universal esteem, these very excellencies exhibited by you, will expose you to the dislike of some. There is an irreconcilable antagonism between *virtue* and *vice*. Long as this state of things shall continue, *vice* will look on *virtue* with that malicious jealousy, with which the fallen spirit of old, contemplated the happiness of the innocent pair in Eden. But, remember if ye be reproached for righteousness sake, happy are ye! Aim to be *worthy* of universal esteem, and if there be those from whom you have it not, account that failure itself a brilliant in your character.

6. The fifth *mental* quality included in the fear of the Lord, is *mental*

Culture Too many act as though their education belonged only to the season of their association with the College or Seminary. When they graduate, all their text-books are laid aside, and all their studies given up, like a dress that is worn out and of no further use. Two years afterwards they know but little of all that they have been for years laboring to acquire.— Like the Prodigal, they waste all this precious store, and the money, the time, and labor bestowed to acquire it, are all thrown away for naught! If such a course be correct, then educational facilities are a mere profitless faree and should be discarded. But, such is not the proper course. It involves impropriety and guilt. When the Institution of learning is left—when the diploma has been received, the work of education has but just begun. Instead of the structure being finished and complete, the *foundation* is only laid. And you should go on to build thereon, endeavoring to improve and enlarge your literary temple. For, that will be a source of solid advantage, to you, when worldly vanities shall be of no avail!

SECONDLY. In the fear of the Lord are included certain qualities of the *heart*, as well as mind. The first of these of which I shall speak, is *governable temper*. There is a very great diversity in the temper possessed by persons. Some unhappily possess a temper that is peculiarly excitable, and when excited it is hard to govern or control. No one may be considered at fault for the peculiarity of temper possessed. For, there is no art or human power that can radically change the temper of any one. Much, however, may be done to its modification and government. And this is the duty and work of the individual. “He that is slow to anger,” says the inspired penman, “is better than he that taketh a city.” The proper government of the temper is a grander and more profitable achievement, than the conquest of of a wealthy city. Ever watch over your own temper, and keep it in subjection, for if you neglect this, in moments of excitement with which you will inevitably meet, you will say or do things, the review of which afterwards will fill your soul with sorrow, and wash your cheeks with tears! “Be ye angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”

2. The second quality of the *heart* included in the fear of the Lord is a *disposition of kindness*. The society of this world is mixed with many who have no tender sympathies—no commiseration, and in whose constitution there are but few, if any of the elements referred to in that beautiful stanza of the Poet—

“Teach me to *feel* another’s woe,
To *hide* the fault I see;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.”

Instead of being disposed to act a part like the Divinely appointed Doves that ministered to the suffering Prophet of the Lord, they are more like the *Vulture*, ever seeking the defective parts of character on which to feed, and their delight is to rend and destroy. But, be ye ever kindly affectioned. Let it never be that you can look on suffering innocence with a heart unmoved. Behold Salem's Daughters weeping at the sight of the suffering Saviour, and seek the same kindly disposition.

You will often meet with those on whom fortune has not smiled so propitiously as it has on you. They have sensibilities as well as you. Look not upon them with coldness and scorn. Often will you meet with those whom death has orphaned,—they have no one to perform towards them a tender parent's part. From the grave of the departed, there comes the melting voice of appeal to you, saying: "*Be kind! Oh! be kind to the loved ones from whom we are parted.*"

3. The third quality of the *heart* included in the fear of the Lord is *an inflexible regard to the distinction which God has established between right and wrong.*

To know the *right* and approve it too,

To know the *wrong*, and yet the wrong pursue

involves fearful guilt and danger. There are multitudes who are easily led to dispose of the distinction between *right* and *wrong*, as a very small thing. Thus the conscience soon becomes so torpid and insensible, that they find but little difficulty in rejecting the good and embracing the evil in almost any instance. It is a thing of vital importance to possess and maintain a nice sensibility touching the distinction between right and wrong. It must never be compromised. Rather suffer than consent to do what you know or believe to be wrong. No circumstances can justify one in doing wrong. The consequences of deliberately doing so, though fancied by you to be very trifling, or insignificant, may prove your utter ruin. "Remember Lots Wife!" She vainly imagined the consequence of so apparently small a thing as that of looking back to the City contrary to the Divine command, would be harmless, yet it caused her ruin. Esau sold his *birth-right* for a morsel of meat, and vainly fancied in so doing, that he was exposing himself to no fearful consequence; but afterwards he found to his everlasting regret, that the act so lightly esteemed by him had caused his overthrow! And the scriptures point to his example, and in tones of solemn warning address every one. "Lest there be any—profane Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right. For ye know how that afterwards when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance

though he sought it carefully and with tears." "The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished."

4. The fourth quality of the *heart* included in the fear of the Lord, is *humility*. Pride and haughtiness are too often found in human character. A proud look God abhors. "Be clothed with humility," is Heaven's counsel to mortals. Pride is one of the most dangerous, if not *the* most dangerous quality to be found in the human heart. It was one of the principal elements in that sin which precipitated an Angel of light from his glorious abode down to the depths of interminable darkness and woe.—There are many who have such pride of heart that they are ashamed of Christ. They deem it a *dishonor* to obey all his commands. They glory in that which is their shame. But, no one has any real and abiding honor outside of obedience to Jesus Christ. They may have wordly honor in disobedience, but this is the very essence of dishonor. Such honor as is gained by disobedience to God, is in reality deep ignominy. It will thus appear in a coming day: "Them that honor me, I will honor, but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." "Learn of me, for I am of a meek and lowly mind, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

5. The fifth quality of the *heart*, included in the fear of the Lord is *the disposition to be useful*. "To do good and communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Too many seem to think that their only business in this world is to live unto themselves. They realize no responsibility in relation to society. Whatever may be the wants of the world, they recognize no responsibility as resting on them to perform any part in the supply of those wants. Be ye fed and clothed is their proclamation to the needy, but they move not a hand or a finger to afford the necessary relief. They are mere passengers on the ship of life, and they have but little concern about any except themselves, and a few nearly related to them. But, God has placed you in this world to be useful, to be a blessing to society. Aim therefore to properly fulfil this design of your mission into this mode of existence. Aspire to such a life that when your earthly career shall close, and you shall pass from the scenes of this world, your usefulness may be left as a valuable legacy to society and the guardian Angel, clad in the garments of invisibility, may sit upon your grave-stone and sweetly hymn your calm repose in these charming strains,

"She hath done what she could."

6. The sixth quality of the *heart* included in the fear of the Lord, is *supreme love to God*. This includes *repentance* for sin, for no one can love God truly and supremely and at the same time love sin. Deep sorrow for sin and hatred to it, are always connected with love to God. And

without supreme love to God, the anticipation or hope of salvation in another world, is nothing better than a delusive dream. You must obtain

A renovated heart;
 "The Great Redeemer's throne,
 Where only CHRIST is heard to speak,
 Where Jesus reigns alone.

This is the "one thing needful." Without it on every other attainment and possession, this inscription must be written, "One thing thou lackest yet!" This is the chief of all the amiable qualities that embellish character. This is the ornament of the most accomplished education. This is the true and abiding loveliness and worth! This is the crowning excellence of the heart! Upon it Jehovah looks with approving smiles as a thing "of great price."

'Tis Religion that can give,
 Sweetest pleasures while we live,
 'Tis Religion must supply,
 Solid comforts when we die.
 After Death its joys will be,
 Lasting as Eternity:
 Be the living God my friend,
 Then my bliss will never end!"

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." "They that seek me early shall find me." "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth?"

The perfection of all the qualities I have specified is *practical obedience and consecration to God*. This is the reliable evidence of the fear of the Lord. "This is the love of God that we keep His commandments." "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven." "If any man love me, he will keep my saying." Such a character and life will not fail to be rewarded with the praise of all the good on earth, and with the praise of God in the world to come. "A woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised."

And let it be remembered that this religion cannot be sought and embraced too soon.

It is the chief concern
Of mortals here below.

Make haste then, O make haste to secure it! "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth!"

I would not, unnecessarily cause you one painful emotion. But it is meet that I should here remind you of the *uncertainty* of life. Some of you, in all probability will fill a youthful grave. Your brightest anticipations will be suddenly blighted! Your Sun will go down ere it is even noon! The Rose that bloomed in Spring, will ere the close of Summer, be faded and gone! The coffin—the winding-sheet—the grave, ere long will your youthful form enclose! Hardly can such an anticipation be realized without a starting tear! Which one of you may be thus destined soon to droop and fade, and die, is a secret unknown! Then let the salutary inquiry come home to every heart, in all its appropriate solemnity—"Lord is it I." Must I soon sicken, fade and die! "Be ye therefore ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

Haste then ye fair ones to be wise,
And stay not for the morrows sun;
The longer wisdom you despise,
The harder is she to be won!

"What thy hands find to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

Or, if in the kind providence of God, you may be spared many years, piety will do you no harm, but it will be a source of unspeakable advantage to you. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace".

No mortal doth know, what Christ will bestow,
What light, joy and comfort, go after Him, go!

Young Ladies of the Graduating Class! It is more than an ordinary pleasure to see you encircled with your literary laurels, procured and woven into a ever-green wreath by industry and diligence. In this pleasure, Teachers, Parents, Guardians and friends, with me richly share. I congratulate you on the distinction to which you have thus attained. You will go forth from these lovely scenes of study, bearing the precious treasure of joyous, budding hopes. And I trust that your pathway in life may be as the shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day. Wherever your lot in the providence of God may be cast, remember the counsels I have given you. And let each one diligently strive

so to live, that when our last meeting shall arrive—our meeting at the great examination, where the worthy in Christ's grandest of all Institutions shall be graduated with everlasting honors, it may be to us attended by no painful emotion, and saddened by no falling tear!

Then in that happy, happy land,
W'ell no more take the parting hand!

My beloved Brother, the President of this College, and the Faculty associated with you! I may not on this occasion, withhold from you an expression of my congratulation. The pleasure with which I contemplate your success and prosperity is not feigned. I bestow no vain flattery. To speak the truth of persons, and tell the deeds of worth which they have performed, though highly commendatory of them, is not flattery. That is flattery where commendation is expressed in the absence of *merit*. Your *works* praise you. Your labors and success are panegyric, printed in brilliant and legible characters. Had you not performed your duties faithfully, and nobly exerted yourselves, this large assemblage of young ladies would not have graced your College as Pupils. This is beyond doubt, the most brilliant of all the days in the history of this Institution. The pleasure which you doubtless feel, is not like that vain, egotistic joy felt by the Chaldean Monarch when he looked over Babylon in the zenith of its glory, and exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" but it is the nobler pleasure of having educated young ladies to be ornaments to society, and blessings to kindred and to the world. Happy President! Happy Teachers! Happy Pupils! may each returning commencement in this College, add new and increased happiness, that like the fostered multiflorous vine, it may grow, and display its countless flowers in all their beauty and fragrance to the admiration of all around!

Within the past eleven years, how changed and how improved is the town of Oxford! Here has arisen this attractive Institution, now teeming as it does, with scores of lovely pupils. Yonder has arisen, on the liberality of that ancient and noble Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, another beautiful College, where will be educated many a young man to fill positions of honor and usefulness in the world. Heaven smile with fostering care on both these Institutions of learning, that as in Eden's bowers, plants may in them grow, which may adorn many a circle—bless many a family, and impart joy to many a heart!

And now dear young ladies, I have finished the task which your partiality has assigned me. It is not probable that I shall ever preach to the Pupils of this College again assembled as to-night. This is a *Valedictory* in reality, as well as in name. With these reflections, affecting to my own mind, I close my discourse.

May the God of all grace and comfort, abundantly bless all who are present!

25
AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP,—ITS FAULTS AND THEIR
REMEDIES.

A S E R M O N

FOR THE

DAY OF NATIONAL FAST,

JANUARY 4, 1861,

By ALEXANDER G. MERCER, D.D.

ASSISTANT MINISTER OF TRINITY CHURCH ON THE GREENE FOUNDATION.

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To the Editor of the
"Standard".

^{in his Paper}
Will he kindly extract, some parts
of this Sermon and so give it a
circulation it needs not otherwise.

THIS Sermon was preached only in part, on account of its length and the indisposition of the writer. After much hesitation he has consented to its publication,—because he feels that no one ought from vain scruples, to withhold any offering of word or act from the cause of a country so sorely tried.

Love among the Southern &
the Union hearts —

S E R M O N .

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.”—1 *Peter* 5: 6.

HOWEVER clear the right of the Pulpit to speak of politics wherever the word Duty can describe the subject, it is a right to be used rarely and reluctantly, as no man's discretion is refined enough to save it from abuse. The voice of the preacher ought never to be associated with what may unfit or disable it as a public voice of religion. Yet at imminent times a timid silence is immoral, and at least as much so as any sort of conscientious speech. For myself, placed here by Providence, and not by my own seeking, no considerations of a personal nature shall keep me silent, or modify what I think is fit to be said. Yet addressing, as I do, many varieties of opinion, and as I must be found in opposition to some,—perhaps to all,—I trust you will at least remember that I am actuated, as I surely am, by none but the purest motives.

This nation stands to-day on the eve, it is feared, of great changes and sorrows, and we are called here pub-

licly to humiliate ourselves for national fault, and specially for our share in it. Suddenly a clear sky is covered with gloom and fear. A strange moment has come, when a rising sun seems transferred to the place of its setting. It is worse than vain to make light of such a crisis,—as has been very common here. Prosperous men are constitutionally unable to realize calamity. They have formed the habit of prosperity. Our national history has had no afflictions, and we have forgotten the thing,—the imagination itself has become incapacitated even to state it. And though our just fears are now, of course, increasing, I regret to say that they do not grow at the rate of our calamities. There is a fear which is the most crazy and paralyzing of passions,—but there is a wise and deep solicitude which, before a great disaster, is the only source of hope. This is especially true in America. For one great danger in our country and government is, that there may be irreparable ills before the real nation has felt and spoken out its wish, and so the most fatal thing now is serenity and easy hope,—if danger is real. But is it real?—You have the evidence before you.

But you still go back to minor experiences of past blusters, and so measure this case; or you trust to a sense of self-interest when distresses come. I think you are mistaken. When I find the cool and thoughtful Commonwealth of Massachusetts governed by enlightened rules of prudence, I shall be prepared to expect a little of that sort from those far Southern States. No nation has yet shown itself high enough for prudence when a passion begins to blow, and what will you expect

of a vivid population which has drawn every sort of honor and of interest into one focal point of fire!—and now committed, too,—formally pledged,—and conscious, moreover, that any humiliating submission must annihilate their power. I think there is no retreat. Why, the Nation grows disrupted at the heart! The growth of heart-estrangement within sixty days makes anything possible. But peaceable dissolution is spoken of, and peaceable arrangements between new sovereignties. A weak fancy! *There can be no peace.* When once the Nation is gone, and the national feeling all lost, there will be more points of interest, of feeling, to arrange between these proud States than have arisen between all the great nations of Europe during modern history. They will be endless. And to be settled,—by whom? by friends turned to enemies, “hateful and hating one another.” If any man looks at this, he will seem to himself as one standing at night on the beach of an unknown sea, where he knows there is before him a wild and wasteful world, but it is so dark he cannot see. He hears, however, threats of wind and thunder, and the sound of the rising surge; and if there be a gleam upon that unknown sea, it looks—I may mistake—but it looks *red*, as of human blood.

O Thou, who knowest, instruct us, that on this day we may feel and know where we are, that we may humble ourselves under thy mighty hand; where we have done amiss lead us right again; “what in us is dark, illumine,—what is low, raise and support!”

The solemn duty of the day, then, is *candidly to state to ourselves our faults, that we may see our remedies.*

Look first at the common faults of the nation, for these are indirectly — nay, directly enough — the causes of our present disaster. The one specially which lies farther back, and deeper down than all others, I think, is the one-sided tendency of our civilization. I suppose, my friends, that the whole of human culture lies in reverence and freedom, — not in one thing, but two things — God and the individual! — a full assertion of myself, rounded and circumscribed by that which is above myself. History has really but these two ideas; all events issue out of them and falteringly express them; and the perfect moment of history will only come when these ideas are of power enough to bring themselves to perfect birth. Through the most of the past we find but an abject sinking of a man's self before something different from himself, “Gods many and Lords many,” — whether before a religion, a government, a leader, — whether before the might of nature, or a man's fellows, — or before some exaggerated projection of a man's fear and wonder.

Our modern era began the reverse of all this, and the rights and power of the individual will are the thing asserted or aimed at in all modern changes; my right to make my religion, my government, my leaders; my power asserted in the form of science against nature, or asserted against society in the form of the political and social freedom of the individual. The vigor of this impulse has within a few years made this amazing product — American success. We are the head and vanguard of the movement, and the popular cry is that we can never have enough of it. We began so. Our Con-

stitution, wise as the instrument is, (a wonderful paper — a sort of cartoon of our civilization,) yet sketches the idea of a State without a religion, or a God. It is man all through. Now who does not know, as a brilliant Frenchman has said, that the “body politic is a tree, which as it rises finds as much need of the heavens as of the earth,” — that “the State is a mysterious vessel whose anchor is in heaven?” Its anchor is there or nowhere. The idea of a State, as of one man, is that of a divine plant which, if rooted in the earth, lifts its head and bears its fruits towards heaven. And its permanence and power is in the proportion that it realizes this idea. At the apex of the great dome of the Pantheon in Paris, at the very crown of this temple, representative of the works and glories of the nation, you may see grandly depicted the French Kings gathered at the feet of a heavenly figure, which floats over the whole, — and to her, on bended knee and in rapt devotion, they offer the splendid trophies of their history. However intended, I take that to be the veritable symbol of a veritable State. But our State purports to be a perfectly ordered earth, with no heavenly figure overhead, and with the whole sky swept off as if it were a superstitious mist!

So through all our civilization the human side has grown too large. We forget that liberty, as we name it, is not all, but that reverence is no less a name, — and that each is only a mistake without the other. We forget that *we* are not all, but that there is something outside which ought to hem us in; — we forget that whatever sets free binds also, and with higher obliga-

tions, — nobly subjects us to God, to man, to society, — not that we may be trampled, but that the energies of self-love may be kept within the limits of justice and loyalty ; — and, in short, that we must be animated by something nobler than self-assertion, I mean self-subjection. Let us not then pronounce so much the cant words “ Freedom ” — “ Man ” — the “ People,” — until we learn to say also “ God ” — “ Duty,” — or even “ Honor ” and “ Courtesy.” And until we do name these with a full heart, the People are but a mob, and Freedom nothing more than the breaking of the rope that binds them.

Then again, look at the issues of this inordinateness on the side of self, when joined to our singular advantages. In this magnificent good of territory, enterprise, wealth, peace, enjoyment, there is a bait which has caught the whole heart of the people, and made out of these noble gifts the seed-plot of devilish fruits to come. For out of this a decent but most energetic selfishness has risen ; so that not public care, — the feeling and sacrifices of a worthy citizen, — but mere selfish neglect has been the issue of our freedom. The public interest, — the noble meaning of COMMONWEALTH, — what do we know of that ? Or if there be some interest in public events, — as to *action*, (for that costs something,) — what action have we but the sinister debauched work of the politician ? Nay, the citizen, too often hampered by a thousand mean fears, does not even give his country his real thought — a free and noble speech ; — the best opinion of the best, fearlessly given, is not heard, while rude and partisan outcry is distinctly given, and is called the public voice.

So of all our public life. We profess to have in our hands the costly results of all history, those great ideas and practices which are “the precious acquisitions of humanity,” — and they have been reached through what troubles? — and yet how treated! Because our insignificance in so great a mass, allows each man little power, he feels free to give up duty, and neglect his part. Or if he weakly tries it, he becomes disgusted nearly at once. And so the whole is handed over to the politician, (aided by his organ, the press,) whose trade is to coin the neglect and the folly of the people for his own pocket, and who at this moment makes husbandry out of the ruin of the State, and perhaps the blood of his countrymen. Under his shaping of the great measures and topics, even this greatest of national topics, Slavery, is fashioned but to strike the eye of some leading faction, — an eye gloating with party and sectional avarice, or mad with some hate and fanaticism.

Law-making, the noblest function of humanity, how has it been done? Look for yourselves at the law-makers — the laws — and the manufactories of shame (too often!) where they are made and sold! What corruption of public honor in all its offices, — that sacred honor on which all rests, on whose purity is staked not only property and rights, but in the last issues the national life, and something of the individual soul itself! — for who can say to what extent the elevation and efficiency of free government is involved not only with the interests but inward life of the governed?

Now if there be these great underlying faults, viz:

an enormity of conceited will, which we call our freedom, and an enormity of selfish grasp on outward good, which we call our greatness, what is our want and our remedy but to "humble ourselves," — to know *God*, and *law*, and the *common weal*, — to know them in our reverence and love? And if it does not please us to do this, I assure you those majestic facts need but to retire a little further off, and the state or society at the first pressure which strains its bond will break asunder, as if the bond were but a holiday-ribbon.

We want loyalty, not to a man or a party, but to Law, to the State, and to whatever is Higher; and hence we want a public sentiment as to the duty of citizens, — a stern public judgment as to that class of men who, if ruin is preparing, are the ruiners! We want a public indignation as to the men who, from the caucuses of the bar-room up to the caucuses of senates and cabinets, sit in dark council, "hatching the cockatrice's eggs, and weaving the spider's web." We want from every honest man, from pulpit, press, and platform, a broadside and blaze of indignation to light up the land and appal every description of traitors, whether they are striding in state to the public gaze, or "lurking in the thievish corners of the villages."

But, after all, let not you and me shift off on these men the making of ruin. My friends, when in the history of Liberty among nations, she has risen from the dust once more, and "loosens herself from the bands of her neck," and lifts her form shining with some aspect of redemption, — who stops her, and brings her mouth to the dust again? Kings, priests, demagogues? Never anywhere

—but here, never, never! It is the lookers-on,—it is you, the people, who will think a little longer on the matter and who will let others act. I tell you that the men too lukewarm to seek out the right of the case, too selfishly dull to see it, too weak to decide upon it,—the blood of the ruined cause lies upon them! Upon them!

So much as to our common faults. Next are those of the two great sections in respect to each other.

These are in some part rather misfortunes than faults,—alienations prompted by such a difference and foreignness as Slavery and Freedom; and allowed from the ignorance of distance. We in this place and age hoped that the vastness of area which hitherto had been a clear cause of weakness and dissolution in great empires, had here become a different fact. For now, as if to fit us for this largeness, we had gained commensurate organs of intercourse,—a new motion that narrowed the width of the continent to a strip, and a new power of speech that flashed like lightning out of the east into the west. We supposed that these new powers could manage this enormous greatness. But we presumed a little: the House is too great to be well lit even by our new method of lighting;—at least when passion, and interest, and fear cloud the air the great sections of the American people, we find, are hid from each other; trifles move like phantoms in the twilight; and so we learn once more that that which is unknown easily becomes hateful and hostile, and that ignorant hatred once begun is keen in reactions and increase.

All this, however, even with the natural alienage of

freedom and slavery, would not have been important but that two distinct fanatical powers have risen south and north, and face each other, — both based on that enormous conceit, that dogmatism of self-will, that boldness of self-assertion of which I have spoken, — but, northwards, this taking the form of conscience, — a fanaticism for an idea; southwards, a fanaticism for an interest, mixed up with a sectional point of honor; an absurd humanity here, an absurd blending of ambition, honor, and avarice there; both darkly exasperated by conflicts, and altogether unchecked by loyalty to the common nation, or even by any strong sense of rectitude as to obligation and law. At Washington, and in the words and acts sent down from Washington, the South and North meet, and there only they meet, and present to each other their worst aspect, and deal with each other in their worst moods, and not with the nice skill which that great intercourse requires. The sections could be neighborly if there were total ignorance or total knowledge of each other. But not with such knowledge as Washington and Congress give. It is inevitable that such northern men, in such a mood, should be ill-pleased with such southern men in their mood. And the reverse. The remedy for this bad mutual understanding cannot be found until the heart and wisdom of both sections is better represented among the national legislators; until intercourse between the sections is increased, — not merely by the interchange of commerce, but by an interchange of finer benefits, — of courtesies, of affections, of fair interpretations, of Christian influences; — and not until the Press, in whose looking-glass each side sees the other's face, becomes a

faithful glass, and not marked (as in noted instances it is) for the breadth and malice of the distortions.

But now let me confine myself to faults peculiar to ourselves. It would be very easy to berate the madness of fanatics south, — their unnatural and wildly factious acts. I think no unbiassed man can look on their proceedings without a mixture of inexpressible sorrow and indignation — all the deeper for the good-will he bears them. But it serves no manly purpose to arraign the absent when our duty is with ourselves. I prefer to speak of the fanatics here — the fanatics as to Slavery.

And first, as to their influence. I deny that it has been small. Those who deserve that name are to be sure few, and their direct effect small, — often indeed they spend their force against themselves. But by supplying in large part the data and shaping the opinion of England as to Slavery here, and also of France, and in turn reinforcing themselves from these quarters; — by intense activity, and speaking like creatures in a wood at night, with more (and more alarming) voices than the creatures themselves justify; — by striking right at the heart of a sensitive people, and all the year, *as a business*, planting their sting with unerring aim in the very sore of the wound; — but much above all, as I think, by acting as a small and rapid stream running in the midst of a large and quiet water, they have turned the motion with themselves, — I mean that they have turned the spirit of a larger body than themselves, lying just around them, into a vague direction against the South: through all this, — aided by the South itself, which in its fury has

often struck back on the bystanders, and turned them into foes, — they have been, and are, *powerful*. They are like a small battery, so maliciously placed and played as to threaten the issue of the day. I repeat: leaning on opinion abroad, and availing themselves of a natural sectionalism at home, and trusting to a series of devilish reactions when once begun, — they have been mighty by indirection. And I here add that the Southern complaints as to Northern responsibility for all this are more just than we are willing to allow.

Then, as to the fatal nature of the delusion on which this faction is based, I shall only say: it is no doubt sanctified to itself by the conscious humanity in which it started, but it is none the less a blind, a dreadful tyranny of one supposed good over and against other good, — and sits hatching, with terrible self-complacency, its one egg, after pushing out and destroying the rest. And it is not merely an exclusiveness whose bent is to reject other morals, but to reject religion also; and this, not only because it is so fond over its one thing that nothing is sacred which does not serve to that, but because nothing becomes so embittered and narrowed as a benevolence which, proud and wilful in its origin, has been checked and outraged, as it thinks, by all that is called good.

Hence it comes that some of the extremest leaders of a moral cause not only do not pretend to be specially well-affected towards God, or towards man in general, but become in fact not specially *for* the African himself, — nay, not for him at all perhaps in the last issue, except as, by a fine chance, they have now

the opportunity of being *against* all others by being so much for the slave. There was once a terrible religious justice which “hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord,” — but there is now a philanthropy which hews God and man in pieces before Agag. Of course, I know that high natures led by high instincts have been caught in this trap of the devil, — caught by what seemed angel’s food, and I speak of them only with sorrow and not with bitterness. But, led into error through the mistakes of noble instincts, I must still charge them, as I do, with the name of fanaticism, and with its dreadful issues.

It is this hostile spirit, full of vital activity, and which has now reached, if not Power, yet increased influence, (for the triumphant party as it has gained something from it, must yield something to it,) — it is this spirit, longing to render itself into illegal act, and which, through its alliances, seems to threaten aggression, — it is this which, far more than any assignable wrongs, justifies the South to itself in its present position.

And I here repeat the old assertion, that this spirit of excessive opposition has defeated all benign action as to the slave, and has turned attention away from a gradual and practical dealing with the subject. The common Christian sentiment in the great Christian communities in the South was very much at one with the North in this matter, — and so also in no small degree outside of the churches. The truly sensible men of the country South and North were impatient of all this dispute about abstract right, and, not wast-

ing themselves on this, felt and knew this much at least, that the African here,—though better than the African in Africa,—though better than the African emancipated, or, as I shall choose to say, turned loose,—is not what he might be, and that it became them gradually, and accepting the facts, to do their best for him. To increase that pity and justice in better hearts, was our chief duty and hope.

I have been much among large slave-owners, and am happy to call some of them my valued friends. I may have been fortunate, but I have rarely found one, though interests were deeply involved, whose conscience did not respond to a delicate treatment of the subject. And mere silence, and concern, (I have seen it often enough,) could shape the feelings of ingenuous and high-spirited men, when coarse accusation was met like steel. In fact the better, and I think (by our aid) the ruling class of southern minds would always have been prompt and forward in the right direction, unless thrown back by some of us. And as to southern women,—women in the best fashion of womanhood,—whose vast influence in this, as in all humanity, was always on the side where Christ stands,—what deep and tender responsibility have I seen among them, and what a power was ready for us there had we known how to use it!

I say, had this better sentiment of the South been supported by us, our sympathies given to the situation, it would gradually have meliorated the condition of the slave, removed the offensive features as to marriage, instruction, and sale—would have resisted the designs

of base and cruel cupidity among themselves, and gradually solved the problem by raising slavery into a clear Christian service, and in the process educated both parties, master and slave, to a higher moral position — higher perhaps than either, certainly than one, could have obtained alone. Wilfulness, however, childish sensitiveness to one thing, impatience, imperativeness, narrowing and darkening into actual inhumanity to all concerned, ends now in threatening the future of the highest race on earth, — and involving the certain aggravation and increase of slavery.

But I must leave this dark nucleus and turn to the fault of a much larger Northern class. There are many men in this land true to all law, who yet so regard slavery as to look upon this contest of feeling between North and South as a necessary and normal process. At least at the bottom of the hearts of some of the real leaders of the Northern party is a belief that with slavery no harmonious advance can be made. Accordingly, they accept the widening of this sectional gulf, and legitimate it as part of a necessary alienation. It is but a stage, they think, in an inevitable process. Hidden or open, they feel there is a conflict which must go on, issuing either in a gradual and peaceable triumph of one of the two sections ; or coming out, as now, into open collision, and reaching peace only by quiet dissolution or by a coercion of the weaker section, — or at least by its return to the Union shorn of future power. Nay, if their views go thus far, they must go farther. In case of disruption, they must see that side by side two such nations, or the fragments of them, could never exist, — being slave and

free ; and they feel sure as to which must triumph. No matter though the Southern side, if it begins only with the Cotton States, begins with 856,000 square miles (an area equal to that of Great Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, and Spain), and soon must stretch down to Mexico and Central America, and blacken vast areas with new slavery — dark tropic armies — in such multitudes as “the North poured never from her frozen loins” ; — no matter ; nay, no matter if, at last, the whole Southern half of the Confederacy fall off ; — no matter, they think, — slavery left to itself will destroy itself. So that the extinction of the evil, and a peaceful end, will be reached by the great Southern power dying in its own corruption, or its national existence trampled out by war.

This is the private programme of some of the farthest-looking minds, and of men who do not use the principles for the party, but the party for the principles. This is the outline — (there can be no other) — sketched, too, in the interest of humanity ! I do not mean that such leading minds ever meant — much less do they now mean — to make unconstitutional interferences, but they put the first terms of the logic in motion, and leave its forces to bring out the vast conclusion. I am not insensible to the boldness of the thought, and its reach into the future.

“The sybil, who had numbered in the world
The sun to make two hundred compasses,
In her *prophetic fury* sewed the work.”

But what a monstrous scheme ! as visionary and wilful in its benevolence, and with the same superfine indiffer-

ence to real evils as the worst of those fraternal schemes which the worst minds of France once put into dreadful experiment. It is not true ; we are under no necessity of fatal contest ; the thing this nation is put here to realize is not the abolition of slavery, and the value of this nation is not to be measured as it effects that. It is erected here for purposes unspeakably larger ; and if we be true to the stewardship, the lesser with the greater trusts will be borne forward together, and God's purpose for the free and for the slave will come to fruit in our hands, or among our posterities.

To allow another thought is madness ; it is guilt ! And for what ? To destroy the sun for his spots ? Will you forget the ample orb, the magnificence of the light-shadow he casts, the beneficent grasp of his hands upon the planets ; will you despise and cast down this solar-order of God, because you in your visions can conceive a sun purged of spots ; or because, in your conceit, you can make a finer thing even than this, — “a world of other stuff” ?

O that in all this mistaken duty as to slavery, whatever its degree or form, the spirit of Christ were felt, — that spirit which is the divine “Way,” — which, while it always keeps the purest and profoundest righteousness as the end, moves towards it in a sort of celestial discreetness, as the river curves, yielding to necessities, and sweetly respecting bounds.

“This way of sweetest wisdom, tho' it winds,
Is yet no devious way. *Straightforward goes*
The lightning's path, and straight the fearful path
Of the cannon-ball !
My son ! the road the human being travels,

That on which *blessing* comes and goes,—
 Curves round the corn-fields and the hill of vines,
 * * * * *
And thus secure, though late, leads to its end."

But understand me. I have no idea that the great Republican party would have lent itself to such a scheme or such a spirit as that just mentioned. Be it far from me, to cast a slur upon so large a mass of men, as enlightened, and who mean to be as national, as any among us. But the party had such a scheme within it, I am sure. I earnestly hope they will now reject it. For, though there was this evil within them, they have not been conscious of it; and the South, in sweeping as she does this majority of northern freemen into the class of her foes, commits a vast mistake and wrong.

That great party not only represents other ideas and issues, but it represents a barrier against the aggressions of an extreme Southern spirit,—a just exasperation at wilful and violent Southern acts,—and an exasperation not less just at that powerful party which has so long held the nation,—(not always for the nation's ends,)—and which, by its corrupt compliances to Southern wishes, has gone far to create the Northern sectionalism which it now so violently accuses. It is always well to be just. And let me say here as to parties in general,—let your party be what it will,—call it by fine names of Union or Freedom or Purity;—you have not much to boast of. Our bad citizenship will soon spoil the new temple with the old gods. New parties are the same bad citizens under fresh names; and though of course one party may be and is wiser and purer than another at one moment, and so to

support it may demand the whole energy of those who think so, yet it is but as a goblet of fresh water before the coloring drop falls in. The primal taint of bad citizens blasts all.

To be just, it was necessary to say this.

Charging, then, no party, and separating this spirit as to slavery from any special organization, it is obvious enough that, through whatever organism it works, — for it can at any time make or command a new one, — it will not die so long as it can hope in such an interest to grasp the government or keep it; for a compound of power and profit, on the base of a moral idea, forms the mightiest party-composition ever known among us. Divide it finally from hope of power, and it will shrink back into the nucleus from which it broke out. It may, to be sure, live there; for as slavery is the only moral mischief on a national scale that the moral fanaticism of this land can ever lay its hand to, and as that spirit will ever demand an object, be sure it will never leave its grasp on this. But its force will be inconsiderable. Can there, then, be such a settlement of this question as will disunite it from political hopes and power? Can that be? We could afford great calamities, if the whole people could now be brought face to face with this question, and settle it forever. Here, then, we reach the one question for the destiny at least of the Western world, — *Is such a radical settlement possible?* Such a settlement, I repeat, as will forever clear the subject out of the sphere of the government.

I hope — I believe, such a settlement *is* yet possible, for I hold it a crime to despair of the State. And what

shall it be? It is not for me to instruct you on such a subject; but as I hold every citizen bound to speak, I answer in a word. In respect to slavery in the territories, (I mention no other points, for all others allow an easy adjustment,) let the Missouri line be given, and the application of that rule to all territories, — and let the acquisition of territory be forbidden unless by a vote of two thirds; this, or something similar to this; and yield, if they are wished, fresh Constitutional guaranties for present rights. ——— You see I would not stand on the terms of a hard bargain; for both freedom and the slave can grant very generous terms and yet be gainers. In fact every one knows or ought to know that it is scarcely a practical question, at least as to present territory, — and judicious men can be very liberal concerning abstractions. But whatever your concession is, (I am not exquisitely careful about its terms) it should be such in style and substance as will bring back lost Union to the heart, for reaching that, we may be sure that if we yield more than is just, we are gaining something better than justice. Let the Free States, then, speak to the South and say, “Let us be at peace, — for we be brethren. We are not ashamed to forget all irritations, to quiet your fears, to correct your mistakes, to assure your rights, — nay, we will take a grand scope of concession, and magnanimously yield where your right is doubtful.”

But yet there is one thing which on our part we must demand, — viz: THAT THE FACT BE HEREAFTER (*I mean hereafter*) FOREVER SETTLED, THAT THE UNITED STATES IS A GOVERNMENT. For, in my judgment, the

question as to this which has now come out in full dimensions, is PARAMOUNT TO ALL OTHERS. The attitude of the South, or much of the South, is, that force shall not be used to maintain national law in case of resistance even by one State. I so understand their present position, though it is not stated in general terms. If this be granted, there is a right, practically, not only of irresponsible, but *guaranteed* secession; and the nation has no security against exactions made from a section, under threat, and national power within the nation is reduced to a great phantom which any wayward child can pass its hand through.

If this be granted, such a State as South Carolina may every year point her guns against the American flag, while this great empire — called an empire, but without a bone in its body — must sit in helpless imbecility, or go about and, with “bated breath and whispering humbleness,” get, or strive to get, the consent of a whole section before it can move to the enforcement of its laws on one inch of it. If the South deliberately maintains this, no hope of a lasting settlement is left, — for it contradicts the very thought of government and of that security for which the government was erected. Of course I well know that the *actual use* of force is nearly a fatal remedy, — but to deny the right to use it in last extremes is to strip the government even of moral influence. No doubt, a State or bodies of States may be ill-treated and it may be a high act to fall back on Revolution, — but call it not Regular, and a Constitutional act, — but what it is — *Revolutionary*, — and justifiable only on Revolutionary grounds and after the failure of all Constitutional meth-

ods either to remedy wrong, or peaceably to unloose the national bond. ——— And I must add that the statesmen who put aside this question, — as is now general, — as if force can have no practical place or virtue, forget that such a provision made definite and constitutional, will by every sanction forever prevent the necessity of force, — or at least will so sacredly justify its use that coercion under it can be made possible. But it is for the South to settle this question; and if it is settled, all the concessions asked of the North, — this imperial and advancing North, — sink into comparative insignificance.

For you then the question simply is, which will you choose, — a broken nation, with its whole issues to white and black, or will you choose to be wisely yielding on one side that you may give FOUNDATION to Government and Liberty on this Continent? That question, fairly put to the people of the Free States, will receive an emphatic answer; such as, if they know their future, they can well afford to give. There and there only is our hope. For the South, alarmed at the spirit exhibited at the North, — which spirit, in some measure at least, now begins a career of power; alarmed, not merely at the loss of an election, but at the overtowering prospect of the Free States, both outside the government and inside, and from this forward, — looks about her for more securities, (the feeling is common even to her most conservative men,) while sectional bitterness and ambition seize on the universal discontent, and, bending it to their purposes, make this alternative distinct: Disunion or some magnanimous Concession. And such concession, I assert, must be, and ought to be, and will be made if the

people speak. To the people, then, let the question be promptly put. See to this — to this one point. Let your business be to see to it. Speak, write, move, unite, act to this one end, to clear away parties from between the people and their perishing government. I believe in the *people* in a moment like this, and I care not a whit for parties, and have no faith in mere party-men. They will wait until the heart-strings of the nation crack before they bate one jot of their party-demands. The question must be forced down to the people. Who hinders it? No matter what our opinions may be, who dares to deny that, in a revolutionary moment like this, we, the people, and we only, ought to be the judges? Our Congress and our State Legislatures are representatives of other views, of another and an older condition of things, and ought not to pass upon a crisis like this. To the people at large let it come, and quickly; and if persons or a party are found obstructing an appeal to the true source of settlement, it is an usurpation of jurisdiction, and the time is near when they will be ground to powder.

But you say, “Nothing will satisfy Southern extremists, and it is vain to try it.” Of course, no satisfaction to extremists anywhere can be. And of course mere madness and fright, a willingness, for the sake of peace or property, to say, “Take all,” is to be despised, and can be the source of no just settlement. It is another spirit which is asked for. The people who at the first signal of disaster yield all, and those who understand no course but that of holding to every jot of their due, — both these classes of persons are at present the bane of the State.

——— “But the South really wants no arrangement, — and no concession will meet the case.” As to the Border States, I assure you, you are mistaken, — and all these States once brought into firm unity with us, together we can finally control the whole subject. But suppose the possibility that no concessions will be met — if *you offer them* — you have done your part — you have placed yourself in such a position as will at least give to you honor and strength in the day of adversity.

But you still say, “To yield now is to be bullied and demoralized, and more of the same sort must come after ; and we wont be menaced.” I answer : In a question not involving principle, I want no rule of such honor or such justice. I want the rule of brotherhood, and of the stronger to the weaker. Do you call this *fear* ? — I wish we had more of this honorable fear ; — but who dares suspect these mighty Free States of cowardice ? —— But “you will sacrifice something ;” — I take patriotism to mean that love of the nation that *can* sacrifice something ; when the life of the country is in question, the section or the party must go down before the nation. We are Americans ; that is now our platform, and not the platforms of Charleston or Chicago. We are Americans ; and your star, and my star, and all the stars of the great constellation disappear, and I see nothing in the heavens but the one day-star ! If, to be sure, you are a mere faction, with certain ends of greedy hope or mere pride, — which you cannot give up but from fears as mean, — and if you show all this in your faces as you do it, then your concessions will be but a title to contempt. But if you are men with public souls, wise enough to shape a line or

mould an abstraction so as to suit a point of fancy and honor ; or if you yield something real, magnanimous enough to prefer a nation's life to a theory or a party, and to do it too with a noble air ; if this be so, you of the Free States will rise in a majesty of *real power unknown before*. The measure of superiority is the ability to yield with increased dignity.

Besides, note this, which we forget : The point of international honor should have no place in this adjustment. We of these States do not stand — and now is the fairest moment to show it — on the jealous, rival principles of foreign States. Among the many dignities assigned to us is such a position as will allow us to illustrate and begin a new international spirit ; at least our honor as States should be the honor of a generous brotherhood, and not the cold justice (meaning justice to themselves) which to this day marks with a mere barbarism the sentiment of international honor. To introduce between these Commonwealths the feelings and attitude of jealous and hostile communities, is the worst sign. It becomes us to infuse, if not Christianity, yet something of the humane heart of Christianity into national proceedings. The mutual conduct of these States conceived in a higher spirit would set forward a nobleness in the relations of States, and draw the first sketch of the great communities of the race, standing together as a family and kingdom of Christ. Are we high enough to treat it so ?

If we are, the Free States, having once taken a generous position, will unite firmly upon it ; and this great free section, once at real unity with itself, must bring

the South to it. I think it is inevitable. No dissolution is possible, with the North at real unity with itself, and on noble ground. While on the other hand, so long as it is broken up, or stands represented by party-ideas, not only will the South fall off, but there will be a dissolution of the North itself. Every interest therefore, from the lowest party-interest up to the interests of the slave, and up to all the interests of human nature, demand such a settlement.

But there is, observe, one condition precedent in all this: that the men of this nation value the nationality with some degree of justness. That I do not see, but the contrary. Perhaps the time for valuing it will only come after we are made acquainted with national retribution. In the earnest hope, however, that we may wake up in time, permit me now to ask your deliberate attention to the faults of tone and temper prevailing just at this moment.

You will hardly deny now that it is a moment of exigency. It certainly looks as if the Lord's fan were in His hand to sift the nation, and as if there were to be a scattering of men as chaff from the mouth of the fan, or as dust from the threshing-floor. Already the golden band of the States is broken — and there is preparation for war! War among these commonwealths! among American citizens! The vital question then is, *How does the citizen behave himself at this moment?* Everything hangs on that.

In the history of the debates and of the process by which our present Government was formed, Mr. Madison places as the last lines of that great record, this

impressive narrative: “Whilst the last members were signing, Dr. Franklin looking towards the President’s chair, at the back of which a rising sun happened to be painted, observed to a few members near him, that painters had found it difficult to distinguish in their art a rising from a setting sun. ‘I have,’ said he, ‘often and often in the course of the session, and the vicissitudes of my hopes and fears as to its issue, looked at that sun behind the President, without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting; but now, at length, I have the happiness to know that it is a rising and not a setting sun.’” He thought he saw in that sight of wise forbearance,—the Patriots from all sections and with all views and interests coming forward to sign away their wishes for their duty,—he thought *that sight* changed the Heavens to a fresh, eastern look, like Morning. Judging by the same test, the sun those philosophic eyes discerned to be rising, is now, after a Lapland day, near to the moment of its sinking. I say judging by the same test, *of how the citizen behaves himself.*

I do not wish to exaggerate, and I shall therefore begin by saying that everywhere there are people of the right fashion, God-fearing men,—or if not that, yet lovers, and if need be, martyrs to the common weal; and some are already at work, and with great effort and sacrifice. There are such before me. But in general it is not so;—so far from it that, as I have heard, there may be an inebriation of an age or people, it looks

now as if there were a great case of it here; a morbid torpor with some, a bad excitement with others.

Among many this bad excitement grows daily; they seem to breathe in an atmosphere heated from below. Everywhere while I speak there are men who feel the sanctions of their better nature passing away and a dark seed germinating with fatal speed. Southward you can hear the crack of its rank growth hour by hour. And the North, for her part, is "taking root downward," and will respond with a deepening response. And many begin to talk coolly, and rather pleasantly, of war!—such war as was never waged! of war which is to cover this continent with a vast fratricide! The brute within begins to scent blood, and there is a stir among the dark and buried instincts of men's lowest souls. I hear, here in this seat of our oldest and most Christian civilization,—I hear talk of what arms we have! what advantages! and there is something of joy in the recital. I know that both there and here much that is noble is mixed up with this feeling. I know, to be sure, that there may be Christian war, and that there is a time when, in execution of law and to vindicate the public existence, a Christian hand can draw the sword;—but with what awful solemnity,—with what deprecation,—washing the hand clear of all taint, and taking down, with invocations to God, and with hearts bleeding inwardly, the sword of public justice,—such a sword as was worn at the side of George Washington, and not a knife bared in passion, and private quarrel!

It is clear we must have a better spirit in this coun-

try, or it is in vain to talk of settlements. God will forsake us and our compacts.

We are so full of conceit too! In fact every defect I have enumerated in our national character and training is brought out by this exigency into the broadest illustration. Conceit, I say. Some of us proposing to break a government to pieces and reconstruct it — as if it were a toy! This government, formed in our golden age, under such necessities, after such distresses, with such wisdom and forbearance, — to refound that government in a sea of turmoil, in a generation of men who have lived under no discipline of public aims and common sufferings! To dissolve this inimitable crystal in the fool's hope that it will form again in as fine a shape!

But the great body in all respects *think* justly; yet mingled with *such apathy and helplessness* as has never been exhibited by so free and able a people. It is partly *apathy*, I say. We are inveterately used to find all things done for us, and so, hitherto, we are content to let this get itself done also and as usual. Besides, because this people have moved on through such material success, they have come to attribute to themselves a secret virtue for success, and so they feel they will be pushed on through all doors shut on their way. They do not see that now, for the first time, they reach a real difficulty, — of that sort, I mean, which tests a true citizenship, — for an iron wall obstructs, which opens to no sesame but the words Public Love and Self-Sacrifice! And because we cannot pronounce those words, it is feared we will perish at our first trial. Judge this case, I warn you, in no respect, by the past.

It is a new case, testing what reality we have as men, and bringing all the past of our negligence and selfishness to a first account with us. Divine Providence, my friends, often for ages keeps society like the surface of the earth, — a green and happy surface, — while below, belted in, lies a world of fire and convulsion. And at the moment the demoniacal force comes up, it will search out what amount of manhood is left. If we are found true, I believe the Divine Restrainer will yet restrain; but woe to us if, when there is beyond a doubt the beginning of the upbreking, and when Providence on every side is ringing its alarm-bells, we will not wake up, or deny and flout the *fact below*.

But a more intolerable thing than our apathy is our *foolish helplessness*. We have every appearance of power, but no reality. For the defence of Carthaginian liberty Hannibal gathered various nations and arms, and according to Polybius twenty languages were spoken in his camp. But here it would appear that, to surround and defend a liberty intended not for Carthage but for Man, all tongues and people had gathered and were ready. But nothing is ready! Over thirty millions wait — for whom? There is no one coming, that is, unless *you* come! YOU! — I hear the future crying its scorn back on us and our helpless millions. All the world would acquiesce if the United States of America went to wreck because it was fit and ripe for such an end. The patriot would bow his head to the just stroke. But we are not ripe for any such fate. Judged by the standard of nations, this is a great and undecayed people. But the citizen is

found to-day undisciplined in public duty. Through our idle divorce from public concerns, we present the sight of a mighty people lying unorganized, except in the organisms of party, and helpless, doing little else than watching the progress of our own ruin. And so we move, drifting, drifting, and, from the habit of our good fortune, obstinately thinking there is luck in the drift. It is intolerable, I say, to see this great and precious thing perishing from such folly; it shocks and confuses the moral sense. Why, the mere chance or madness which founders a great ship, or destroys a life, startles that invincible expectation each soul is born with, of a certain reasonableness in nature;—but here is a great life, girt with such glory, the pledge of the fairest and holiest hopes down through the new scenes of a world hereafter, — a presence which wakes a morning in the earth; — I say that this life, this State, this America, this noblest birth, this home of men, should be broken down under the axes and hammers of a mob of politicians and madmen, South and North, — the majestic people, meanwhile, lying below, torpid, under some dread fascination, — this! — it is a new thing even in a history so full of surprises and horrors as the history of States, — and it is a *shock* to the whole moral frame:—

“Earth feels the wound, and Nature from her inmost seat
Gives signs of woe.”

Our help must be in God.

FOR WORST OF ALL; with this helpless apathy, there is a *positive selfishness* towards the nation in her extremest exigency. Even with some of those who

seem to stand most boldly for the nation, it is merely because the nation is identical with good trade, and they would not scruple, at any moment, "to desert the ship of State if they could save themselves in the cock-boat of their own fortunes." But with many, over all the country, there is actually a hard and unsparing eye cast upon the Union! its value counted with an easy air, and with a sharp look against it. "There are many things more valuable than the Union," I hear. There may be; — but what things? Why, the concession of any free soil to slavery. This they call "crime," and so enormous, that it were better to destroy a hundred Unions than act it, — better to destroy for this a Union which sets bounds, which meliorates slavery, and gives the only hope to the slave! For a fanaticism, — or, lower still, for party-pride or greed, — and because they hate to swallow a party disappointment, — people will prate of "crime," and dare, in the face of God and man, to ruin slave and free, and call it virtue!

What is Union? (noble name of brotherhood, now cheapened and traduced!) What is Union? It is thirty-three Commonwealths spread from sea to sea, in unity for freedom, peace, and power! It is to them all, strength out of weakness, peace out of quarrel, — a mould which shapes littleness to greatness, and greatness to permanence; it is a tower that "stands four-square to every wind that blows," which Freedom everywhere "runneth into, and is safe"; it is something that stands here in the west of the world as a portent to all kingdoms of darkness, and a promise to the children of light; a something which, though growing like a moun-

tain, looks as if it were but a foundation for a heavenly structure, — looks as if it were a “corner-stone elect and precious” for that throne which is to stand as the sun in the heavens!

Yet on this a mass of men, who have gained from it all they are, look with an eye cold as the eye of a fish, and could stand by, very comfortable, while they see the axes smiting it to the heart, as if it were a rotten tree. I am sure there is some delusion. They separate the Union as an accident from the Nation and from the national life. But the Union — woe be to them if they do not learn it! — *is* the Nation, — not a mere wrapping for the Nation, as a fillet for the head of a god. It is the Nation! Destroy it, and think not, ye men of Massachusetts or of Pennsylvania! that ye have left to you a Massachusetts or a Pennsylvania; you will by the same process disintegrate yourselves to atoms. There is no other unity, nothing else among us which seems one by the proudest and most needful bonds, — no integrity of section, of commonwealths, of religion, of humane brotherhoods, of man with man, or of man with himself, — which is not shaken the moment you break the one charmed bond around the whole! Tell me, then, which way you can so quickly walk to barbarism, as by carrying out to act this public heartlessness? Can any man name to himself all that this united country is to his own consciousness, his own manhood? What littleness are we bent on? What little bitter hordes do we seek to break into? — following our great men of the moment, or our newspapers, or our wilful wish, and forgetting HIM and his parting words, — forgetting HIM, whose

deep love and wisdom saw this moment and warned his children of it! O, to hear his voice! I wonder that his voice is not heard from his grave. Perhaps if all were silent, and we listened, we might hear it! O, for an hour of his majestic presence, — to see that face, heavy with great and generous cares, the face of the man who bore America and its liberty in his heart, — to whom God gave the land and the cause as a gift for his nobleness! O, to behold him! to see the glance he would cast, — to hear what word this Southern man would speak, to South, to North, to Virginia, — to bow before him down to his beloved feet with shame and sorrow, that we might rise up and come forth, nobly terrible to purify and save the land. But we wish for him in vain, — and the company of our great and venerable ones have gone after him: and “a *man* has become more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir.” The Land is bereaved: “there is none to guide her among all the sons she has brought forth.”

Our help must be in God.

O thou Spirit, which hast moved through the sad history of man, in mysterious slowness, forming the souls of the world, be inward among us now; — let Thy great work not perish from the folly and crime of an hour; — lift us up, scatter the baseness of our souls, and in Thy pure power may each man stand in *his place* as a sentinel of the public safety and honor!

And now, if you have offered your prayer, offer your act. God is ready if we are. Awake! Arise! The country looks and waits for the coming of her pure and

heroic children. I do believe that God will bring them up; this ripening hour of ill is also a ripening hour of good, — there is a preparing and fashioning of better hearts, — and the seeming agony of dissolution is, I trust, the birth-moment of a new sentiment of Christian nationality on which a better future will rest. To this coming generation indeed, there would have scarcely been a country, had not this day of trial been ordained of God to teach them, and to point it out to their eyes. Arise, then, in hope, and act! *This is the time.* There is no greater time in history. Who waits?

But I hear once more, and hear again, and my heart sinks in hearing it, “we can do nothing.” Do nothing! Suppose not; it is not a question for us *what will save the nation*, — that is with God, — but *what it becomes us to do to save it*. But how is this, you can do nothing? If but a few of us stood out truly and grandly right, and the Lord who built the nation were with us, before our faces, the storm would shrink from the heavens. Do nothing! Why, let each man, standing in his place, be dutiful, brave and generous, — let him reach out with both hands, — let his heart beat, and I assure you he will find or make the most miraculous organs. O, to hear the beat of patriotic hearts, beating as if they would break! O, to see men with a tithe of that will to keep a nation alive, which just now invincible in Italian bosoms has made a nation to live! That WILL, American citizens, is law and necessity, here as there.

And now I thank God that I have been allowed to speak a word for the Country to-day. I have done it in love to her and to all her children. Pardon the plain-

ness and urgency of my speech,—I have felt as if pleading for a Father's life.

It is not politics I have called you to; it is religion and worship. For in the language of John Milton, "I maintain that the cause of Christ and civil liberty is one, and moving to one glorious end."

And so I close. Let Christian men who carry Christianity to their firesides, and to their business, now carry it down to this great crisis of the public, and show men the work of a Christian citizen. Find out your duty! and find it, not from your prejudices, but by seeking it in humble confession of national and private sins,—and in humble prayer. Humility! prayer! these are the remedies of our ills,—owning in our hearts unspeakable ingratitude to God and selfishness to man. Low as we may go down this day, we cannot get low enough for our fit place. Let us go lower still; and truly, most truly humble ourselves under the "mighty hand" that is upon us, trusting that He will "exalt us in due time." But be sure, the contrition is not genuine, nor will the "exaltation" come, unless we go forth eager to find our duty, and in His strength to stand on it. In His strength. "Trust ye in the Lord forever—for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."—In His strength stand! I say. In the sacred name of God I charge you to stand true to the nation!—for the sake of Christ "whose right it is."

But if after all the citizens *will* hold back from duty, we deserve to fall. Let us fall! Eighty years of the goodness of God has but served to ingrain folly into our fibre, and the only hope for us is in the furnace

of fire. The augur finds the fatal portent that the victim is without a heart.

Whatever comes, I hope at least that the threatened overthrow of the objects of our pride and love will drive us up to "the city which hath foundations," — above the changes of this restless sea, to make us "citizens of a better country, even an heavenly."

And now, great and gracious God, as sinful men we bow and humble ourselves before Thee, even to the dust! Most merciful hast Thou been, and we adore Thee for thy mercies. "Be bounteous still; to give us only good!" But if thy mercies will not teach us, teach us by sorrow, and so purify and redeem us, — and through afflictions open to us the Land of Peace and everlasting Rest. And, O God the Saviour, the Redeemer in the time of trouble, save this nation! Purify it from bad principles and bad men. Restrain the wrath, and teach the folly, of man! Not for our sakes, for we are not worthy, but for the children's sake, — for the sake of perishing and trampled men, — for the sake of the whole earth, — and for the sake of the Redeemer of the earth, — hear us and save us! Amen.

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GOD, THE GIVER OF VICTORY AND PEACE.

A THANKSGIVING SERMON,

DELIVERED IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SEPTEMBER 18, 1862,

RALEIGH, N. C.

By REV. JOSEPH M. ATKINSON.

THE DIVISION OF LABOR

A THANKSGIVING SERMON

DELIVERED AT THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

BOSTON, MASS.

BY REV. JOHN W. ALLEN

CORRESPONDENCE.

RALEIGH, Sept. 23rd, 1862.

REV. AND DEAR SIR :

It is desired by a large portion of your audience, who heard your very able, eloquent and instructive sermon on the late "Thanksgiving day," Sept. 18th—that the discourse should be printed in pamphlet form. We think that the very original and forcible manner in which you presented the issue involved in our present struggle, would not only prove instructive to the reading public generally, but that, if sent to our soldiers in camp, *as a tract*, it would prove very acceptable to them, and would tend to keep constantly before their minds the great truth—that *to God alone belongs the glory!* 'Tis HE, who in fact fights our battles; and to HIM should our thanks and praises be ascribed. You will confer a favor on us, and very many others of those who heard you, if you will furnish us with a copy of your discourse, on the occasion alluded to.

Most respectfully,

L. E. HEARTT,
H. A. BADHAM,
WM. PEACE,
T. MCGEE,
H. D. TURNER,
R. E. MADDOX.

R. H. BATTLE,
C. DEWEY,
J. BROWN,
K. RAYNER,
F. L. ROBERTS,

RALEIGH, Oct. 1st, 1862.

Messrs. L. E. Heartt, H. A. Badham, Willian Peace and others.

GENTLEMEN :

The discourse which you have thought proper to ask for, was originally prepared without the remotest thought of publication.

But since in your judgement, its more extensive circulation might be of service at this time, and especially to our soldiers, I do not feel at liberty to withhold it.

Accept my thanks for the very kind terms in which the request was conveyed, and believe me to remain,

With high regard,

Your friend and brother.

JOSEPH M. ATKINSON.

GOD, THE GIVER OF VICTORY AND PEACE.

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.
Psalm 30 ; 5 : latter clause.

What a perfect picture of the providence of God and the experience of man ! Alternation of good and evil, pain and pleasure, light and darkness, joy and weeping is the law of this lower world. In heaven where "transport and security combine," all is fixed, stable, everlasting; the experience of good is absolute, unmingled, unbounded. There shall be no succession, save of ever-growing felicities; no change, save of a continual rise from glory to glory.

On all those wide extended plains,
Shines one eternal day ;
There God the Son forever reigns,
And scatters night away.

On earth, whether our state be one of joy or sorrow, we need to be reminded of this glorious prospect—in the one case to sober, in the other to cheer us. The mind takes the colour of the passing time, and thinks it will ever be as now it is, and fancies it will always feel as now it feels. But we should know from the varied dispensations of God in the past, from what others and ourselves have undergone, and from the repeated testimonies of the inspired Word, how false this estimate of things !

This is signally illustrated in the recent history of our country. God had good reason to send sorrow ; but when sorrow has done its appointed work—when, by the sadness of the countenance the heart has been made better, we may expect the darkened cloud to withdraw and a glorious burst of sunlight to appear, like that which even now

“ Flames in the forehead of the morning sky,”

flashes its gladdening rays from east to west, and calls our whole Confederacy to thanksgiving and praise.

It is in happiest accordance with the spontaneous impulse of a Christian people that the honored Chief Magistrate of these States, banded in a common brotherhood of love, of interest, of suffering and of mercies, has called us to grateful ascription and religious rejoicing.

On a memorable occasion, in the personal history of our Lord, * when the envious Pharisees rebuked the jubilant rejoicings of the disciples, He said, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. We might well look for a stern and audible rebuke from brute insensate things, if we should withhold our thankful tribute on this day to the God of our salvation. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Bless the Lord, O, our souls, and forget not all His benefits.

At no distant day in the past, a dark eloud of uncertainty, of disaster, of wrath, overhung our whole Confederacy and discharged its collected fury on our devoted land. A series of unexpected and appalling reverses, beginning with the ill-fated battle of Somerset, followed in rapid succession by the capture of Roanoke Island, the loss of Newbern, Nashville, and of various intermediate points, and culminating in the surrender of New Orleans, the commercial emporium of the South, the evaeuation of Norfolk and the blowing up of the Merrimac, had caused all faces to gather blackness. Then the boldest was filled with apprehension. The most sanguine were tempted to despair. The head of every patriot was bowed in profoundest grief. Shall we not be permitted to hope that the heart of every Christian was bowed in humility, confession and supplication? We felt that vain was the help of man, and we east ourselves on the fatherhood of God. When brought to the lowest point of public depression and of conseious dependenee, our deliveranee was at hand. God poured the spirit of dauntless heroism into the hearts of a whole people—soldiers, legislators, leaders, alike. The generous resolution was taken to defend the Capitol of the Confederacy to the last extremity. From that moment our prospects began to brighten. Then came the successfull repulse of the enemy at Drury's Bluff, flushed with anticipated triumph and glorying in imagined invincibility. Again our coveted and hated capital was beleaguered by the

* Luke 19: 40.

most numerous and best appointed army of modern times, led by their most trusted and skillful generals. But day after day that mighty host was baffled and beaten back, like the surges of the sea raging against Gibraltar. Their strongest entrenchments were stormed. Their most costly munitions were captured or destroyed by the valor of our troops, animated, sustained and guided by the Lord of Hosts. The defence of Richmond was a prodigy, not only of human heroism but of Divine might. From that day to this, our march has been an unbroken series of splendid successes, under the invisible presence of the pillar and the cloud. Shall we not henceforward ascribe all glory to the Lord of Hosts, while mindful of our inextinguishable debt of gratitude to those noble patriots and martyrs whom He employed for our defence ?

When the eyes of the prophet's servant were opened, he beheld the mountain filled with chariots of fire and horses of fire. In the first great battle of Cortes against the Mexicans the enthusiastic invaders imagined that they saw St. James, the patriot St. of Spain, leading their fiery forces on to victory.* If our eyes could have been unsealed during those seven day's memorable battles before Richmond, we should doubtless have seen a more awful and a more glorious spectacle. We should have seen an angel, terrible as that which smote the host of Sennacherib, hurling back the multitudinous cohorts of our self confident invaders, filling their ranks with confusion, dismay and death. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

Never in the history of mankind has the wonder-working providence of God been more strikingly manifest than in the successive phases of this contest. We wholly misapprehend the real significance of this revolution if we fail to discern His hand and His counsel in all that has been done, or, with high providence, permitted to be done. For the present, not joyful but grievous, it has doubtless been a divine agency for the spiritual education of our people in the highest lesson of religious wisdom, akin to that painful economy by which Jchovah led his ancient people through the perils of the pathless wilderness to the possession of the promised land. In the

* The same inspiring but imaginary vision, only in a form still more glorious, was again vouchsafed during the expulsion from Mexico.—Prescott's Conquest of Mexico, vol. ii. p. 341.

successive periods and phases of its progress, it has disappointed all probable anticipations; putting to shame the confident predictions of the wise and vindicating the superior sagacity of humble piety. Its principal agents were themselves even unconscious, before-hand, of the important part which they were designed to bear in the execution of the decrees of infinite wisdom. So far as it may be permitted to man to interpret it, the great purpose of God would appear to have been to exalt his own glorious sovereignty in debasing the pride of material power and illustrating the supremacy of moral forces. In this point of view, its progress has been to us singularly instructive and cheering. Not only does it stand aloof from all vulgar revolutions, but from that which we have been taught to regard with almost superstitious veneration as the most wonderful and noble in the annals of our race; that by which, under the divine favor, we achieved our independence of the British crown and became the freest and most powerful people in the New World. The course of Providential development in our first Revolution was essentially unlike what we have thus far witnessed in this. Compared with the former, the hand of God is more bare, more open, more visible, in that which is now in process of consummation. The personal history of one man is the record of that revolution. The portion of the life of Washington comprehended within the period, contains and exhausts the Revolution itself. He was not only the type and hero of the Revolution, but what was silently transacted in his thoughtful mind and conceived in his patriotic heart, and executed by his own individual prowess, constituted the sum of the Revolution. Thus far at least there is no one man of whom this can be said. There is no one man to whom the glory of these splendid achievements can be so eminently ascribed. It is this circumstance which especially distinguishes it from our first Revolution. In consequence of his undisputed ascendancy Washington received among us, it is to be feared the glory which is due to God only, and other eminent patriots and statesmen of that day, Henry, Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison and Marshall, were unduly exalted and relied on. The illustrious men of that generation constitute a grand Pantheon, each having his own proper altar and his own particular worshippers. It should indeed be to us a matter of grateful acknowledgement that God has raised up for us in this our time of need, able and

godly leaders, like Lee, Jackson, Hill and others, whose character would confer honor on any cause, as their public services would shed lustre on any age. But, perhaps, it is well for us that there is no one name with which the transcendent glory of this period of our country's history is too exclusively connected. Thus the apparent sphere of the Divine operation is enlarged, and our dependence on His favor, though not more immediate and absolute, is more conscious and visible.

In perfect consistency with this view, it may be affirmed as a uniform method of Divine Providence, springing, perhaps, from profound causes hidden in the nature of things and in the nature of man, that in all great Revolutionary movements, religious or political, the tendencies of the times should embody themselves in some one heroic individual whom all men are content to take as the type and representative of the whole period. Thus Luther stands forth confessed as the representative of the German reformation, Calvin of the reformation in France, Zwingle of the Swiss, and Knox of the Scottish reformation. Passing now to the domain of civil Revolution, we recognise at once Napoleon, with his brilliant endowments, his indefatigable power of bodily endurance, his inexhaustible fertility of resource, his insatiable thirst of military glory and supreme indifference to human life as the incarnate genius of the great Revolution in France, near the close of the last and the opening of the present century. At the mention of the American Revolution every eye turns at once to the majestic image of Washington, with his unsullied patriotism, his consummate prudence, his immeasurable self-control, as the model of all natural and all civil virtues. When we come to our own day, may we not hope that Jackson, the Christian hero, the man of piety and prayer, with a fervency of spirit, like David's in the sanctuary, and a martial ardour like David's in the field, has been graciously given us as the interpreter and impersonation of the Christian element and the Christian consciousness of this grand conflict?

We cannot but regard it as a singular mercy of God, that the men for the most part who are the chief agents of Providence in conducting this Revolution, should be in personal piety, in such perfect correspondence with its religious character; and that the recognition of God in his incommunicable glory as Supreme Disposer of all

events, should be so universal among our Rulers and people. So long as we shall deeply feel our dependence on God alone, and put our trust in Him, He will favor us, and our progress will be irresistible as the march of time. Faith is the principle of endeavor and endurance. It prompts energy and produces patience. In its relation to God, it waits and is dependent. They that believe shall not make haste. It says to the subject soul, stand still and see the salvation of God. In its relation to man, it is daring and defiant; seemingly desperate, imprudent, wild and reckless. But when apparently most adventurous, it is in fact most guarded and most prudent; for it is animated by a sublime enthusiasm which links the feebleness of the creature with the almightiness of God. The great virtue, therefore, which the crisis demands, and, we trust, has called forth, is faith in God—the perennial source of patience, courage and hope.

We are prone to rebel against the dispensations of the Most High and murmur as did Israel of old. But how is faith in the Divine Providence vindicated even in time! How often within the limited sphere of our own personal concerns, have we seen that our own plans would have been our ruin, and that the events which appeared most disastrous when they occurred, were blessings in disguise. It is the sovereign prerogative of God to bring good out of evil. Thus the awful catastrophe of our apostacy as a race is made the occasion of the eternal salvation of his elect, and of affording therein the most amazing illustration of His glorious attributes, to all intelligent creatures, throughout never-ending ages. And doubtless, each inferior but to us perhaps, scarcely less mysterious evil, as the rupture of what once seemed to us the golden chain that bound together in firm concord this bright sisterhood of States, and in place of amity and peace, gave us the alarms and atrocities of war, will yet find means even out of this visible chaos, to cause a brighter and a more beautiful creation to emerge.

In that magnificent plea of Milton for the liberty of unlicensed printing, the glorious image of his beloved country rises up before him in poetic vision, and he exclaims, "Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself like a strong man after sleep and shaking her invincible locks; Methinks, I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth and kindling her undazzled eyes at the

full midday beam ; purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance." This picture and prophecy we would transfer to our own dear Southern land. Now, she is involved in the heat and dust and blood of the battle : Hereafter, she shall repose in victory and triumph and peace. Now she sits as a widow, forsaken of the nations : Hereafter she shall arise, radiant as a queen, resplendent as the day, crowned with immortal honour, in favor with God and man. Now, she is oppressed, but not overwhelmed ; enveloped in flames, but not consumed ; in peril, but not appalled ; putting her trust under the shadowing wings of the Almighty. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

She is now toilsomely learning those precious lessons which she shall teach hereafter to oppressed and struggling nations ; and to the proud and heartless Tyrants, who in other lands and in future days, may seek to degrade the noble and enslave the free. She is now making for herself a name which shall be gratefully and admiringly murmured wherever freedom has a friend or the God of Providence a worshipper ! The only proper view of this Revolution, is that which regards it as the child of Providence, who " maketh the wrath of man to praise Him and the remainder thereof He restrains." The ends contemplated by men and the actions permitted, not approved by God, are in many cases, very unlike his ultimate designs. And we may say to our Northern oppressors, as Joseph to his cruel brethren, As for you, ye thought evil against us, but God meant it unto good. Gen. 50 : 20. All that was affirmed, and more than was imagined of the ulterior aims of those who inaugurated this atrocious war, has been already done or plainly indicated already.

Were we able to interpret aright the painful dispensations of the Almighty, we might find that our frightful series of reverses during the winter and spring, were as truly merciful in their intent as our recent splendid successes. It was a humiliating but needful part of our education as a people. It was a bitter medicine, but we hope it wrought a lasting cure. It taught us our prostrate dependence on Him who, sitting on the circle of the Heavens, hath appointed to the nations of the earth the bounds of their habitation and rules with absolute sway over the councils of Cabinets and the event of battles. It was the indispensable condition of the exercise of virtues, with-

out which no character is complete, whether of an individual or a whole people—virtues less obtrusive and less glaring than heroic prowess on the field of bloody strife, but not less magnanimous, less essential or less rare—the virtues of self-control, of patience, of fortitude and of hope. It has served to exhibit a striking characteristic of our people, previously unknown, it may be, to themselves. I mean their marvellous recuperative energy. In a week after a defeat or disaster, they have seemed as resolute, as hopeful, and as eager as ever. In the presence of terrible calamity, under the pressure of heavy affliction they exclaim,

“ All is not lost; the unconquerable will
And resolution never to submit or yield,
And what is more, not to be overcome.”

Another quality conspicuously evinced in the progress of this contest has been the singular unselfishness of the great body of our troops, many of them belonging to the best families of our Southern country, born in affluence, nurtured in ease and honour; yet entering the ranks and serving with “proud submission”—with “dignified obedience,” under men in every way inferior to themselves, but invested by lawful authority for a temporary purpose with the right and the place of command. The true history of this war will show that nobler instances of knightly courtesy, of generous valour and of chivalrous enterprise, have not been found among the best and bravest of our officers, than among the men subject to their authority.

I have spoken thus far of the gallantry of our soldiers and the patriotism of our people, but assuredly not with the design of giving the supreme glory to them. They have been but instruments in the hand of a higher power; channels through which the Divine goodness has streamed forth upon us. For the singular preservation of the precious lives of our leaders and troops exposed beyond all former precedent; for the signal victories vouchsafed to our arms over an arrogant and exulting foe; for the patriotic unity which has animated all classes and both sexes; for the spirit of moderation, of firmness and of humanity which has marked the policy and conduct of our rulers, our fervent thanks are due to that benign Providence who alone bestowed and inspired it all. The glorious deliverances which we have so often experienced heretofore, so far from

exhausting the Divine bounty, may under an economy of grace, be turned into an argument for still greater mercies hereafter. When the stripling David armed only with a sling and pebbles from the brook, went forth to meet the giant of Gath, the thought of ancient deliverances kindled his courage. And David said, Moreover, the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.*

There ought to be not the spirit of carnal rejoicing and self-complacent boasting among us now, but great solemnity of heart and great tenderness of walk. We should humble ourselves even in the hour of victory, before the eternal Majesty of Heaven and earth, whose right hand and holy arm hath gotten Him the victory. If, by ingratitude and unbelief, we provoke Him to depart from us, our failure and ruin will not be more deserved than dreadful. The brilliant successes with which His favour has crowned our arms and gladdened our hearts, will be like a single star or a small cluster of stars in a firmament of gloom—a bright chapter in a volume written within and without in characters of mourning, lamentation and woe. This contest is not ended. Infuriated by defeat, our enemies are more rancorous and implacable than ever. They are summoning new levies of hundreds of thousands, to effect, if possible, the subjugation of our people, and will resort to every device which cruelty, sharpened by malice and mortification, can suggest to effect their purpose. In these circumstances we look to that God who delivered David and Israel, and while we celebrate His past goodness, hopefully invoke His future favour. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. Abiding in such a posture of spirit as this, may we not hope that what He hath so auspiciously begun He will carry on to a glorious consummation? A conflict waged in self-defence for all that man holds dear, and consecrated by the martyr-blood of the best men in these Confederate States—by the solemn voice of all our religious convocations, of all Christian churches and above all

* 1 Samuel; 17: 37:

by the visible favour of Almighty Power, cannot but terminate happily. We should learn, therefore, to exercise a cheerful trust in God and cherish perfect unity among ourselves.

And amid all the excitements of war, let us not cease to feel that a people's spiritual interests are their supreme interests; especially in a time of political convulsion, when so many moral and social bounds are relaxed or broken. He, therefore, who at this crisis does most for his own soul and the souls of others, does most for his country; and he who by his conduct or teaching lowers the standard of Gospel piety, is an enemy not only to religion but to liberty. There are times when extraordinary energies should be put forth by the servants of the Most High. Whenever men are profoundly agitated by a political convulsion or by a war, such as that which is now raging throughout our extensive borders, vice of all kinds abounds. Satan and his agents are active and vigilant. At such a time the people of God should evince a corresponding energy. Never were Christians called to more diligence, self-denial, courage, benevolence and industry than at this solemn juncture; and it is, at such a time as this, that God and all good men are most fruitfully active. In a contest like this every man must serve his country according to his several ability and in his appointed sphere. Every man must find the place and the duty suited to him, and to which he is suited. None can be more important than practical and prayerful labor for the religious welfare of our heroic soldiers; directly seeking their salvation by preaching to them—by writing and distributing Tracts and Hymns and Bibles—by praying for them—and by tender sympathy with them in the trials and temptations to which they must be inevitably exposed. If God should breathe over these Confederate States the spirit of devotion, of humility, of dependence and of faith, it would be better than any victory in the field, however brilliant—for it would be at once a proof of His favour and a pledge of our prosperity.

Instructed by the calamities of war, we shall estimate more highly the blessings of peace. We hardly ever value as we ought uninterrupted prosperity, or estimate as we should any good while it is ours. The evils of this trying period will not be lost to us, if they shall impress upon us all an adequate sense of the preciousness of peace and bring the policy of our Rulers and the temper of our peo-

ple into perfect harmony with the spirit of the Gospel, peace on earth, good will to men. Such have been the gallantry and patriotism of our troops in the field, and such the charity and courage of our women in anticipating and ministering to their wants, that we may pursue our chosen policy of peace with all nations without the imputation of effeminacy or cowardice. After the lapse of a few years, we trust that we shall look back upon these trying times as on a troubled dream, and in the secure enjoyment of peace repeat, with even more solemn and tender emphasis than on this day of thanksgiving and praise. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

The martyred dead have taken possession of this Southern soil for the Southern people. It was theirs originally, by the gift of God, and they have bought it anew by their blood. This land will be endeared to us and to our posterity, because it is the earthly resting-place of our immortal dead. It was the boast of the ancient Greek, as his eye wandered over his beautiful and beloved land, that every hill bore the tomb of a hero or the temple of a God. But more noble dust mingled not with the soil of Attica than that which reposes in the bosom of our own dear native land. It surely lends attraction to heaven, viewed with reference to our present constitution, to think that there we shall behold and converse with the best and loveliest we have known on earth. If Socrates could talk of transports of joy at the prospect of seeing Palamedes, Ajax and other heroes of antiquity in a future world—how should the Christian feel when he looks forward to an everlasting abode, not a transient meeting with the saints of all ages—with his Christian friends who have fallen in his defence—and with Christ Himself, the Author and Finisher of our faith. If he hoped for felicity in comparing his experience with theirs—how shall we rejoice in reviewing dispensations of Providence now impenetrably dark, or imperfectly understood, but then shining in the light of Heaven. The *past* and the *future* meet in the memory of the dead. The sweetest and brightest link in the chain that stretches back over the past, binds us to the dead; and that chain stretches forward to eternity and attaches itself to the Throne of the living God. Thus death joins on to life; and all that is sacred in memory connects itself with all that is inspiring in hope. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.







