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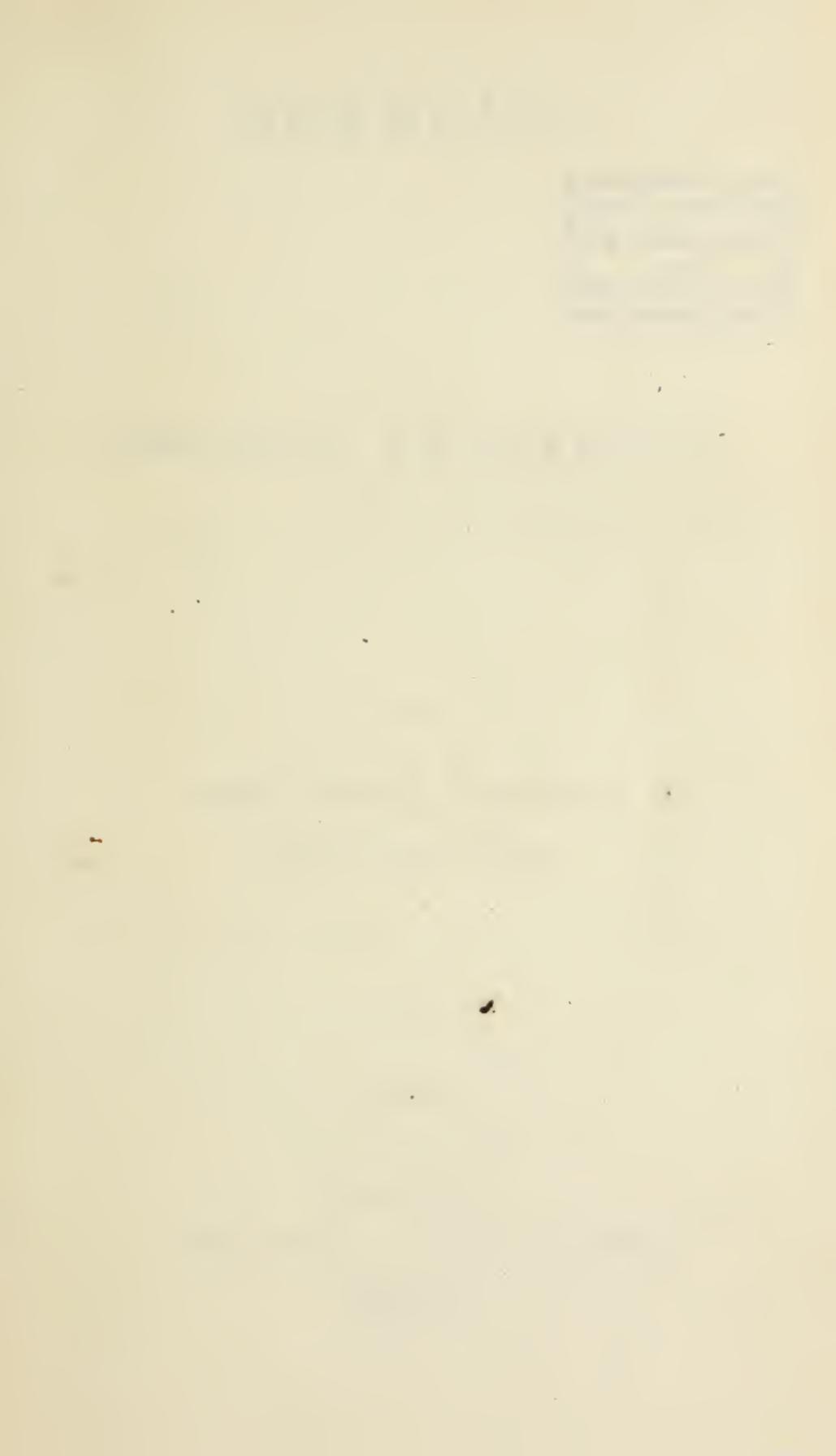
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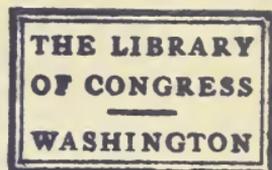








# SERMONS:



CHIEFLY PRACTICAL.

BY

THE SENIOR MINISTER

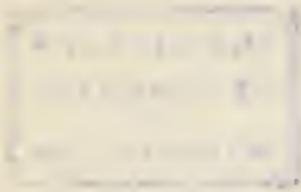
OF THE WEST CHURCH IN BOSTON.

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## DEDICATION.

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### TO MY CHILDREN,

Whose love and devotedness have been a source of happiness and joy to me in my days of health and activity, and of solace and comfort in seasons of infirmity, and in old age :

AND

TO THE PRECIOUS MEMORY OF THEIR SAINTED MOTHER,

*This Volume is Dedicated*

---

### TO ELIZABETH CUTTS DUTTON.

I dedicate this volume also to you. We are the children of the same parents ; grew up from infancy together ; have been, through life, except only for a brief period, side by side ; without the recollection of one unkind action, or word, or thought, towards each other ; and are the last survivors of our father's household.

Nor is this all. You will find in this volume a sermon containing the portraiture of a good mother, and will not fail to trace in it, — though she was not the prototype, — the lineaments of the character of that sainted being, —

now a ministering angel to us,—from whom we both received our first lessons of piety;—lessons which she so fully and beautifully embodied in her own life and example.

May we be enabled to follow her on the upward path which she so faithfully and lovingly traced out for us; and when called to follow the beloved departed, whose hallowed memory we fondly cherish, may we be united with them in our FATHER'S house above!

Your loving and only brother.

Elmwood, December, 1854.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS volume has its origin in a request repeatedly made to the author that he would republish the sermons he had already published, with a selection from his manuscript sermons. In order to comply with this request, it was determined, Providence permitting, to publish two volumes, simultaneously, the first volume to contain such of the sermons as it was thought best to republish, and the second, the sermons which should be selected from manuscripts.

Circumstances have led to an alteration of this plan. The volumes will be published separately, and in a different order from that originally contemplated.

The state of the author's health has occasioned a delay in the publication, and interfered not a little with the preparatory steps to it.

The author is compelled to add, with anguish which can be understood only by those who knew the object of it, that, after the intended publication was announced, a domestic calamity occurred, — the rupture of a parental and filial tie, inexpressibly dear and delightful; — which rendered the labor of revision for the press almost impossible, though it excited a still stronger sense of responsibility, and more fervent desire that the labor might not be in vain.

The sermons in this volume, with the exception of a few of a practical character, which had before been published, are selected from the author's manuscripts.

They are printed almost literally as they were delivered,

except that, in the delivery, the speaker did not always feel obliged to confine himself strictly to the notes before him.

They were originally addressed to a people with whom the author has been connected as a minister, with uninterrupted confidence and affection, for nearly half a century. To them they are now especially sent forth from the chamber to which, in the providence of God,—always wise and good,—he has been, in a great measure, confined by illness, for more than three years. This circumstance of their more especial destination, will account for the introduction of sermons containing delineations of private character and allusions to domestic griefs, as well as of others plain, direct, and unelaborated.

Of *their* kind reception of them to whom they were preached, and to whom they are now especially sent, the author is well assured. They will read them, as they heard them, with affectionate interest.

That the reading may be blessed to their benefit, and that a blessing which the world cannot give nor take away, may be ever with them, is the fervent wish and prayer of their most affectionate friend and pastor,

CHARLES LOWELL.

West Church, Boston, December, 1854.

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# SERMON I.

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## THE GOOD MOTHER.

Proverbs xxxi. 28.—HER CHILDREN ARISE UP, AND CALL HER BLESSED.

THE text needs no explanation. It must present to every mind the portraiture of a good mother. It is only such a mother who would be thus honored by her children. It is only such a mother who, in life, would receive their grateful homage, and whose memorial would be cherished by them among the dearest objects of their remembrance.

There is something, indeed, in the very name of mother, which awakens the tenderest associations, and must excite in every breast, not corrupted and hardened by vice, the liveliest emotions of affection and gratitude. It implies, in those who bear it, the most exuberant kindness toward those to whom it relates; and is even used in Scripture to present to us the highest example our weakness can comprehend, of the Divine compassion. *Can a mother forget her child? The Lord will not forget thee.*

It is the name of one to whom we owe our being; on whom devolves the care of our earliest years; who sustains us in the most helpless period

of life; who, with unceasing and untiring assiduity, watches and labors for our preservation and comfort; to whom no self-denial is irksome, and no exertion toilsome, that can promote our benefit; who, in our advancing years, regards us with an anxiety and solicitude which has no other name than maternal by which it can be expressed; whose faithful bosom is the depository of our early joys and sorrows; who in sickness is found at our pillow, wakeful without effort; performing such offices of kindness as a mother only could perform; and in whom, if survived, the love for her children is the last earthly passion that warms the heart.

All this is included in the name of mother: affection intense; affection undying; strong in life, and strong in death; labor untiring; care unremitted; anxiety unceasing. All this is associated with that dear and sacred name; all this comes in to swell the tide of affection in the heart of a dutiful child — whilst it is enjoying the blessing of maternal love and care. All this comes in to swell the tide of its grief when, on earth, that love can be felt, and that care can be exercised no longer.

But this is not all. There may be much more than this, to enshrine this name in our hearts, and to cause them to thrill with the tenderest emotions when it is called up to remembrance. It is the name of one to whom, if she is faithful, we owe our first impressions of God and duty; who first

teaches our heart to feel its obligations, and our tongue to utter them; who watches the opening mind, and, as its powers unfold, instils instruction in wisdom and virtue, and lays the foundation of the future character; who, as we grow in years, is still our faithful monitor, judicious counsellor, and confidential friend, restraining and guiding us by the persuasive energy of her precepts, and the silent, but not less impressive eloquence of her life; furnishing, while in the mercy of God she is permitted to remain with us, a beautiful illustration of the efficacy of the principles she inculcates, and the hopes she would inspire, and leaving behind her a bright and luminous track, which still marks out for us the path by which she ascended to heaven.

It is to such a mother that children look up with a veneration and love which may be felt, but cannot be described. It is the memory of such a mother which is embalmed in the hearts of children, not to decay till those hearts are mouldering in the dust. I should rather say, *never* to die, but to live with the immortal mind which has received the impress of her virtues.

How dear, how precious, is such a mother to her children who are worthy of her! How doubly precious when the parent, who had shared with her in their veneration and affection, is gone from them; when she unites in herself all, in this world, that is comprehended in the parental relation, and alone can receive the offerings of filial piety. How anxious are they to give her every demonstration of

their sense of her value to them, and of the obligation they owe her! How watchful their solicitude to promote her happiness; to anticipate her wishes; to help her infirmities; to render cheerful and pleasant the evening of her life! How tenacious are they of every look of tenderness, as of beams that are soon to be withdrawn. How carefully do they gather up her words as treasures that will not long be supplied; watching, as her day declines, to catch the last rays of her setting sun. How faithful are they to the calls of duty, in the closing scene; ministering to her weakness, as she has ministered to theirs. And when the scene is over,—when the bitterness of death is past, how are they cheered in the ‘solitude of their souls,’ by the sounds of pious resignation, and humble confidence, and holy joy, which seem yet to vibrate on the ear, and will never, never cease to vibrate in the heart!

Blessed is such a mother! Blessed in life; blessed in death; blessed, forever blessed, in the world beyond the grave. *Her children arise up, and call her blessed.* They bless her while she lives to bless. They bless her as they receive the last breathings of her spirit, which is on the wing for heaven. They bless her memory, which is left as a rich inheritance to her children’s children. Long after she is gone, they look back upon her solicitude and fidelity with an interest which the lapse of time has not destroyed,—perhaps has not impaired.

My hearers! When one so honored, deservedly honored by her children, is taken away from among

us, I would gladly delineate the features of her character, and thus indulge my own feelings, whilst I paid a just tribute to the memory of departed worth. I would describe, on such an occasion, the qualities which rendered her an object of deep respect and warm affection, not only to her children, but to all who enjoyed her friendship. I would describe the mind refined and cultivated; the countenance beaming with sweetness and intelligence; the manners dignified, yet winning; the conversation, interesting to the wise from its wisdom, yet most attractive to the young and gay from its vivacity and playfulness; the whole deportment inspiring happiness in all around her. I would dwell on her compassion, and tell of the ignorant whom her bounty had contributed to enlighten; the poor, whose wants it had supplied; the widows, whose hearts it had caused to sing for joy. I would introduce you to her domestic circle, and speak of her order, and economy, and industry. I would carry you to the bed of sickness and death, and repeat the words of consolation which she addressed to her children; and the words of humble, yet firm and steady confidence which she addressed to her God. I would describe her composure — nay, her joy and rapture, in the prospect of being with that God in heaven. All this, and more than this, I would minutely detail, were I to follow the prompting of my own heart; but to this, on former occasions, I could only allude; and to this, now that it may be told with so much truth, I must only allude.

There are hearts which can fill up the sketch, and I could not do justice, by any description of mine, to the character which is imaged there.

If the fervent wishes and prayers of children, friends, could have availed aught to stay the stroke, our friend 'had not died.' To us, indeed, she died.

But,

'The dread path once trod,  
Heaven lifts its everlasting portals high,  
And bids the pure in heart behold their God.'

We mourn, that in the retirement of domestic life, in the scenes of her labors of benevolence, in this place, to which she loved to resort; we mourn, that where we have been accustomed to meet her, we shall meet her no more.

But, as we loved her, we rejoice that she has gone to her FATHER; to the associates and friends of her early life whom it was her lot to survive; to all who have gone before her to heaven. We rejoice that she has gone from a world in which there is so much pain and sorrow, to a world where 'there is no more pain; and sorrow and sighing flee away.'

They have been highly favored to whom it was permitted to enjoy, in the parental relation, so much that was worthy of their reverence and love, and to enjoy it so long. They are favored if they have known its value, and endeavored to improve it. May they still feel its energy exerting a powerful influence on their conduct! When the image of one so venerated and loved comes up to the mind, in health or sickness, in joy or sorrow, in seasons of

retirement, or in seasons of business or pleasure, may it chasten, purify, elevate, every thought and feeling and purpose and desire.

If, as I have more than once suggested, and delight to repeat, they who are glorified make a part of that 'cloud of witnesses' by which we are compassed about; if they are permitted to revisit the scenes of their former interest and attachments; if they are employed on errands of love and mercy to those who were the objects of their solicitude on earth; if they still hover around us, witnessing what is good in us, and instruments in the hands of Him who worketh by the instrumentality of second causes in cherishing every holy purpose,—how should we live!

My hearers! we are always in the presence of God, and the Spirit of God is always striving with us. May we live as in this presence, and by the assistance of this Spirit, follow on in the footsteps of the pious dead, animated by the consciousness that we are acting worthy of their memory, and that every step brings us nearer to their renewed intercourse, and their eternal reward.

## SERMON II.

---

### PARENTAL AND FILIAL DUTY.

II. Tim. i., part of verse 5.— I CALL TO REMEMBRANCE THE UNFEIGNED FAITH THAT IS IN THEE ; WHICH DWELT FIRST IN THY GRANDMOTHER AND THY MOTHER, AND I AM PERSUADED IN THEE ALSO.

THE disciple to whom Paul addresses these words was eminent for his piety. He is frequently mentioned by the apostle in terms of commendation, and two epistles are directed to him full of counsel and affectionate encouragement. ‘From a child he had learned the Scriptures,’ and was thus the better prepared to receive the truths of Christianity. He was converted by the instructions of Paul, and was his frequent companion in travel and in suffering.

It was the privilege of this young convert to have a pious mother and grandmother. From that source he, doubtless, received his early impressions of piety. The unfeigned faith that was in him had dwelt first in his parents ; and, through the influence of maternal counsel and example, had descended to him.

We are led, then, to reflect, in the first place, on the advantage of having pious parents, especially a pious mother ; in the second place, on the responsi-

bility which rests on children, who are thus favored; in the third place, on the obligation which rests on parents, especially mothers, to confer this benefit on their children.

1. It is a privilege to have pious parents, especially a pious mother. This position will not be denied or doubted in this assembly. It is not because it is either new or questionable, that I advance it; but to remind you of it, and enforce it, and derive instruction from it.

The relation in which parents stand to their children, gives them an influence which no other relation confers. The characters of the children partake more or less of the qualities which belong to the characters of the parents. The instruction, good or bad, which is directly or indirectly conveyed; the example, beneficial or injurious, which is exhibited; never reaches, without effect, the eye or the ear of the child. In many comparatively trifling particulars, parents contemplate in their children, in very early life, a portraiture of themselves. They become conscious of habits of which they were not before aware, by beholding the miniature transcript in these faithful copyists. It is so in higher matters; in the intellectual and moral habits. Hence the importance and value of good instructions, and a good example. In *both* parents it is of vast moment; for, as the united effort to give a proper direction must be doubly efficacious, so the failure, on either part, will tend to counteract the fidelity of the other part. But especially is piety important in that parent

from whom the child receives its first impressions; who traces the first characters on its ductile mind, and gives the first impulse to its onward course. Early impressions are proverbially deep. Good precepts and good principles, inculcated and instilled as the mind is first developing its powers, are perhaps never wholly lost. They are so many lights set up in the mind to direct the conduct through the maze of life, and they are seldom, if ever, extinguished. The giddiness of youth, the blind impulse of unruly passions, may dim their lustre, and cause them to burn with a faint and flickering flame; but still the light remains, though nearly gone, and something may rekindle it, and restore all its purity and lustre. When the tumult and infatuation are over, the mind may be calmed by the dictates of reason, and they who have wandered far 'from the way in which they should go,' may return to it, and not depart from it again. How many can trace to the faithful, assiduous attention of a mother, in their early instruction, their having been preserved, by the blessing of God, from becoming a prey to the temptations which have assailed them in the world!—How many their having been led to pursue the path of religious wisdom, in which they have found their highest happiness!—How many their return to God and duty, when they had gone astray!—I *might* say, how many have looked back on the early neglect of their parents; or on the bad influence they had early exerted, with deep and bitter anguish; if

not —. But I forbear. They to whom God, in his merciful providence, has given good parents;— who have been blessed with the early counsels and prayers of a pious mother, cannot feel, with too much gratitude, their obligations. And on them I remark, in the second place, a great responsibility rests.

2. You who now enjoy the blessing! — Children! whose parents are diligent in forming you to piety and virtue, and in securing you from the corruptions and miseries of impiety and vice; whose mothers are anxiously sowing, and anxiously watering the seeds, which, if you are faithful to them and yourselves, will, with a divine blessing, bring forth the rich fruits of holiness; let me tell you how much you are favored, and how anxious *you* should be to improve under the pious culture you are receiving; to learn the lessons of heavenly wisdom which are taught you. When your mother is engaged in the sacred work of instructing you in your duty to God and man; in teaching you to be good, that you may be happy; listen to her instructions, think of them, and when you say your prayers, pray that you may be all that she is thus laboring to make you. The time is precious to you, children, for the season of childhood is fast passing away. The time is precious to you, children, for the bud may be nipped as it is opening, or may open but to die.

You who have *gone out from a parent's guidance*, and look back upon the precious hours that were

given to the counsels of parental love and fidelity, how great is your responsibility! How much have *you* received, and how much should *you* return in gratitude and holy obedience! Amidst the labors, and cares, and temptations of life, often recur to this period. Call up, again, and again, the lessons you have been taught by precept and example; and let them still admonish and guide you. If your parents are alive to witness your faithfulness to the obligations they had imposed upon you, it will gladden their hearts. If they are gone, you will have the consciousness, and how delightful will it be to you, that you are honoring the memory of those to whom you owe so much.

How interesting to us, my hearers, is the remembrance of those early counsels and prayers, when they who offered them are gone from us! We look back with a melancholy satisfaction on their anxieties for us, when we had no care for ourselves; on their solicitude to protect or to warn us; on the instruction and discipline by which they endeavored to form us for the duties of coming life; on the earnestness with which they spake to us of the pleasures and rewards of religion, on the hopes they indulged of the progress of our talents, or from our good conduct, or success, from our duty and affection to them, and our fidelity to God.

There are no recollections so useful to us as these. We should often call them up to our minds. They will instruct and admonish us as long as we live. Who of us that has had a pious mother does

not bless GOD for it fervently? How sacred are the recollections that come up to us with this dear object of our earliest love!

Has our conduct been worthy of all that has been done for us? Do we still feel its influence, and do we labor to revive and strengthen it more and more?— We must answer before GOD.

Alas! What shall we say of those who disregard these recollections; on whom they have no influence to guide or restrain them? If their parents are alive to witness their conduct, are they not ashamed to meet them; to converse with them; to receive favors from them? And if they are gone, how little,— thoughtless, degenerate, ungrateful children,— how little did they anticipate this, when you hung about them with your infant arms, answered their fond smiles, and lisped out the first broken accents of affection! Oh! that you would have compassion on them, if they are witnessing your conduct with unspeakable anguish; that you would have regard to their memory, if they no longer witness it; that you would have mercy on yourselves!

3. In the third place, how great an obligation rests on parents to confer on their children the advantage of early religious instruction, the benefit of pious counsel and example!

Do I address a mother who needs to be reminded of her duty? Is there one who now hears me, who forgets that she is intrusted with the care of immortal beings, and that it is for *her*, by early instruction and discipline, to direct and guide their feet in the

path of immortality? Is there one who hears me who is not anxious, above all things, next to her own salvation,—and I had hardly said next,—to promote the spiritual benefit and eternal welfare of her children? Can such a mother be found?—When ‘the dead, small and great,’ shall appear before the throne of God, the mother who has been faithless to her charge, the father who has impeded or counteracted the efforts of a faithful mother, may meet their child; and how dreadful the interview! May we never know! May God enable us to be faithful; that our children may cherish our memory with respect and tenderness; and that we may look forward with joyful expectation to the day when we shall be able to say before the throne of God, ‘Behold, here are we, and here are the children thou hast given us!’

Mothers! would you have your memory precious to your children?—would you be embalmed in their remembrance?—would you be associated with their best recollections, blended with their highest enjoyments of earth, and their surest hopes of heaven?—Be faithful to their instruction in piety and virtue.

Christian mother! Never despair of the success of thy early labors for the spiritual benefit of thy child, whilst life remains. They may seem to have been fruitless, but the time may come when thou shalt reap a rich and joyful harvest.

On a foreign shore, friendless and solitary, thy wandering, erring child may look back to the home

of childhood, and hear again the warning voice of maternal tenderness; and the light, thus early imparted, may burst again upon the mental vision, and serve as a beacon to conduct him to the haven of peace and safety.

On the bed of sickness and death, when this world is passing away, and another world is opening on the view, the dreadful picture of the recompenses of guilt which thou hast portrayed, and the delightful visions of heavenly felicity which thou hast gone, perhaps, long before to realize, may be permitted, in the mercy of God, to come up before the awakened conscience with an overpowering energy, and thy child be saved.

Christian mother! Never despair of the success of thy early labors for the spiritual benefit of thy child whilst life remains; for though thou shouldst never be permitted to reap thy reward in this world, thou mayest find in heaven that thou hast not labored in vain.

## SERMON III.

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### PARENTAL HOPES.

Genesis, v. 29. — THIS SAME SHALL COMFORT US CONCERNING THE  
WORK AND LABOR OF OUR HANDS.

To know the heart of a parent, to indulge the overflowings of parental tenderness, and to enjoy the return of filial affection, is a privilege and a blessing. It was a natural, as well as a pathetic appeal, 'LORD GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?' Our image is renewed, and our memory embalmed, by our children. They are a part of ourselves. If to no one else we are objects of regard, we fondly believe that our children will care for us. The anxiety we feel, the care we exercise, the labor we exert, they will not fail to repay.

If, in the season of infantile helplessness, or heedless childhood, or inexperienced, giddy youth, we cherish and protect and warn them; if, amidst the diseases to which their early life is subject, we deprive ourselves of rest and recreation, that, if possible, we may secure their comfort, and promote their recovery; if, as they grow in years, we spare no expense, and heed no privations, that we may

store their minds with knowledge, and fit them for respectability and usefulness in the world; if we fail not to instil the lessons of piety, and restrain not our prayers for the success of our instructions; our children will not, surely, be backward to acknowledge the claim, or to fulfil the obligations, these services impose. They will be our honor and our pride; the means of improvement with which we furnish them, they will diligently use; and if our time of sickness, or helplessness, or dependence, shall come, they, in their turn, will watch over and support, and cherish us.

Such are the fond expectations that are formed; such the bright visions that are raised by the magic wand of hope, in the prospect of the parental relation. They are expectations which are frequently fulfilled; they are visions that often prove real.

But, in the picture of the parental relation there is not only light, but shade. How great is the solicitude, how unceasing must be the vigilance, how keen is often the disappointment of parents!

I grant that the son who 'honors his father and mother;' who cherishes for them, not only the reverence which he owes them, but the watchful solicitude of undissembled affection; repays, a thousand-fold, their early anxiety for him. I grant still more that when filial love is purified by the spirit of piety, and the ardor of youth is controlled by the faith which overcomes the world; the affection of the child goes still deeper into the hearts of the

parents, and has a double effect to cheer the evening of their days.

On the other hand, it must be granted that when this filial affection and tenderness are wanting, and these holy fruits of early cultivation do not thrive, it inflicts a pang to which, except in the upbraidings of a guilty conscience, there is not a parallel. The conduct of a vicious child is a source of the bitterest anguish which can flow into the heart.

‘And is *this* the reward of all our care? Is this the child of so many hopes, of whom we had so often said, in the fulness of parental love, “*This same shall comfort us concerning the work and labor of our hands?*” Have all our instructions, admonitions, prayers ended in this? It were better we had never enjoyed the delight of parental affection, than to have been doomed thus to experience the bitterness of unrequited tenderness and care.’

It is happy for those parents, with the anguish of whose disappointment no feelings of regret and compunction for their own negligence, are mingled; who are not compelled to receive themselves a portion of the condemnation which attaches to the conduct of their child.

We rejoice in the gift of a child; but it is to be feared that there are many who do not fully estimate its importance. We do not receive merely a perishable body, which is to be fed and clothed and cherished; but a *mind*, which is to be cultivated and improved; a *soul*, which is to be trained up for glory.

To an unthinking observer, an infant may present only the idea of weakness and helplessness; or, at most, the embryo of a future man who is to live, and act; and suffer, enjoy, and die. But to the reflecting mind,—to the mind of the enlightened Christian,—it presents an object infinitely more important and interesting. It has entered on the first stage of an endless existence. It is the future heir of heaven or hell. To the parents, under God, it may belong to determine its destiny to one or the other. A glowing fancy may depict—no, the heart of man cannot conceive—the awful responsibility which rests on those to whom is committed the care of these young immortals.

What parent, then, but must pause, with deep and solemn awe, on receiving such a charge, and ask, with earnest solicitude, ‘What manner of child shall this be?’ ‘Who is sufficient for these things?’ ‘How can I take a charge so responsible?’ ‘How shall I perform a duty so arduous, as has now devolved upon me?’—There is a resource in God, whose ‘grace is sufficient for us, and whose strength is made perfect in weakness.’

Important, indeed, my friends, are early instruction and discipline. It was part of the commendation given to Abraham, ‘the friend of God,’ and ‘the father of the faithful,’ that he would ‘command his children and household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.’ To Eli were imputed those offences of his sons, which, by his authority, he might have restrained, or, by the seasonable induction of good habits, have prevented.

Those of you are to be congratulated who possess the consciousness of fidelity, and who are reaping the reward of that fidelity in the good conduct of your children. Or, if your children have escaped from the temptations and sorrows of the world, you are happy in the thought of their security from evil in a world where 'nothing that defileth' can enter; and in the hope that you may meet them again in your Father's house above.

## SERMON IV.

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DUTY TO THE AGED; ESPECIALLY TO AGED PARENTS ;  
COMMITTED TO OUR CARE.

Leviticus xix. 32. — THOU SHALT RISE UP BEFORE THE HOARY  
HEAD, AND HONOR THE FACE OF THE OLD.

HUMAN life is compared in Scripture to various objects in the world of nature; to the natural day, which advances from the dawn till noon, and then declines, till the sun wholly disappears, and darkness covers us. 'I must work the work of Him that sent me while it is day,' said the Saviour; 'the night cometh when no man can work.' It is compared to a 'flower which blossoms, withers and dies.' 'Man cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down.' In the text there seems to be an allusion to the seasons of the year. Childhood is the spring of human life; youth its summer; manhood its autumn; and old age its winter. Then, the light is feeble, the affections lose their fervor, and time begins to snow upon the head. The hoar frost spreads and thickens; the air is cold and piercing; the current of life moves slowly; and death approaches to bind it in icy fetters.

'Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old.'

There is a natural veneration due to declining age, which all feel, arising from the very countenance of an old man, and from the superior wisdom and greater experience he is supposed to possess.

The civilized nations of antiquity paid much respect to the aged, and instructed their children diligently to cultivate this amiable virtue. The men of gray hairs were their counsellors, their arbitrators, their judges, and their leaders. In peace, they were the rulers and magistrates of the state. In war, they were the generals who commanded their armies.

Even among the savage tribes, the hoary head receives singular honor. It is the business of the old to instruct and advise; of the young, to learn and to execute.

It would seem, then, as if there were but little occasion in a Christian audience, to enforce the injunction in the text. Old age itself, if it be accompanied by a sense of dignity of character, and especially if it be 'found in the way of righteousness,' will command a respectful attention. Under these circumstances, we naturally 'rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old.' If these circumstances do not exist, if this sense of dignity of character is voluntarily relinquished, the same respectful attention is not due, and cannot justly be expected.

It often happens, however, that it is *involuntarily* lost; that, in the course of nature, or by the opera-

tion of disease, the powers of the mind, as well as the body, become enfeebled, and a second childhood takes place.

Old age now assumes its most humiliating form, and appears in all its decrepitude and helplessness. Here it is that we are most in danger of neglecting the duty enjoined in the text.

When an object like this is presented to us, in which reason has ceased to instruct, imagination has lost the power to charm, and memory is almost, if not wholly, unable to draw from its stores, there is danger that we may forget to 'rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old.'

We have need, then, to be cautioned, — especially if the old are committed to our care, — lest we should be wanting in that respect and attention, which their age and condition require, when they are continued for some time beyond the period of their usefulness, till they have become a burden to themselves, and there is danger of their becoming a burden to us.

Let us remember, in the first place, that it is by the appointment of God, and therefore for wise and good purposes, that their lives are thus prolonged.

They may be left as a trial of our virtue, as an example of the frailty and imbecility of our nature, and to teach us the folly of human pride. They may be left to call into exercise our benevolent affections; to cherish and invigorate our Christian graces, especially our meekness, patience, and forbearance.

They who have arrived at extreme old age are often querulous, impatient, and fretful. As reason has lost its sway, they are often unreasonable in their wishes and demands; and as the warmth of the affections is diminished, and the sensibility of the heart impaired, we do not always discover that sense of our kindness which, under other circumstances, we might justly expect.

Here, then, is our trial, and here is one answer at least, to the inquiry we might be apt to make, why a life, apparently so barren of good, is thus lengthened out. It is a trial of our virtue, and a means of strengthening and improving it.

It may be that it is a *parent* who, in this helpless condition, is dependent on our care. Here an opportunity is afforded us of making some return for the kindness we have received; of repaying in some measure the debt of gratitude we owe. And what child that had the least remains of gratitude or goodness, would not delight to pay off this great debt of nature, to pursue this round of filial duty, in a conscientious discharge of all the good offices he owes his aged parents? What child would not regard this retribution as his greatest honor and happiness?

To our parents, under God, we are indebted for our existence; for our preservation during a state of infancy and childhood; for the means of acquiring knowledge; and probably for the good principles we possess, and the good habits to which we have been formed.

They cared for us when we were unable to care for ourselves. They were instrumental in shielding us from harm when we were weak and defenceless; and in supplying our wants, when we were unable to express them. When we were grieved, they soothed us; and when we were sick, they provided and administered the remedies which, by the blessing of God, promoted our recovery. How many anxious, watchful hours, how many sleepless nights, have they had on our account! They have toiled and labored, and denied themselves for our improvement and happiness.

And when *their* turn of dependence and weakness is again arrived, shall not we watch over *them*, and provide for their comfort, and smooth their declining path, by every tender and assiduous attention?

Shall not we sustain those arms, now become feeble, which once sustained and defended us? Shall not we patiently and perseveringly guide their footsteps who were so patient in guiding ours, and in teaching us to guide them?

Shall not we bear with their infirmities, who have so often borne with ours? or shall we be weary of their impatience and fretfulness, who have so often experienced impatience and fretfulness from us?

Let us go back, my hearers, let us call up to mind that we, ourselves, were dependent on them, and were feeble and helpless as they are; and the recollection will quicken our diligence and sweeten our toil. We shall delight, in this change of cir-

cumstances, to fulfil our duty, and shall cheerfully make the returns of filial piety.

‘Help thy father in his age,’ says the wise son of Sirach, ‘and grieve him not so long as he liveth; and if his understanding shall fail, have patience with him, and despise him not when thou art in thy full strength; for the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten, and, instead of sins, it shall be added to build thee up.’

‘Hearken to thy father who begat thee,’ says the wisest of men, ‘and despise not thy mother when she is old.’

Despise thy mother! Is there a son or daughter who now hears me, that does not feel a thrill of horror at the thought?

Despise thy mother! who gave thee birth, to whose nurturing care thou owest, under God, thy preservation during thy helpless infancy; who was thy faithful monitor and guide and counsellor in giddy childhood and inexperienced youth; who has felt for thee an anxiety, and manifested a tenderness which cannot be expressed, and who still feels for thee,—old as she may be, if she is alive to one feeling of humanity,—a love of which, if thou art not a mother, thou canst have no conception.

Despise thy mother! Even if she were degraded and wicked,—which indeed is not to be supposed,—thou must pity and pray for her, but thou must not despise her.

A mother’s love, it has been said, is the love of God running through those hearts of tenderness.

It is a love which, to a good child, is inestimably precious, and will be fondly and fervently returned.

As an additional motive to the cheerful discharge of our duty to the aged who are committed to our care, let us remember how important, how *essential*, our attentions are to their comfort and happiness.

Religion, if they are capable of feeling its consolations, is indeed their best comforter. Yet even religion, though it may lead them to trust in God, and to bow with submission to whatever befalls them in the course of his providence, cannot wholly assuage the grief, or dissipate the anxiety, they must feel when they are neglected by those who ought to care for them. But they may be unfitted for the supports and consolations of religion, and in this case, our tenderness, and sympathy, and care, not only promote, but *constitute*, the only enjoyment they have. Without them, they must be miserable. And shall we withhold them? — Let us remember what they *were*. They whom we now behold broken down by age, and oppressed with infirmities, were once as active and vigorous, as wise or wiser, as good or better, than we are.

Let us remember, too, as a further inducement, and the last I shall mention, to the faithful discharge of our duty towards them, that *we* may be in the same helpless condition, and require the same attention.

Let us look forward to the period when *our* faculties shall be blunted, our imagination extinguished, and we ourselves entirely dependent on

others for our support and comfort. As we would wish then to be treated, let us conduct towards those who, in this sad situation, are intrusted to our care. Is it a parent? Let us watch over him with fond solicitude, study his wishes, accommodate ourselves to his caprices, bear with his infirmities, and render that period tolerable, which, at best, is joyless.

Should we neglect our duty in this respect, we may justly expect an awful retribution even in this world. We may expect that the example we have exhibited to our children will be followed by them, and that they, in their turn, will be unmindful of obligations which we have not deemed sacred.

On the contrary, if we perform our duty in this respect, we may be assured that we shall not be forsaken in a time of old age. Our feeble arms will be upheld, and our faltering footsteps will be supported as we descend into the grave.

I congratulate those of you who have aged parents, in the opportunity afforded you of discharging the sacred and interesting duty that you owe them. And I congratulate those of you who, having been deprived of aged parents, have the sweet remembrance of fidelity to the claims on filial duty.

You will reap a rich reward, and it will be proportioned to the sacrifices you have made, and the arduousness of the duties performed. The clouds of adversity may gather around you, but they will not always remain. A gleam of joy will brighten the evening of your days, and spread into all the glories of the celestial world.

We have been contemplating in this discourse, my hearers, the most comfortless period of human life,—the time of extreme old age; and after the view we have given of its helplessness, and of the few enjoyments which, under the most favorable circumstances, attend it, can it be to any an object of desire?

Let us submit ourselves, without anxiety, to the disposal of Him who is wiser than we are. Let us faithfully fulfil our duty, and then, whether our heads are ever encircled with gray hairs or not, they will rest in peace, and be crowned with eternal glory.

To conclude:

The intercession we have been led to offer to-day, for bereaved children, calls up to remembrance a portraiture of old age very different from that which is presented by its decrepitude and helplessness. It presents to us an aged mother, venerable, dignified, and pious, bringing forth, in old age, the fruits of a rational and virtuous life; retaining, amidst infirmities, the mind clear and unclouded, serene and cheerful, the affections of the heart warm and unabated, forgetful of self in her solicitude for the welfare of others.

Such an one we now commemorate; an object of reverence and deep interest and affection to her children; troublesome only in her anxiety not to give trouble; returning every act of kindness with a look and an expression of gratitude, doubly due from those who performed it.

We have seen, too, the devotedness of filial af-

fection, — children devoting themselves to the care of their aged mother, proud of the humblest offices, and pleased with the most difficult; watching her wishes, preventing her desires, catching every precious opportunity to be grateful with an eager solicitude.

But I may not enlarge as my heart would prompt me to do. Thus much I thought it not unsuitable, but proper, to say, as an example and stimulus to other children.

Such duty, as far as the opportunity and ability to perform it exist, is due from all to their aged parents.

*They* are favored to whom this opportunity and ability belong; whose parents are spared to old age, and thus afford them the privilege of doing something towards repaying them in kind the obligations imposed.

Pay what you may, children, to your parents, you will still be their debtors. Do what you may, you will remember when they are gone, that something more might have been done for their comfort. If duty has been neglected, and regret comes, there will be a bitterness in the regret which cannot be described. God, in His mercy, grant that it may not be the portion of any one of you to know it!

## S E R M O N V.

CHEERFULNESS IN YOUTH SANCTIONED BY RELIGION,  
AND SHOULD BE HALLOWED BY IT.

Eccles. xi. 9. — REJOICE, OH YOUNG MAN, IN THY YOUTH, AND LET  
THY HEART CHEER THEE IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH, BUT KNOW  
THAT . . . GOD WILL BRING THEE INTO JUDGMENT.

I HAVE omitted a part of this verse. The whole verse appears to be addressed to heedless, reckless young men.

It begins in a strain of irony, and ends with a solemn and awful warning.

If there are any such young men who now hear me, I beg them to read the whole verse; to ponder upon it, and to heed the warning it gives them; or the judgment, denounced against their heedlessness and recklessness, will assuredly come upon them, and may come unawares.

The passage, as I have used it,—in the way of accommodation,—is a sanction to cheerfulness in youth, accompanied by an admonition which may serve to chasten and control it.

A disposition to cheerfulness is a part of our original constitution, and is therefore implanted by

the hand of God. It is innocent and amiable in every period of life. It is peculiarly appropriate and beautiful in the young.

Youth is the spring-time, the season of flowers, when we expect to find,— and should mourn if we missed,— the delightful characteristics of the youth of the year.

It is unnatural,— I had almost said it is monstrous,— when, by the severity of discipline, or the severity of system, the buoyancy and vivacity of youth are kept down, and impaired, or destroyed.

They have entered on a new world, with affections and passions fresh and ardent. Every thing has the charm of novelty, and their youthful spirits give a *peculiar* charm to all the objects around them.

It *should* be so. It is a beautiful world on which their eyes have opened. It is a beautiful world in which they are appointed to dwell. They may admire it; they may rejoice, they may be happy in it.

I am not, and never have been, a believer in that system which would dress up the gladsome spirit of youth in the weeds of sadness, and convert the accents, even of early childhood, into mournful regrets and lamentations,— if indeed these could be felt and indulged,— for the deformed scene on which they have entered, and the deformed natures they have brought with them.

It is a system which has never been taught in this church, whose hundredth year is not very

distant, and which, I trust, will never be taught here.

*Rejoice in thy youth.* Rejoice in youth *itself*, — in its elasticity and lightsomeness, its activity and vigor, its glowing fancy and unrepressed hope, adorning every scene, stretching the view over a boundless prospect, and gilding all with sunshine. Rejoice in the warmth of its affections; in its ductileness; in the facility with which it gets knowledge and receives impressions; in all that is designed and fitted to make it enjoy and improve the scene in which its Creator has placed it. In all this rejoice.

Rejoice in the privileges and blessings which the *season* of youth affords. In its dependence, — if it be so, — on parental care, and its consequent freedom from worldly anxiety; in the opportunities it has for getting, as well as the facility, as I have said, with which it acquires knowledge; in its sources of happiness, with which experience has seldom mingled the bitter waters of disappointment. In all this rejoice.

Rejoice *while thou art young*. Be as cheerful and happy as thy disposition, and the circumstances in which thou art placed, incline and enable thee to be. A gloomy spirit is not the proper spirit of youth. A gloomy countenance does not become thy years. Be cheerful while thou mayest. Trouble will come fast enough without thy seeking. Rejoice in thy elasticity and activity, and warmth of affection and susceptibility of impressions, while

thou mayest. Advancing age and coming events will soon enough impair them. Rejoice in parental care, and in the advantages and enjoyments of youth while thou mayest. Soon enough, — alas! too soon, — thou canst rejoice in them no longer.

Yes, rejoice *while thou art young*, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth. The days of darkness are coming, and they may be many; the days of watchful, anxious solicitude, for thyself and for others; the days when thy soul shall be tortured by suspense, or wrung with the anguish of disappointment; the days, in short, when the troubles of life, — to which thou art now almost, if not wholly, a stranger, — shall come thick upon thee. The days which, — if thy life is spared, and all other calamities could be escaped, — must come at last, of feeble and weary old age, when the knees shall totter with infirmity, and ‘fear shall be in the way;’ when the pleasures of life shall please no more; when life itself shall be a burden, and ‘desire shall fail.’

Rejoice, then, while thou mayest, in the freshness of youth, in thy health and strength, and freedom from anxieties; but know, — and let it not damp thy joy to know, — that ‘*God will bring thee into judgment.*’

Rejoice, then, as one who rememberest that thou must give an account of the sources and the manner of thy joy. Let thy rejoicing be such as shall not bring thee sadness in reflection, add to the weight of the evils that may befall thee in life, and

come over thy soul with the blackness of despair, when thou art called to the bar of thy God.

Let thy rejoicing be sanctified by religion; religion which will purify and elevate thy joy. In the season most favorable to the exercise of piety, whilst the heart is alive to every generous emotion, whilst the marks of thy Maker's goodness beam, with such unsullied brightness, from every object around thee, let the sentiment of piety take root, and grow, and unfold itself.

'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say thou hast no pleasure in them.'

Youth, indeed, like the Spring, is a season of hopes, but how often are they the hopes of a harvest that shall never be reaped! Youth is a time of health and vigor; but alas! how short, how uncertain is that life and strength! How soon may they be supplanted by disease, or untimely death!

Look at that weeping parent. He has lost the son, in early youth, on whom his hopes for many years were suspended, and whose youthful promise was all that a father's heart could desire. 'Being perfected,' however, in a short time, 'he fulfilled a long time;' for honorable age is not that which standeth 'in length of time, or that is measured by number of years; but wisdom is the gray hair to man, and an unspotted life is old age.'

*Thy* days on earth, young man, like his, may be few; but if, like him, thou art virtuous, like his thy

memory on earth will be precious, and thy reward in heaven immortal.

‘Remember *now*, then, thy Creator in the days of thy youth.’ *Now*, for thou canst call no day, even in early youth, thine own, but the present; and if thou dost not remember thy Creator now, thou mayest never be able.

Time is on the wing. It flies to return no more. Seize the moments as they pass, and employ them to the best advantage. The time that has gone has left a memorial of thy diligence, or thy negligence; — thy faithful remembrance or forgetfulness of God. Let the time to come leave behind it a better memorial than the past. Dedicate to God the first fruits of thy life, and He will bless thee with a fruitful and abundant harvest.

I repeat, and thus conclude, as I began, my discourse, — ‘Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; but remember that God *will bring thee into judgment.*’

## SERMON VI.

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EVERY SEASON OF LIFE TO BE GIVEN TO GOD.

Jeremiah viii. 20. — THE HARVEST IS PAST ; THE SUMMER IS ENDED ;  
AND WE ARE NOT SAVED.

THESE words are not used in a figurative sense. Jeremiah beholds, in prophetic vision, the calamities that are coming upon his country.

In warning his countrymen of the impending evils, he reproves them for their sins, and for their thoughtless stupidity ; which, even the instinct of the brute creation, by a beautiful contrast, is made to upbraid.

This leads to further threatenings, conveyed in a variety of striking terms.

Upon which, a chorus of Jews is introduced, expressing their terror and alarm at the news of the invasion, which is greatly heightened by the prophet's hearing the sound of the enemies' horses, even from Dan ; and then beholding the devastations made by the invading enemy, whose cruelties, God himself declares, no entreaties will soften.

On this declaration, the prophet bitterly laments the fate of 'the daughter of his people ;' changing

the scene unawares to the place of her captivity, where she is introduced as answering in mournful responses to the prophet's dirge.

In one of these responses, the words of our text are included: 'The harvest is past; the summer is ended; and we are not saved.'

The daughter of Judea had been anxiously 'looking for good, but no good came.' The summer passed away, the harvest was gathered in; but she was not delivered from her captivity.

The variety of figures and images used by the prophets to diversify the same subject, is admirable. Nothing can be found to equal them in the productions of uninspired men. You go to works of fancy, my hearers, to find glowing descriptions, and striking imagery. Your richest storehouse is the word of GOD.

*'The harvest is past; the summer is ended; and we are not saved.'*

It is precisely to such a period, as is here described, that, in the course of nature and of Providence, we have now arrived.

We have seen the blossoms of spring unfold, and the fruits of summer ripen, and the harvest gathered in. But we are not compelled, like the prophet, to weep over the desolation of our country; or, like the daughter of Jerusalem, to bewail, in the house of bondage, our distance from the land of our nativity.

No. 'The harvest is past; the summer is ended;'

and we *are* saved;—from ‘horrid war,’ and wasting sickness, and every desolating judgment.

‘The harvest is past; the summer is ended;’ and we are saved from the stroke of death.

The goodness of God to us, should lead us to convert the words of the text into the means of spiritual improvement.

Human life is a year. It has its spring; its summer; and its autumn. Its year closes in the cold and cheerless winter of death and the grave.

And if our life is a year, what are the seeds which are sown in its spring; and how plentiful the fruit which its summer ripens; and how rich the harvest which its autumn yields?

Ye who are in the spring-time of life! Let me direct the inquiry to you.

What provision are you making for the advancing seasons? Are you sowing such seed as that when your spring increases into summer, you will bear the fruits of knowledge and piety; and when autumn comes, reap a harvest of satisfaction and comfort?

If you waste your youth in idleness; or if you pervert your youth to vice; or if you spend your youth in thoughtless inattention to the duties and obligations of religion; there can be no hope that you will bear the fruit, or reap the harvest, I have now described.

It is in youth that you are to prepare for maturity; and it depends on the preparation you now make, what the maturity of life shall be.

Seriously reflect on this; and make such preparation as shall render your mature life respectable, and old age peaceful and happy.

But old age may never be yours. Your days on earth may be few. They may end with your spring-time. Be careful, then, to crowd into your span of life as much of duty as possible. Thus you will live long in a short time; and if early called away, be transplanted into the paradise of God, 'where everlasting spring abides, and never-withering flowers.'

Ye who have attained to maturity! How are you spending the summer of life? Is it like the gay and gaudy insect which flutters for a season, and disappears? Or are you weary with toiling for that which affords you no real, enduring satisfaction?

Alas, this season, like that which went before it, is fast elapsing. As you labor in your days of summer, so will you reap in the autumnal harvesting. He who sent you forth to labor will soon call you to a reckoning, and fearful will that reckoning be if you have been unfaithful and negligent.

But with many the summer is already ended, and the harvest will soon be past. What are the fruits you are gathering? Are you reaping the rich reward of a well-spent youth, and a maturity devoted to God and duty? There remains but a little time to you. Whatsoever your hands find to do in the work of salvation, they must now, more than ever, do it with all their might. Happy are

they to whom 'the hoary head is a crown of glory, being found in the way of righteousness.' It is an earnest of a far brighter 'crown of glory which shall never fade away.'

The year, which is drawing to a close, reminds us all that life is fleeting. The changing seasons mark the silent, but sure and steady lapse of time; and it will be wise in us to learn the moral lessons they impart. They teach us that our life is spending; for the close of every season, and of every year, brings us thus nearer to the end of life.

Have we yet begun to live for heaven? Are we so living that we have no fear that life should end? Let those who have been negligent, redeem, as far as they can, the time they have lost. Let those who have not yet chosen whom they will serve, delay no longer. Time is flying. Death and eternity are close at hand. If we live well, we shall die well. And when the brief, transitory summer of life is ended, and the harvest is past, we shall be able to say, 'We *are* saved; the reaping angel has put forth his sickle, and we are gathered into the store-house of God.'

## SERMON VII

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### THE GOODNESS OF GOD IN THE DEATH OF LITTLE CHILDREN.

2 Kings, iv. 26. — IS IT WELL WITH THE CHILD? AND SHE ANSWERED,  
IT IS WELL.

A BENEVOLENT mind does not confine its regards to itself, but cherishes an interest in the welfare of others, and expands in kind feelings and generous wishes towards them. From such a heart the question in my text proceeded. It was addressed by the prophet Elisha to a Shunamite woman, from whom he had received the offices of hospitality and kindness in his various journeys, and who had now come to him to seek for consolation in her trouble. As she approached his dwelling the prophet descried her, and in his friendly solicitude for her welfare, sent out his servant to inquire about herself and her family. ‘Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?’

The text contains her reply, — ‘*It is well.*’ Her child was dead. He had gone out to the field to his father, in the morning, but soon returned, complaining of his head; ‘sat upon her knees till noon,’ and then died.

It was an only child, and all the earthly hopes of its parents respecting it were destroyed.

The pious Shunamite had not come to the prophet to utter her complaint. On a former occasion she had manifested a spirit of contentment; and now her answer to the inquiries of Elisha, respecting the welfare of her child is, '*It is well.*'

From the character of the Shunamite, and from the frequent opportunities she had enjoyed of strengthening her feelings of piety by intercourse with the prophet, we may suppose that her reply was the dictate of a heart which bowed itself in humble resignation to the will of God. Her language, — at least as it may be adapted to our instruction, — may be thus interpreted: It is well, *because God has done it.* It is well for *me*, for *there are many useful lessons it has a tendency to teach me.* It is well for the *child*, because *God has taken it to himself.*

These are powerful reasons to the understanding. May they tend, by the blessing of God, to soothe the hearts of those who are in like circumstances with the woman of Shunem. Partaking of the sufferings, you partake, I trust, my afflicted friends, of the spirit of this pious woman; and, like her, can say, '*It is well.*'

1. It is well, because God has done it.

'The LORD reigneth.' 'His kingdom ruleth over all.' Nothing cometh to pass, nothing *can* come to pass, without His permission. 'Not a sparrow falleth to the ground' unnoticed by Him. We

hear of accident, and chance, and fortune; but they are mere words; they have no meaning; or, if they mean any thing, they are only names for the unknown and inscrutable operations of the providence of God.

Now this Providence is wise and merciful in its operations; infinitely wise and infinitely merciful. Look around you. Do you not behold every where the clearest and fullest demonstrations of the Divine wisdom and goodness? Are they not written every where, in the brightest characters, as with a sunbeam? Contemplate your own condition, and acknowledge, with grateful emotions, how much the sum of your blessings exceeds the amount of your afflictions.

If you every where discover, and in circumstances innumerable, experience, the kindness, beneficence, and compassion of God; if there are every where the clearest indications of His regard for the welfare, and his attention to the happiness, of His creatures, will you not believe that in the evils of life there is a kind and beneficent design? Is it reasonable to suppose that a Being so good would wantonly inflict pain; or that a Being so wise would ignorantly inflict it? Does not a father chasten his children whom he loves; and is not the chastisement of God, who is more tender than the tenderest earthly father, a proof of *His* paternal tenderness and affection?

Yes, God is wise and good; infinitely wise and infinitely good. Every thing which He orders, there-

fore, must be wise and good, wisest and best; and it is the language of reason as well as of piety; *It is well because GOD has done it.*

2. It is well, *because of the useful lessons it has a tendency to teach.* It teaches us the vanity and instability of these blessings.

What parent is there who is able to confine, within the exact limits of propriety and duty, the affection he feels for his children? Who can say to the tide of natural affection, as it flows out towards the objects of its care, its solicitude, its labor, its hope, 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther'? Who can exactly regulate the workings of parental love, and fix with precisely the just degree of tension the cord which binds a child to a parent's heart? What parent is there who always remembers, what parent who ever realizes, how tender and fragile a plant is committed to his fostering care? Yes, there is a time when, and when only, he realizes it. It is when God, with an inexorable hand,—still it is a *Parent's* hand,—roots out the tender plant, and withers the bud in which the colors were beginning to glow. Then indeed, *indeed*, it is realized. There may have been indications of its fragility. A parent's heart may have had its forebodings, but not till now has that heart truly *felt* how tender and fragile it was.

Vain, delusive, transitory joys! Direct your eyes, my friends, to another and better state. From these 'broken cisterns' turn to the 'Fountain of living waters;' from these transient, vanishing meteors, to

the 'Father of lights.' Fix your affections where they cannot be too strongly fixed, 'on things above,' and not with too much strength and ardor on things below. On things above.—It is there that you may find again, and love with a purer and stronger affection than ever, those who are more worthy than ever of your love.

For, 3dly, — *It is well for the child, for God has taken it to himself.*

There is sure ground of hope concerning young children. Of infants, Jesus said 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for *of such is the kingdom of God.*' And those who have advanced a little farther on the journey of life, and who, by their sweetness of disposition; simplicity and guilelessness; lively sense of obligations conferred; tenderness of conscience in regard to any thing that might be displeasing to God; have become the objects of our fondest love, are objects, also, of love to the compassionate Saviour, and assuredly have a place with those of whom he said, '*Of such is the kingdom of God.*'

Fear not, Christian mourners, your children are not lost. If you are living as you ought to live, they are not lost to *you*. The cord that bound you to them is not broken. It is lengthened out. It extends from earth to heaven; forms a new bond of connection with a better world; and should draw you upward. By faith you may mingle your spirits with theirs; by faith you may overpass the bounds of mortality, and be with them even while you are

here. You may love them as you have always loved them, and they are more worthy of your affection than ever, for they are purified from mortality. They are safe,—safe with their God; treasures ‘laid up in heaven.’

He who made them has had mercy on them. He has taken them from much evil to come; more, far more, it may be, than you can imagine. He has taken them to great good; to a felicity which the human heart cannot conceive. In heaven there is ‘fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.’ How much is contained in this short sentence! It comprehends all that is included in the idea of perfect happiness,—fulness and perpetuity. On earth our joy is never full; there is always some want, some vacuity. On earth our happiness is never secure; there is always a dread of losing it. In heaven the joy is ‘full and everlasting.’

The Saviour has said of little children, that ‘their angels do always behold the face of the Father.’ He here adopts an Eastern phrase, which is used in reference to those who have the nearest place to the sovereign. They are said to ‘see his face.’ And the angels of little children are admitted,—if I may say so,—into the inner circle, nearest to the Sovereign of all,—the Source of life, and light, and blessedness. They do ‘always behold the face of the Father.’

You call to remembrance the little history of their lives. Many passages by others unheeded, were marked and are remembered by you; and all

that was 'good towards the Lord' is full of comfort to you. It is an anchor of hope to you, and you may lean on it. Whatever was marked and is remembered by you, was marked and is remembered by God. He who had begun a good work in them, can and will perfect it.

Admitted to a higher sphere, they are adorned with nobler faculties. Can you wish that these young inhabitants of heaven should be degraded to earth? Would you call them back from the sphere of such exalted services? Will you sorrow for that, which to them is an unmingled source of joy? Will you utter lamentations for that, for which they are lifting up their fervent thanksgivings?

'If God be pleased,' said a good man, 'and his glorified creature be pleased, what are we that we should be displeased?' No, rather rejoice in their joy, and whilst your thoughts go out in search of them, let your affections also go forth, and centre where they are.

How much more intimate and endearing have your relations with heaven become in consequence of their translation thither! How greatly is your interest, too, in that better country increased!

Whilst they were with you, they were among your strongest ties to the world. They were your companions, your comfort and hope, in this house of your pilgrimage.

The comforts of a pilgrim are transient, but if you follow them with devout affection, and ascend

by faith to the world of spirits, they will still be your companions, and comfort, and hope, in this house of your pilgrimage.

With what interest must we all think of heaven, where so many who are dear to us, have already entered! That which constituted our greatest felicity on earth contributes to make us most willing to depart. We are strangers in a foreign land. The hour of our departure rises on the soul. Before us is a country peopled with our kindred. Our parents, our children, the friends of our bosom, are there. Thither, by the grace of God, and the mediation of Jesus Christ, may we follow them!

## SERMON VIII.

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### THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN NATURE, AND ITS CONSEQUENT OBLIGATIONS.

1 John, iii. 2. — NOW ARE WE THE SONS OF GOD, AND IT DOTH NOT YET APPEAR WHAT WE SHALL BE.

WE cannot fail to perceive in the world around us, we cannot fail to perceive in our own hearts, a love of distinction; a desire to elevate ourselves,—in some way or other,—above our fellow-beings.

It is apparent in the eager pursuit of worldly honors, from the highest to the lowest; and of worldly wealth.

It is apparent in all professions and occupations, and in every grade of society. No distinction is so high that ambition will not aspire after it. None so low that vanity will not seek it.

And to what vice and folly does it not often prompt! What wicked and degrading passions, however opposite and conflicting, does it not call into exercise; to what wicked and degrading practices does it not lead! What pride and haughtiness, what baseness and servility, what strife and hatred, what falsehood and slander! It has broken the ties of friendship. It has destroyed the peace of families.

It has rent a nation by divisions. It has deluged the world with blood.

And yet I come not here to condemn a principle which is inherent in the nature God has given us. I would lead you to direct it to better objects than any to which worldly ambition can aspire. Turning away, in this season of sacred rest, from the passing distinctions of this passing world, I would dwell on that permanent distinction which God has stamped upon the soul; and on the duties and obligations it involves.

There is no worldly distinction, my hearers, no place of honor, however exalted, that will raise you so high as the one that is your birthright. You may impair that distinction, by seeking 'the honor that cometh from men,' but no worldly distinction can raise you so high as the honor that has already come to you from God.

The poorest and humblest person who now hears me, is possessed of an inherent dignity which raises him far above all the objects, however magnificent, which the world can afford; for he has within him a soul which God has made in his own image, and which is capable of advancing, forever, from perfection to perfection, from glory to glory.

'WE ARE THE SONS OF GOD.' We are the children of HIM by whom kings reign. The Almighty Ruler of the universe is our Maker; and this Almighty Ruler permits us to call Him our Father.

I might well say that no worldly distinction could compare with this. And is it not wonderful that,

in the pursuit of inferior distinctions, and often of those which are most frivolous and chimerical, we can ever lose sight of this intrinsic dignity? How is it that we do not esteem it above every other, and direct our chief attention to preserve and improve it?

We are the sons of God; of the first and greatest of Beings. What noble and elevated sentiments should fill our minds! How should we rise above every thing that is low and worthless, to what is dignified and elevating!

With what diligence should we cultivate that understanding in which consists our affinity to God, and in the cultivation of which we approach nearer in our resemblance to Him!

Shall that mind be allowed to lie waste and barren, which is an emanation from the SUPREME INTELLIGENCE? Shall that mind be engaged in low and worthless pursuits, which is designed for the attainment of the most important knowledge, and is capable of endless progression and improvement?

Shall the paltry, insignificant, miserable pursuit of power, or of gain, absorb those faculties which can soar to heaven, and grasp eternity?

Renouncing our true greatness and happiness, shall we pursue a greatness and happiness precarious and unsatisfying, whose foundation is in the dust? Disregarding substantial realities, shall we grasp at phantoms, pursue a shadow?

If the soul must be confined to this prison of clay; if its relation to material things demands an

attention to them ; shall it not be mindful that it is itself *immaterial*, and sometimes escape to breathe its native air, and dwell in its own element ?

Shall place and office, barter and exchange, news and politics, tattling and gossiping, be the constant burden of its thoughts and its discourse ? Formed for eternity, shall it think only and speak only of *time* ? Formed for heaven, shall it live only for earth ?

Children of the Most High ! Do you forget your exalted origin ? Immortal beings ! Do you disregard your immortal destiny ?

*We are the sons of God*, — of the purest and best of Beings. How pure and holy should be the affections which animate our own breasts ! How should we soar above every thing that is degrading and corrupt, to what is ennobling and refined ! How carefully should we regulate those passions which are intended to improve us in the image of God, to qualify us for the enjoyment of virtue and happiness here, and of its rewards hereafter ; which are capable of the highest elevation and refinement, and of the lowest debasement and corruption !

Shall that soul be allowed to become tainted and corrupted, which was formed in the image of INFINITE PURITY ? Shall that soul be engaged in vicious pursuits, which was designed for the attainment of holy affections, and which is capable of infinite and unending advancement in holiness ?

If it *must* inhabit a tenement which is of the earth, earthy, shall it not be mindful that it is itself

from heaven ; and hold pure and elevated communion with the FATHER of spirits ?

Shall it forget that He who, in a peculiar sense, was the Son of GOD, once dwelt in flesh, and was subject to the infirmities and temptations of human nature, yet 'knew no sin ;' and shall it not sedulously copy his pure and spotless example ?

We are the sons of GOD. How much should we love GOD, our Creator, Preserver, and constant, unwearied Benefactor ; who discovers his paternal relation to us by unceasing care, and the most substantial benefits ? How greatly should we honor HIM ! How devoutly should we trust in HIM ! How cheerfully should we submit to HIM ! How diligently should we serve HIM !

How should we labor to promote the benefit and happiness of those, however humble, who, like ourselves, bear His image, are His children, and equally the objects of His care and kindness !

The distinctions of earth will soon disappear ; and none remain but that of those who have been improving in the Divine likeness, and those who have debased their native dignity, and obscured the image of GOD in their souls.

WE ARE THE SONS OF GOD. Such is our station and dignity by nature. It becomes us to ask ourselves,—for it is to this especially that the apostle refers in the text,—Is it our station and dignity by grace ? Have we been 'created anew in Christ Jesus ?' Have we the spirit and temper which will secure us at last an acknowledgment by HIM with

whom nothing that is unholy can dwell; and who will say to the workers of iniquity, 'I know you not?'

Children of God! Heirs of immortality! Reflect, I beseech you, on the exalted station for which you are born, and act as becomes it. Reflect on the felicity for which you were designed, and earnestly and unwaveringly pursue it.

Strive more and more to be animated by a sense of your real dignity and true happiness. Indulge and cherish and display a noble ambition to render yourselves, by the grace of God, more worthy of all that God has done for you in giving you intellectual, immortal minds, and providing for you the means of their improvement and salvation. Labor more and more, to 'walk worthy of your high and holy calling,' as men and as Christians.

Having received not only immortal natures, but also high and precious promises, 'purify yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God.'

'Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.'

*It doth not yet appear.*

It is natural that we should send forth our inquiries into the world where we must shortly dwell; that we should pass, on the wings of imagination, that boundary which the disembodied spirit must soon pass in reality; and speculate on the nature of those scenes in which we soon must mingle.

Feeling in ourselves, and taught by revelation, that we are born for another destiny than that which earth discloses to us, it is natural that we should seek to learn it before we go to realize it.

Bereft of many with whom our souls were linked in bonds of the closest affection, it is natural, — nay, it is unavoidable, — that our thoughts should go after them, search out the place of their residence, and contemplate their employments; and, if they are found in heaven, join in their ascriptions of thanksgiving, and partake of their joy.

All this is natural, it is innocent. It may be beneficial to us.

But how little can we know! We know not what *they* are, and it doth not yet appear what *we* shall be.

Of this, however, we may be assured, that ‘they who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honor and immortality, shall have eternal life.’

But what is eternal life? They shall ‘enter into rest.’ But what is this rest? They shall have ‘fulness of joy.’ But what is the nature of that joy of which they shall partake?

‘Here we know but in part.’ ‘We see through a glass darkly.’ A veil which no mortal has been able to lift, conceals from us the world of spiritual intelligences into which the souls of the departed enter when death has stripped them of their mortal covering.

We may indulge curiosity, but it is in vain. We

may give the wings to our imaginations ; but, after all its roving, it will return to us void, having found no certain resting-place.

Faith may ascend, in the light of revelation, but the time has not come when 'it is lost in vision.'

*The time has not yet come.* My hearers, it is hastening on. It is urging forward its flight. The shadows that now surround us are fast passing away. For us the inexorable doors will soon be unfolded. We must enter that prison-house, and learn its secrets.

This spirit, now confined and weighed down to earth, will soon be dislodged. 'Dust will return to dust.' Corruption will lay hold on that which belongs to it.

But the immortal spirit, which tenanted it, will pass through death to 'its own border.' We shall then know——

Omniscient Being! *What* shall we know?

In infinite mercy, prepare us for that hour! Give us a heart to love Thee. Give us grace to serve Thee; that, when our faith is knowledge, we may know that we are blest!

## SERMON IX.

## CONSCIENCE.

ROMANS xiv. 13. — LET US NOT JUDGE ONE ANOTHER ANY MORE. BUT JUDGE THIS RATHER, THAT NO MAN PUT A STUMBLING-BLOCK, OR AN OCCASION TO FALL, IN HIS BROTHER'S WAY. HAST THOU FAITH? HAVE IT TO THYSELF BEFORE GOD.

HE THAT ESTEEMETH ANY THING UNCLEAN, TO HIM IT IS UNCLEAN. HE THAT DOUBTETH IS CONDEMNED IF HE EAT.

HAPPY IS HE WHO CONDEMNETH NOT HIMSELF IN THAT THING WHICH HE ALLOWETH.

I HAVE taken these words from the fourteenth chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, though not in the order in which they were written by him.

I request you to read the whole chapter attentively and seriously, in your retirement.

It has special reference to a case of conscience, which had occupied the attention, and excited the scruples and animadversions, of some of his Christian converts.

In discoursing from them at this time, I shall separate them from the occasion and circumstances with which they are especially connected, and consider them as containing a moral lesson for myself and for you.

We have, in the text and context, a practical rule,

applicable alike to our personal conduct, and to our treatment of others.

If our brother 'esteemeth any thing to be unclean;' if to him, to act, or to refrain from acting, appears to be criminal; we must not judge and condemn him because we think differently. *He* may be right, and *we* may be wrong; and if he is in an error, he follows the dictates of his judgment and conscience, whose dictates he is bound to obey.

We may do what we are able to enlighten him, but we must do nothing to persuade him to violate the admonitions of his conscience. So, on the other hand, in regard to our own conduct. Whilst we refrain from censuring our neighbor for following the guidance of conscience in doing what we may be disposed to condemn, or not doing what we deem innocent, we should be careful to regard the warnings of this internal monitor ourselves. We must do nothing that we believe to be wrong, though all the world should unite to do it.

The rule to us, as well as to our neighbor, is, 'He that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.'

Those whom we respect and love, and who are worthy of our respect and affection, may have no scruples in this particular instance. They may use arguments to convince us that our scruples are groundless; but whilst there is a lurking *suspicion* even, of its sinfulness, we must not accompany them a single step; for 'he that *doubteth* is condemned if he eat.' What may not be criminal in those who

have no conscientious scruples, would be criminal in us who have.

We stand or fall, not to our fellow-creatures, but to God; and we must take care that, in all things, we can approve ourselves to God, who knoweth and judgeth the heart. It will be much better for us to deny ourselves what is innocent, though it might afford us gratification, than to act in opposition to our sense of right.

Afford us gratification! No, my friends, be assured that nothing can afford you real pleasure, which you believe or suspect to be wrong.

It is only in the consciousness of uprightness that you can enjoy happiness. An upbraiding conscience is a source of perpetual torment. 'An approving conscience is a continual feast.'

Nor is it only in *refraining* from acting, that we are to heed the admonitions of this faithful monitor. What an enlightened conscience, — I mean a conscience enlightened by reflection, by serious examination and inquiry, and by the word of God and prayer, — prompts us to do, we must not neglect. We must obey its impulses to *act*, as well as its warnings to refrain from acting.

And here, in the eye of God, we stand alone. We are to be judged by our own conduct; not by the conduct of others.

Our neighbor, our friend, may have doubts; but if the path of duty is plain to us, we must follow it.

However wise or good, in our estimation, may be those who differ from us, their scruples, — though

they should make us hesitate, and inquire, and seek for light from above, — should not control our conduct, unless these scruples become *our own*.

They who indulge them may be wise and good; but in this respect they may be less enlightened than ourselves. The prejudices of education, and a thousand circumstances, may blind their judgment, and prevent them from seeing, as clearly as we do, the path of duty.

There is a sense, however, in which we *should* regard the scruples of others, and be influenced by them. In things indifferent, we should not do what would ‘give offence,’ or ‘place a stumbling-block’ in the way of another. It is better for us that we should deny ourselves what is innocent, and what, in ordinary circumstances, we might do without the reproach of our own minds, if it grieve, or offend, or injure, another.

Such is the lesson which the apostle gives us in the admirable chapter from which my text is taken; a lesson which he taught most forcibly in his own example.

I infer from my subject, in the first place, an admonition to parents.

Whilst they do what they can to inform the minds of their children; to teach them the word and will of God; and to imbue them with a sense of their responsibility; let them teach their children, by precept and example, to listen to the lowest whisper of conscience, and never, on any occasion, to violate its dictates.

Let them, at the same time, be careful not to brand with the stamp of guilt, what is not criminal. Let them not write 'unhallowed,' 'unclean,' upon every innocent recreation in which the gay spirit of youth may prompt them to engage.

By so doing, they tempt their children to sin; by tempting them to disobedience, to artful pretences, that they may do, what they cannot *now* do, — when it is forbidden, — without criminality, but what they might otherwise have done with perfect innocence.

Yes, might have done to the glory of God; for, if we teach our children to glorify God for the recreations, the innocent enjoyments of life, we convert these recreations into the means of spiritual improvement; we teach them to love that kind Parent, who has opened to them so many sources of enjoyment; who has planted these flowers along the path of life, and allows them, if it is done with moderation and gratitude, to gather and enjoy them.

I infer, from this subject, in the second place, an admonition to children and youth. May the lesson of instruction I have now given, be deeply impressed upon their minds!

You have heard, my young friends, and you cannot but feel, that there is a monitor within you, which, if not perverted by repeated neglect of its admonitions, will not fail to reproach you when you do wrong.

You have also heard that they are happy who

condemn not themselves in that thing which they allow. Be careful to do nothing that your conscience tells you not to do, and this happiness will be yours.

Hearer of whatever age! Be ever attentive to the feeblest whisper of thy conscience. It is the voice of the SPIRIT of GOD.

Does it say to thee, 'Forsake the evil, and live'? 'This is the way, walk ye in it!' Slight not the warning! Turn not away from the directing voice, or it will cease to admonish and guide thee.

## S E R M O N X.

## THE UPRIGHT MAN.

## A CHARACTER.\*

[Concluding part of a Sermon.]

Job xxvii. 5. — TILL I DIE, I WILL NOT REMOVE MY INTEGRITY  
FROM ME.

THE exhibition of integrity which I have given you in this discourse, is not an ideal character. In its most prominent features, we often meet with it in real life. As it exists in the world, we pay it the homage of our respect and confidence. When it passes away, it is the subject of mournful, indeed, yet pleasant and useful recollection.

Such an one, — a man of tried integrity, — whom none could distrust, and in whom all men placed confidence, has just been taken from the midst of us, and you will not be surprised that my heart prompts me to pay him a brief tribute of affectionate respect. For more than sixty-four years he has been connected with this society; and for thirty-seven years, without the slightest interruption of kind feelings, I have enjoyed his friendship. I

\* Thomas Dennie, Esq.

loved and honored him, and he was worthy of love and honor;—an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile.

We have seen him, through a long life, performing his duties with conscientious but unostentatious fidelity; valuing, as he ought to value, the good opinion of others, but most anxious that his own *heart should not reproach him so long as he lived.*

Losing his father a little before he reached his majority, he was cast, under Providence, upon his own resources; and was found equal to the responsibility.

Accompanying a small bequest from his father, was this testimony,—inestimably precious, more precious than the bequest of an ample fortune,—that *he had never displeased him.* Through life it was held by him among his dearest and most cherished remembrances.

And let me say, in passing, to the young, that such remembrances, if they think rightly, will be among *their* most cherished recollections when their parents can no longer be the objects of filial duty. As there will be nothing more bitter to you, my young friends, than the remembrance of any thing you have done to displease them, so there will be no sweeter satisfaction than the memory of any thing you have done to make them happy.

At an early age, I may be permitted to mention,—and no good son of a good mother will wonder at my mentioning it,—our lamented friend formed a connection which contributed essentially to his

prosperity, as well as happiness. ‘The heart of her husband did safely trust in her,’ and ‘her children rose up and called her blessed.’ Her good sense, and prudence, and judicious economy, came in aid of his own intelligence and persevering diligence, in enabling him to attain to independence, but could not prevent the access of misfortune. He failed in business, and having paid all he could pay, received an honorable discharge.

But this happens every day, and if this were all I had to tell, I should be silent on this subject. There is something more; something which, from the honor it has reflected on his character, I fear is of comparatively rare occurrence. On again acquiring property,—notwithstanding the release he had obtained from every pecuniary obligation,—calling his creditors together, he paid them their own with interest; leaving himself and family a bare subsistence. Providence smiled on his renewed efforts, and they were crowned with success.

Late in life he became a communicant. His self-diffidence, and not any doubt of the obligation of this ordinance, having led him to defer it. It was, perhaps, in part, too, the consciousness of an infirmity,—a hastiness of temper,—which, however, is often accompanied, and, in his case, was most certainly accompanied by the kindest affections and by a noble and generous spirit. And yet, where can we better go to learn a lesson of meekness, gentleness, forbearance, than to the Lord’s table,—to the

commemoration of Him, who, 'when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he was persecuted, threatened not, but committed himself to HIM who judgeth righteously?' His last sickness was a beautiful exhibition of the efficacy of religion in affording support when it is most needed. His trust was in the mercy of God through the mediation of Jesus Christ. He was entirely submissive. His heart was full of gratitude to God, and of kindness and love. Many little incidents might be told, indicative of this. They are treasured up in the memories and hearts of those who most loved him, and who were permitted to manifest their filial piety by watching at his bedside. It is due to them to say that he often spoke of the affectionate attentions of his children, and of their children.

'A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children;' — the inheritance of a good name and a good example. It is well if they regard it as their best legacy. It is well when they aim to act worthily of it. When they do so, the memory of his virtues comes up to cheer them in the path of duty. When they do not, it comes up to rebuke them, and may the admonition never be in vain.

And now, 'the places which have known' this honored and honorable man, 'shall know him no more.' We shall no more behold that venerable form where we have been accustomed to see it, on the morning and evening of the Christian Sabbath, in the place from which he was never, but from

necessity, absent. Never more shall we mingle our prayers and praises with his in this house of our solemnities which he loved so well. May we meet in the upper temple, and unite our voices in notes of praise that shall be lengthened out throughout eternity!

## SERMON XI.

## THE FAITHFUL YOUNG MAN.

## A CHARACTER.\*

[Concluding part of a Sermon.]

Rev. ii. 10. — BE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, AND THOU SHALT RECEIVE  
A CROWN OF LIFE.

I CANNOT allow myself to close my discourse, without dwelling for a little time on the character of that excellent young man who has just been taken from among us.

I owe it to myself to do this; for I loved and valued him; I owe it to you, and especially the youth of this society, who, by the contemplation of his character, may be excited to resolve, by the grace of GOD, to 'go and do likewise.'

From childhood to maturity, his conduct was worthy of imitation. At school, and at the university, he was distinguished by his simplicity, his sincerity, his benevolence, and his exemplary diligence.

He engaged in his professional studies under the direction of an eminent practitioner, with an ardor

\* John D. Wells, M. D.

which was an earnest of future excellence; and this ardor did not abate, but grew stronger and stronger as long as he lived.

He had scarcely entered on the practice of his profession, before he was called to lecture on anatomy and surgery, at Bowdoin College, in Maine; and not long after, at a respectable medical institution in this state.

In the first named institution he was elected a professor, and was intrusted with the important commission of selecting, in Europe, a medical library.

This commission he fulfilled with much judgment, and returned to contribute, as he did largely contribute, to raise the schools with which he was connected, to an elevated rank.

In the mean time, his reputation as a lecturer continued to increase and extend itself, till he had attained to a distinction second to none in the branch of instruction to which he was devoted.

On a vacancy occurring in the medical department in the University of Maryland, which, from the eminence of its professors, had acquired an honorable celebrity, and from which a professor had been recently selected for the London University, he was invited to become a candidate; and, though he had powerful competitors,—himself an entire stranger,—was unanimously elected to the vacant chair.

He had now reached an eminence to which few, at his age, are permitted to attain; and might look

forward, we might suppose, to a distinguished, and, what to him was first and most valued, a useful career. He was destined, in the Providence of God, for higher duties, and a more exalted sphere of honor and usefulness.

When the tidings of his election reached him, death had set its seal upon him. The fatigue, incident to the delivery of three courses of lectures in quick succession, at remote distances in the places of their delivery; the anxiety attendant on successful competition, and the journey back, to commence a new course of lectures at Brunswick; destroyed his life.

Go with me to his chamber.

‘The chamber where the good man meets his fate,  
Is privileged above the common walks of virtuous life,  
Just in the verge of heaven!’

He was a Christian. He had studied his Bible.

A few years since he became a communicant in this church; and, as religion had been his constant companion in life, it did not forsake him when its supports were most needed.

‘I had hoped,’ he said, ‘to live that I might do good. If I know my own heart, this was my chief desire. But if it be the will of God that I should die, His will be done. I trust in the mercy of God through the mediation of my Saviour.’

During a part of his sickness, he was deprived of his sight, and it was doubtful, if his life should be spared, whether he would ever see again.

It will serve to exhibit, in a striking light, the influence of his religious principles, and his confidence in the wisdom and goodness of God, to mention that he was calmly planning for himself a course of useful employment on the presumption that he should be blind.

I might occupy your attention for a long time in describing the holy exercises of his mind, as displayed in his deportment and conversation at this period. I must, however, add but little more.

On entering his chamber on a certain day, he said to me with much feeling, 'I am greatly distressed. I have thought I was dying, and my thoughts were all of God and heaven. But now I think I may recover, and the world has come in to absorb my thoughts, and the heavenly visions seem to be departing. I have no wish to return to the world again.'

When a friend was leaving him for Brunswick, and asked him if he had any thing to say to his friends there, he replied, 'Tell them that I am dying; that I die in the faith of the gospel of Christ, and that this faith is every thing to me, — my support and comfort.'

But I must forbear. In being thus minute, I have deviated from the course which I have almost invariably pursued. But I consider this case, in its combined circumstances, an extraordinary one, and as demanding peculiar notice.

I present this example to children and youth; to show them how much may be gained, in a brief

period, by the diligent application of 'the mental powers to some useful pursuit, when those powers are controlled and sanctified by religion.

If it be asked to what he was indebted for distinction and success? I answer, not to his talents merely, but to his strong sense of duty, which prompted him to intense application and unceasing industry.

If it be said that his exertions shortened his life, I answer, it is true; and in the intensity of his exertions he erred, and is not to be imitated; but I also answer, that he lived long in a short time; for 'honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years; but wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age.'

'He being made perfect' or sanctified, 'in a short time, fulfilled a long time; for his soul pleased the LORD, therefore hastened HE to take him away.'

## SERMON XII.

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### CHRISTIAN HEROISM.\*

Romans viii. 38, 39. — NONE OF THESE THINGS MOVE ME, NEITHER COUNT I MY LIFE DEAR UNTO MYSELF, SO THAT I MIGHT FINISH MY COURSE WITH JOY, AND THE MINISTRY I HAVE RECEIVED OF THE LORD JESUS, TO TESTIFY THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.

It is Paul the apostle, — the persecuted, suffering apostle of Christ, — who utters the words I have now read to you.

But a little while since, he was himself a persecutor, ‘breathing threatenings and slaughter,’ and pursuing even to the death, the devoted followers of Jesus.

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\* This sermon, written in the ordinary course of preparation for the pulpit, is only a sketch of an important argument. The author was called upon unexpectedly, with the notice of only a few hours, to preach at the annual convention of the Congregational ministers of Massachusetts, a service to which he had been appointed for the following year. He had just preached this sermon to his own people, and took it for this occasion. The concluding appeal is here retained, in the hope that it will excite attention to the interesting class of sufferers on whose behalf the appeal was uttered, and for whom a contribution was made at the time at which it was delivered. The Congregational Charitable Society was instituted for their relief, and is a society eminently worthy of the bounty of the beneficent.

Behold how changed! He has embraced the faith which he once attempted to destroy. He has assumed the name which he once despised, and rejoices to be counted worthy to endure the loss of all things for the sake of his profession.

And what was it that effected this astonishing revolution in the sentiments and feelings of this distinguished man? Was it ambition?—No. He was the pupil of one of the most eminent lawyers of his time; himself possessed of talents and learning which qualified him for aspiring to some of the highest stations in his country, and that country the mistress of the world.

All that was alluring in the career of worldly glory he forsook. He averted his eyes from the bright visions that had doubtless risen before his youthful fancy, and turned his feet into the humble, gloomy path of infamy and death.

Was it the love of gain?—In the practice of an honorable profession, with his talents and learning and ardor, he would doubtless soon have risen to wealth as well as to eminence. But what was his prospect, I beseech you, as a disciple of the new religion? Its founder had led a life of poverty and apparent wretchedness, and the band of followers to which he joined himself, might have addressed him in the language of one of them on another occasion, ‘Silver and gold have we none.’ Their wealth was comprised in the garments that covered them, and the implements of their humble calling.

Was it *the love of ease and pleasure*? To these

he might have aspired before he became a Christian, but his own experience as an opposer and persecutor of the Christians, had taught him that not ease and pleasure, but toil and suffering awaited him in his new vocation.

Examine all the motives by which worldly men are actuated in their choice of a profession in life, and you will find that none of them could have operated to induce the disciple of Gamaliel to become the disciple of Christ. No. It was a conviction of the *truth* of the cause he espoused; a conviction produced by a miraculous intervention of Divine agency.

At the moment when his zeal against the religion of Christ is at its height, when he is on his way from one city to another, to seize and imprison and destroy its votaries, at such a moment, and under such circumstances, he is arrested in his course, and the whole current of his thoughts and feelings and purposes changed. The hand of Him whom he had persecuted was stretched forth to lead him out of the darkness in which he wandered, into 'marvellous light.'

At mid-day, — when the sun shone the brightest, — a brighter light than that of the sun, in his meridian splendor, burst upon him. Overpowered by the radiance, he fell to the earth, and heard a voice, not of anger, but of pity and affectionate expostulation. It was the voice of Jesus, calling him from the mad and cruel pursuit in which he was engaged, to be the advocate of a better cause; to renounce

the honor and reward of a zealous persecutor, for a crown of martyrdom.

‘I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee. Delivering thee from the people and the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, through faith that is in me.’

And now he consults not with flesh and blood. His eyes had beheld celestial light, and he must follow its guidance. His ears had heard the voice of the risen, ascended Saviour, and he must obey. He throws aside the weapons of his warfare, and girds himself with truth, and puts on the ‘armor of righteousness,’ and goes forth to contend with spiritual enemies; to overturn the empire of vice and wickedness, and to establish ‘*a kingdom that is not of this world.*’

As the despised disciple of a despised Nazarene, he feels a moral dignity which he had never felt before, and enjoys a peace which the world could not give, nor take away. He is conscious that he has espoused the cause of truth and virtue, and in this panoply he feels himself secure. The honors, and treasures, and enjoyments of the world have no attractions for him now. His reward is on high. ‘The honor that cometh from God,’ imperishable,

immortal; the treasures of His grace and love, inexhaustible; the enjoyments of heaven, unfading, eternal. *These* are his, and he will not exchange them,— No! he will not exchange them for all that the world can give him. It has nothing valuable enough to tempt him; it has nothing appalling enough to frighten him from his holy purpose. He may well say then, as he did, for himself and his fellow-disciples, ‘I am persuaded that neither life nor death, nor principalities nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.’

The strength of his resolution had been tested, he had faced death in every form, and in all times of suffering and danger could say, ‘None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry that I have received of the Lord, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.’

His course is finished. It is finished ‘with joy.’ He had ‘fought a good fight, and kept the faith,’ and has received ‘the crown of righteousness,’ that was ‘laid up’ for him ‘in heaven.’ He is encircled with a far brighter glory than that which surrounded him on the way to Damascus.

Christian! examine thyself, and see how much of the spirit of this devoted disciple dwells in thee.

What value have the things of this world in thy estimation, compared with the things that are unseen and eternal? — With what patience dost

thou bear the injuries, with what firmness dost thou meet the dangers, with what submission dost thou endure the sufferings to which thou art called? Born in a Christian land, and educated in the knowledge of those glorious truths for which this apostle contended so earnestly, labored so diligently, endured so patiently, — for which he was willing to live in poverty and wretchedness, and die in torture, Christian! dost *thou* prize this religion as thy greatest treasure, follow it as thy surest guide, cling to it as thine only ark of safety, and count all things but ‘loss’ for the excellency of its knowledge and the worth of its possession?

It is indeed thy greatest treasure, thy surest guide, and thine only ark of safety. Amidst the vexations, disappointments and sufferings of life, it is this alone that can afford thee adequate support and consolation. If thou hast truly embraced it, none of these things will greatly move thee. For a time they may interrupt, but they will not destroy thy peace. In the sanctuary which religion has opened, thou art beyond their power to harm thee.

Christian minister! Examine thyself, and see how much of the spirit of this devoted disciple of the Lord Jesus dwells in thee. Art thou ready to make any sacrifice, to endure any hardship, to suffer any privation, to sustain any reproach, for thy Master’s sake? — Dost thou not, from fear, or favor, ‘shun to declare the whole counsel of God, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear’?

Dost thou not, from dread of censure, or love of applause, 'keep back any thing that is profitable'?

In short, dost thou 'take up thy cross,' and do thy duty, through good report and evil report, 'not counting even thy life dear unto thyself, if thou canst finish thy course with joy, and the ministry that thou hast received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God'?

There is a voice, powerful and emphatic, issuing from the tomb, and urging us to duty. There is a voice, powerful and emphatic, issuing from the abodes of the blessed, and urging us to duty.

It comes from the tombs of our deceased brethren. It comes from the abode to which their unfettered souls have ascended.

Our brethren have 'rested from their labors.' Their work on earth is finished. Their trials are ended.

We pay a passing tribute of respect to their memory; utter our mournful regrets that in the places where we have been accustomed to see them, we shall see them no more, and, with us, it is over.

But there are those with whom it is not so. It is not so with those who shared in their labors and cares, and whose love and sympathy divided and lightened the weight of their pressure. No. It is not so with them. *They* feel, in the lowest depths of their souls, their sad bereavement.

The heart that beat responsive to their affection and tenderness, has ceased to beat at all. The arm on which they leaned for support can no longer

support them. They are *widows*. Ah! how much of sorrow and desolateness is there in that word!

Some of them are aged and infirm; not a few of them are poor. Of one, the report that reaches us is that her whole annual income is five dollars. Of another, that her proportion of the contribution which is made at this season, is all that keeps her from the almshouse.

I plead with you, this day, on their behalf. O, how powerful would be the plea if, instead of uttering my feeble exhortation in their cause, I could bring before you the destitute children of these widows, to utter in your hearing, from that sacred book which their fathers taught, a more persuasive appeal than art or eloquence could invent; and which would not fail to reach your hearts!

WE ARE ORPHANS, AND FATHERLESS. OUR MOTHERS ARE AS WIDOWS.

## SERMON XIII.

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### PRAYER.

Psalm cxlv. — THE LORD IS NIGH UNTO ALL THEM THAT CALL UPON HIM, TO ALL THAT CALL UPON HIM IN TRUTH.

YOU are often reminded in this place, — and not in this place only, — of the nature, the obligation, and the benefit of prayer.

So long as man is ignorant, and needs to be enlightened; weak, and needs to be strengthened; sinful, and needs to be forgiven; so long will a frequent recurrence to this topic be necessary and beneficial.

It is Divine Wisdom that must enlighten our ignorance. It is Divine Power that must strengthen our weakness. It is Divine Compassion that must pardon our offences; and, if we desire light, strength and pardon, we must pray. It is prayer that furnishes the panoply against the force of temptation, and the wings on which we ascend to heaven.

Every relation that we bear to God; every perfection of His glorious character; every attribute of our frail, dependent nature, furnishes strong and indisputable motives for this sacred duty.

But there is another reason why we should often discourse on the duty of prayer. Important as it is to our spiritual life, growth and happiness, still there is reason to believe that it is much neglected.

There are some, who, if they do not say with the ancient scoffers, 'Who is the Lord that we should fear Him?' adopt at least a part of their language, and ask 'What profit shall we have if we pray unto Him?'

There are others whose time is so filled with the cares and occupations of life, serious and trifling, that they allow themselves little or no leisure for the performance of this duty; or, whose minds are so intent on these objects, that when they *seem* to pray they do not. Their words are of God and heaven, but their thoughts are of earth and earthly things.

Need I say in this congregation, in answer to those who object that prayer is useless, that there is indeed 'much profit in praying to God?'—Need I say how much it promotes gratitude, trust, purity, benevolence, penitence, pious resolutions, watchfulness?—Need I say that God has commanded it, again and again, and that obedience to HIM is always profitable to us, from the influence it has on our character, as well as from its rendering us acceptable to Him?—Need I say that God has promised blessings as the reward of this obedience? especially the gift of His Holy Spirit,—which I will not say is important,—which is *essential* to our progress in holiness?

I know that there are some who speak slightly of Divine influences. I do not censure them, — for this is not my province, — but I differ from them. If I disbelieve the reality of these influences, I must relinquish my faith in the Bible, for, to my understanding, they are as clearly taught there as language can teach them. How many are there who might go much farther than this, and say that they would as soon doubt their existence as that they had felt these holy influences, and enjoyed the light and comfort they impart!

Do we pray that God would restore our health, and is it not equally rational to suppose that He would give health to our souls? If He hath breathed into us the breath of life, so ‘His Almighty Inspiration hath given us understanding,’ and if He can rekindle the flame of life which is expiring, so He can illumine our minds, revive the decaying flame of piety, and cause it to burn with new ardor.

It has been objected to prayer, that it implies that God is changeable; but the reverse of this is the fact. He has annexed a certain reward to the right performance of this service, and the granting that reward is a proof of his *unchangeableness*.

But, there are others, I have said, who neglect prayer because their time and their minds are engrossed by the world, — its cares and its pleasures. To them I would say, that the world is not their home, and that it would profit them nothing to gain the whole world and lose their souls. I would tell them that their seasons of devotion may be ob-

served, and not interfere with their necessary business or their innocent enjoyments, and that there is no duty so necessary as this, and no enjoyment so great as that which results from it. I would tell them, too, that they can be 'fervent in spirit,' whilst they are 'not slothful in business,' and that a spirit of prayer whilst it prompts to fidelity, will promote success.

There are doubtless many prayers addressed to God to which no answer is given, — which do not find acceptance with Him.

Have we ever offered such prayers? — Have we ever felt that our prayers returned to us void? — Have we risen from our devotions, and gone forth to the business of life, conscious that we have not found the blessing we sought; — uncheered by a sense of the Divine Presence, unsanctified by the Divine Spirit? — Have we sought for holy influences and failed to obtain them? If it has been so, let us examine ourselves. Are we not conscious that our prayers did not *deserve* to be heard and answered? — Can we not assign to ourselves a satisfactory reason for their returning to us empty and void?

Did we seek for spiritual blessings? Were not our desires after them so vague, so superficial, — our petitions for them so languid and feeble and cold, our conduct in this respect, and perhaps our real sentiments, — so little in accordance with our prayers, that we need not be surprised they were rejected? We 'ask and receive not, because we ask

amiss.' Our prayers were lifeless, heartless, insincere, and could we expect that they would go up to heaven, and be accepted and registered there? — Could we expect that it was only necessary to pronounce a form of words, in order to be renewed in the temper of our minds; to be transformed into true Christians; to be sanctified, and made meet for engaging, as we ought, in the employments of earth, and for the enjoyments of heaven? — Where shall we find a man so thoughtless, may I not say so abandoned, as not to have offered the same prayer?

It is not to those who merely call upon God, that the promise is given. We may 'cry aloud,' like the priests of Baal, and no fire come down to consume the offering. We may build the altar, and lay the wood, and kindle the fire, but, if we have not a pure victim for the sacrifice, our labor will be vain. 'If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil?' 'If ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? — Offer it to thy governor, and see if he will be better pleased, or accept thy offering, saith the Lord of hosts.'

Religion has its seat in the heart; and every service, to be acceptable, must have its origin there. It is the simplicity of the heart that is the best inditer of our prayers. The head may find words, but the finding devout affections is the business of the heart. We must pray with the heart, if we would obtain acceptance, and we may thus pray and use no form of words. We may breathe a sigh,

and, if that sigh is breathed from a humble contrite heart, it will not be lost upon the air. It will be wafted upward. It will come up into the ear of the ETERNAL, and we have the pledge of HIM who cannot lie, that it will 'not be despised.'

But, if the heart be not engaged, our prayers are useless; they are worse than useless. They are regarded with displeasure by a GOD of truth. If we pray for the forgiveness of sins and do not repent of our sins, but 'regard iniquity in our hearts,' GOD will not hear us. If we pray for the assistance of GOD's spirit, and do not sincerely and fervently desire that assistance, GOD will not hear us.

When we pray; then, we should do what we can to adjust our spirits to the posture of true devotion. We should 'not be hasty to utter any thing before GOD;' but should seriously examine ourselves, to see whether we are about to pray 'in sincerity and truth.'

We should reflect on the greatness and power of GOD, and remember that it is to that high and incomprehensible Being, who by a word created all things from nothing, and by a word can reduce them to nothing again, that we are to address ourselves in prayer. We should reflect on the omnipresence and omniscience of GOD, and remember that it is to HIM whose infinite, all-seeing knowledge looks through the recesses of every heart, that we address our prayers. We should reflect on the infinite purity and holiness of GOD, and consider that it is to that Being who 'cannot look

upon sin,' that we offer our prayers. We should reflect on our own wants, weaknesses, and sins, and remember that it is to HIM who alone can supply, strengthen, forgive, that we address our prayers.

But this is not all. We are permitted to remember, when we pray, that it is to 'our Father in heaven,' who is compassionate and ready to forgive, and to help our infirmities, that we offer our prayers.

And when we have done praying, we must evince our sincerity by our labors. Like Moses, — but in a spiritual sense, — we must combat while we pray. God will not do all. If He did, we should not be free, accountable agents, but mere machines. We must strive to 'work out our own salvation,' and we may then look, with humble confidence, to God 'to work in us, both to will and to do.'

Then, and then only, can we expect Divine assistance, and that assistance will render our own efforts effectual. Who that has sought in sincerity has not found help in time of need, and strength when he has felt his own weakness, and was ready to despair?

It is thus with *spiritual* blessings. But we sometimes ask for temporal blessings and meet with disappointment. Can it be said that we do not truly desire *them* when we ask for them? Would that we were always as sincere when we ask for the forgiveness of our sins, and the grace of God, as when we ask for the blessings of the present world!

Here let us again examine ourselves, and we

shall probably find that we have found a reason for our disappointment.

Do we not remember how little we know what is best for us, and have we not often found in our experience, that, if our petition had been granted, we should have deeply, yes, bitterly, regretted it?

Are our prayers the prayers of ambition?—The places to which we aspired might have exposed us to temptations which would have proved too powerful for us, and to which, in a humbler station, we are not exposed; and might minister food to passions which, in a humbler station, would have found no aliment.

Are our prayers the prayers of avarice? The possession of riches might corrupt us,—might stifle the germ of piety which had been planted within us, when it would otherwise grow up into full maturity.

It is thus with every thing of a temporal nature for which we pray. It might prove a snare to our virtue, or, in some way or other, prove injurious to ourselves, or others, if our prayers were granted.

In refusing to hear us, God is merciful. As a father, attentive to the best welfare of his children, seeing afar off, though they cannot discern them, the instruments of their unhappiness and ruin, He mercifully averts the blow, which, in ignorance, they may be earnestly striving to bring upon their heads.

When we ask of God as a good, what might prove an evil, the more inexorable He is, the more does He manifest His benevolence and love. In

refusing to hear us, He does most effectually hear us. His regard for us is most truly shown when He seems most regardless of us. He is the kindest, when He appears the most unkind. His mercy shines the brightest, in the darkest night of adversity.

The prayer of faith and sincerity has not been offered in vain, my hearers, when it operates a change upon us, and renders us more fit to receive the favors of Heaven. In this sense, a fervent prayer will be 'effectual,' and we shall not fail to experience, when we 'pray to God most High,' that 'He performeth all things' that are necessary and best 'for us.'

Oh, that we might all realize as we ought, the duty and the privilege of prayer!—that we might thankfully and eagerly fly to it as the source of our greatest comfort, and our highest happiness!

Let the sinner fly to it, as he needs and hopes for forgiveness and mercy. Let the ignorant fly to it, as the means of obtaining divine illumination. Let the feeble and helpless fly to it, as their staff and support. Let the anxious fly to it, as the source of that 'peace which passeth understanding.' Let the afflicted fly to it, as their solace and refuge, for it mixes in the bitterest cup the healing balsam of heavenly consolation. In their affliction let them repose themselves on God, and they shall find support. Let them tell their sorrows to their compassionate Father who will bring good out of evil, and cause these comparatively 'light afflictions,

which are but for a moment, to work out for them an exceeding, an eternal weight of glory.'

If 'His way is in the sea, and His footsteps are not known,' if 'clouds and darkness are round about Him,' and hide from them the light of His countenance, let them not despond. He is essentially clothed with the effulgence of light. 'Righteousness and justice and mercy are the habitation of His throne.'

Who are they, then, that are faithless respecting the efficacy of prayer? Let them habitually, and rightfully practise it, and they will 'be no longer faithless, but believing.'

They will have abundant experience of its blessed effects; they will advance in knowledge and virtue; they will feel increasing consolation, satisfaction and joy; they will find support and aid under the difficulties of life; they will enjoy a sacred peace, — 'a hope that maketh not ashamed,' in the hour of death; and be prepared for a world where pure, unmixed devotion reigns and triumphs forever and ever.

## S E R M O N X I V .

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### IDOLATRY AMONG CHRISTIANS.

1 John, v. 21.—KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS.

THE caution in our text was peculiarly important in the early ages of Christianity. Many of the Christians were converts from heathenism, and, dwelling in the midst of those from whose faith and worship they had withdrawn themselves, were in danger of relapsing into their former errors and superstitions.

To that portion of them who were converts from Judaism, it was by no means unnecessary; for the Jews, notwithstanding the clearest proofs of the existence, the unity, the unrivalled excellence, and supreme authority of God; notwithstanding the peculiar regard which God had expressed for them, and the repeated obligations he had imposed upon them, were strongly addicted to idolatry.

To those whose condition resembles that of the early Christians, the admonition in the text might now with great propriety and effect be addressed. But why should it be brought forward in a land of Christian light and knowledge?—Why should it

be directed to a Christian congregation assembled for the express purpose of worshipping the one living and true God, and who are in no danger of falling into Pagan superstition and idolatry?

We look around us, and there are no altars erected to Baal; no shrine for the goddess of the Ephesians; no temple consecrated to the 'unknown God.' — The night of Pagan superstition and idolatry has fled away, 'the day-spring from on high hath visited us,' — we dwell in the noon-day splendor of Gospel light, and Gospel privileges. There is no danger then, surely, that *we* should worship false divinities; that we should bow down to stocks and stones.

From *religious* idolatry, my friends, — from the idolatry of the heathen, — the Gospel has happily freed us; but there is another species of idolatry which, though less gross in appearance, may not be less criminal. I speak of that moral idolatry, by which, whilst the true God is ostensibly worshipped, the homage of the heart is paid to another. In this sense, how much idolatry, — what images, what idols, what false divinities do we not discover in the midst of Christians? What, I ask, is every irregular passion which we fondly cherish, and for which we are disposed to make the greatest sacrifices? What is it but idolatry?

To build temples in honor of God, then, to celebrate His praises, to address our prayers to Him, to bow down before Him, — these are but equivocal marks of religion, and are often deceitful. To

worship God as we ought, is to worship Him in 'spirit and in truth,'—to acknowledge Him in our hearts as the most perfect of all beings; to pay Him the homage, not of our bodies, only, but also of our souls.

With what complacency, I beseech you, can He regard a service in which the heart has no share? No! All incense that is offered only with the hands, is an abomination to Him. He must have the first place in our hearts. He must reign supreme over our affections and our wills. Let us engage then, in the duty of self-examination. Let us see if there is no idol in our hearts which usurps, in some measure, the place which belongs only to God.

1st. 'Covetousness,'—the immoderate love of money, — 'is idolatry.'

Is money our idol? Does this absorb our thoughts, — our cares? Do we regard this as our chief good, as the source of our highest happiness? If so, we are idolators.

Though we do not acknowledge fortune as our divinity; though we do not build altars to its honor; though we do not directly address our prayers to it; though we do not literally bow down before it; yet we are not the less idolators.

Our *hearts*, which ought to be temples for the Holy Spirit, are the temples of an idol. We render it our unremitted service. It obtains our incense; it obtains our vows.

Ah, of what importance is it that we do not render it our formal worship, if we in reality wor-

ship it! Of what importance is it that we offer to God the homage of our lips, if we say in our hearts, 'to gold, Thou art my god; and to fine gold, thou art my confidence?'

'No man can serve two masters.' He must attach himself to one, to the exclusion of the other. 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.' We cannot give our hearts to two objects, when these objects are opposed to each other. There will be an inevitable, a perpetual conflict. We must decide between them.

'Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.' God, or Mammon. Your religion, or your love of gain. They are as incompatible as heaven and hell; as light and darkness.

2d. Nor is idolatry confined to the immoderate love of money. The immoderate love of *pleasure*, is idolatry.

Is pleasure our idol? Is this the object of our thoughts, — I may emphatically say of our labor?

Wherever amusement invites, or pleasure calls, are we eager to go? Do we spend our days in preparing for such scenes, and our nights in enjoying them?

Do we lead a life of frivolity and levity? Are we absorbed in the whirlpool of fashionable folly, and hurried along by a rapid succession of amusements?

Are the dear delights of family intercourse, the gentle charities of private life, the sweet emanations of conjugal, parental, and filial affection, insipid,

compared with the gay party, the splendid ball-room, or, — infinitely worse, — the haunts of dissipation and excess ?

Every amusement, every pleasure, carried to excess, is criminal. It diverts the mind from God and duty. It unfits it for serious reflection. We may enjoy pleasure ; but we must be temperate and moderate in the enjoyment of it. We must be careful that we are ‘not lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.’

3d. An immoderate love of honor and distinction, is idolatry.

Is the love of honor or of praise, the ruling principle of our actions ? Do we feed upon the chaff, are we puffed up by the breath of popular applause ? In short, do we ‘love the praise of men, more than the praise of God ?’ Then we are idolators.

Profit, honor and pleasure have been called the world’s trinity. They are the gods whom the world worships.

But methinks I hear more than one in this assembly reply, ‘If this is idolatry, then are not *we* idolators. We have no immoderate love of money, or of pleasure, or of fame.’

If it be really so, my friends, you have cause indeed for self-congratulation. But let me ask you again to look into the recesses of that heart which is known only to God and to yourselves.

If you do not find there an image of gold, or the shrine of pleasure, or a temple to fame, is there *no* idol there ?

Is not a husband, or a wife, or a child, or some

other object of affection, your idol? Has nothing a larger share in your heart, than your God? Does nothing interfere with the duty, the homage, which you owe to Him?

If there is any thing,—bear with me my friends,—and yet why should I say bear with me?—you are idolators. You are giving to others what belongs only to HIM who has given you all.

I may call upon you with propriety to ‘keep yourselves from idols.’ I may call upon you to ‘separate between you and your gods.’

Let me not be misunderstood. You may love these objects. You may love them fervently. It would be monstrous if you did not. But you must love the Giver in the gift, and Him supremely. Else are you idolators.

To conclude. Do you seek for riches?—The inexhaustible riches of God’s mercy in Jesus Christ are spread before you; treasures which ‘the world cannot give, nor take away.’

Do you pant after honor and distinction? Behold ‘a crown of glory which fadeth not away.’ Listen to the honorable testimony with which God himself will reward your sincere endeavors to serve Him. ‘WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT! ENTER INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD.’

Is pleasure the object of your search? Joys with which strangers cannot intermeddle, are offered to you; the fellowship of angels, the presence of the ever-living God, in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and pleasures forevermore.

## SERMON XV.

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### RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION.

Malachi iii. 2.—THEY THAT FEARED THE LORD SPAKE OFTEN ONE TO ANOTHER.

It was in a degenerate age that these words were spoken. The glory had departed from Judah. The worship of God was profaned in the land. The priests and the people were alike the slaves of corruption.

But, in the midst of this wicked generation, there were some that 'feared the Lord;' and their minds were fortified, and the sentiment of piety cherished, by frequent communion with one another.

If we have fallen on better times; if there is less degeneracy among us; if there is a more general acknowledgment of religious obligations; still there was something, even in those times, which is worthy of our imitation. We find it in the text. '*They that feared the Lord spake often one to another.*' They spake of religion; of God and duty; for it is said that 'the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before HIM for

them that fear the Lord and that thought upon His name.'

It is to *religious* conversation, then, that the text directs our attention; and I scarcely know a subject on which a word of admonition is more needed than this.

Mankind are variously occupied. They are engaged in professions and employments which lead them into different paths. Among those who are engaged in the same pursuit, there is frequent communion. It is natural and fit that it should be so. It promotes information, activity, enterprise.

But however variously mankind may be occupied, in however different paths they may be pursuing the journey of life, there is one subject in which they have a common interest, and one path in which they are travelling together.

The subject in which they have a common interest is religion; and the path in which they are walking together, is the path to the grave.

Is it not natural and fit that this subject should occupy much of their attention; and that, as they travel together, it should often find a place in their discourse? Worldly pursuits terminate at death. The factitious distinctions which wealth and honor confer, have no place in 'the land without any order.'

'We brought nothing into the world with us, and we can carry nothing out.' But it is not so with intellectual and moral pursuits. *They* relate to the immortal part of our nature, and are them-

selves immortal. The acquisitions of wisdom and piety accompany us into the region beyond the grave; and have an important influence on our eternal well-being. All that relates merely to the present world will soon have no place in our regard. The time is coming when the interests of this world will be nothing, and religion every thing; when the time which has been spent in idle, frivolous conversation will be remembered with poignant regret; and the time which has been devoted to religious communion, with unspeakable satisfaction and comfort.

If I could lift the curtain of eternity, and disclose to you the awful realities that are hidden behind it, you would realize, — but, till that curtain is lifted, and the disembodied spirit is permitted to behold the scene to which this scene is preparatory, you cannot fully realize, how deeply this subject concerns you. You are now inhabitants of earth. You have known no other world than this. Your closest ties, your dearest and most interesting associations are here. It is difficult for you to feel, — however you may believe, — that this world is not your home. You lay plans for an earthly futurity. You ‘buy, and sell, and get gain;’ and if you breathe a sigh that life is short and uncertain, do you not say in the same breath, ‘Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years?’

Here is one reason why an admonition on this subject is needed. The subject is all-important and momentous. It is important as our intellectual and immortal nature. It is momentous as the con-

cerns of eternity. If it becomes us to speak often to one another on the business of this fleeting life, it much more becomes us to speak often one to another on the business of a life that will never end.

But what is the fact? Alas! we need have but little intercourse with the world to perceive that the reverse of this is the fact.

It is well that the hours of business should be devoted to useful business, and hours of recreation to harmless recreation, and at such seasons the conversation may partake of the nature of the employment. But how little is spared to high and holy converse with one another! Even among those who are known to each other as fearing the same God, and trusting in the same Saviour, as members of the same household of faith; who have joined together in the exercises of devotion, and are remembered, it may be, — it *should* be, — in each other's prayers; even among these, too, religious conversation seems to be almost interdicted; is chilled with obstinate silence, if it is not rebuked with a sneer. Even *they* speak to one another on subjects the most frivolous, or subjects worse than frivolous, in preference to those which belong to their best welfare. 'The Lord hearkeneth and heareth.' A book of remembrance is written before HIM, and 'for every idle word we must give account.'

Here, then, is another reason why an admonition on this subject is needed. Notwithstanding the

importance of religion, there is comparatively but little religious conversation.

There is political conversation. There is conversation about parties of pleasure, and about amusements. There is conversation about people's character and conduct. There is conversation about preachers and preaching; conversation about points of 'doubtful disputation which engender strife, but do not serve for edifying;' which destroy the kind affections, and root out the Christian graces. There is much gossiping about religion, but very little religious conversation.

How much has what is termed religious conversation been perverted! It has been worn as a mask by hypocrisy. It has cherished and manifested the complacency of spiritual pride. It has served as a vehicle for denunciation and anathematizing to bigotry and intolerance. It has fostered the religion of the fancy, cold in heart and powerless in conduct.

But, though the instrument has been abused, it is not in itself the less valuable. How pure and soothing, how noble and elevating, are the themes with which religion is conversant!

What is there in the whole range of intellectual and moral speculation with which religion may not be united, and on which the conversation of the pious may not with propriety and advantage dwell?

'Let them that fear the Lord,' then, 'speak often one to another' on these delightful themes. Let them dwell on the goodness by which every creature

of God is blessed; on the love which remembered them in their lost estate, and provided a ransom for them; on 'the liberty wherewith Christ has made his people free.' By the interchange of pious sentiments, let them kindle in each other's breasts a brighter flame of piety.

In the domestic circle, in the confidential hour, let religion have its place. Let *them* speak to one another of God and heaven, whom God has united in the closest and tenderest ties. If in every other good they delight to share with each other; if in every other sorrow they seek from each other support and consolation; Oh, let them not refuse to share in the joys of religion, or to seek for its assistance and sympathy in their doubts and difficulties! Let the heads and members of families, — let friends and acquaintance 'take counsel together' in those pursuits which are to prepare them for eternity.

Conversation has great influence upon conduct. 'Let us consider one another,' says the apostle, 'to provoke to love and good works.' It is easy to stir up selfishness and wrath by the tongue, and by the same instrument we may provoke to beneficence. There are principles of benevolence which, in young minds, may be cherished and drawn forth by presenting kind and compassionate views; by combating ungenerous and cruel maxims; by approving and ripening plans of usefulness. We are not to boast of alms, but, by mutual consultation, advice is obtained; incitement is given; proper objects are discovered, and imposition is detected;

knowledge in the doctrine of alms is increased; the heart is enlarged, and generous affections kindled. Ordinary conversation is very properly seasoned with the praise of goodness. Indignation at vice may be tinged with personal animosity, but the love and praise of virtue indicates 'pure and undefiled religion.'

Some who cannot give much alms may persuade the rich to give. Wisdom, and eloquence, and influence of every kind, are worthily exerted in the cause of charity.

But I must not forget to say that 'for every thing there is a season.' We are at all seasons to be religious; but there are times when religious topics may not be well introduced. Our Saviour teaches us this, when he says 'Give not that which is holy to the dogs;' 'Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.'

Whilst the Christian should watch for opportunities to advance the cause of religion, he should be careful not to expose it to the ribaldry of profaneness, or the sneer of folly.

My hearers, I have said that religion is all important; and I trust in saying this I have a testimony to the truth of the assertion in the conviction of every mind. Would that I might say in the feeling of every heart!

I have said, too, that the time is coming when all other subjects will have lost their power to interest us. It will be happy for us if our spirits

can then be revived and animated by the words of affectionate piety; if the heart from which the tide of life is ebbing, can rest on that anchor which is sure and steadfast. It will be happy indeed if we can enjoy the soothing reflection that, amid all that was frivolous, and unprofitable, and sinful in the world, 'we have had our conversation in heaven.'

## S E R M O N X V I .

GOD ALL-SUFFICIENT ON EARTH AND IN HEAVEN.

Psalm lxxiii. 25. — WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN BUT THEE ? AND THERE IS NONE UPON EARTH THAT I DESIRE BESIDE THEE.

THESE are strong expressions. Is it right, — is it possible, that *we* should adopt them ? Though we should doubtless love God supremely ; are there not many on earth whom we should love beside Him ? Are there not many in heaven, — spirits of the just made perfect, — to whom our thoughts may turn, — *must* turn, with fondest interest and affection ?

The Author of our nature does not forbid the exercise of its kindly and social affections. He who implanted them has taught us to cherish them ; and has presented us with other objects than Himself, on whom they may be placed.

I know not the precise state of feeling in which the words of the text were uttered. The Psalmist had found treachery in his friend, and ingratitude in the son whom he loved. He was ‘plagued,’ to use his own expression, ‘all the day long.’

It may have been from the depth of human vanity, and vexation, that his heart ascended to God. It may have been with a feeling of weariness and disgust with every thing about him, and in a spirit somewhat querulous, that he said, 'There is none on earth that I desire beside THEE.'

I believe, however, that it was in a moment of glowing and rapturous devotion; when, feeling the want of earthly comforts, he found a sufficiency in God. 'In Thy presence is fulness of joy.' 'Thou art able to supply all my need.' 'With thee I shall not want; I have enough.' 'Whom have I in heaven but THEE? and there is none on earth whom I desire beside THEE.'

The passage is sometimes rendered *in comparison* with THEE. But the expression is faint and feeble. The original implies much more.

If we were bereft of every object that is dear to us on earth, it would be sad, and heart-rending indeed. We might be ready to say, in the prospect of it, that the trial would be greater than we could bear;—that we could find no compensation for the loss. But, if we acquainted ourselves with God, we should be at peace. In the sense of His presence, and the enjoyment of His favor, our loss would be supplied.

This is not conjecture. How often have we seen it exemplified! The earthly cords of affection, one after another have been broken; and the devout, confiding, rejoicing spirit, has been able to say, 'Although the fig-tree should not blossom and

there should be no fruit in the vine, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.' 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' We have seen it most fully and clearly and impressively, on the bed of death; when faith, leaning upon that anchor which 'enters within the veil,' was enjoying a foretaste of heaven; when every thing here has been relinquished; when the last passion that warms a mother's heart,—love and solicitude for her children,—has been subdued; has been absorbed,—if I may say so,—in the love of GOD; when one idea has seemed to fill the mind, one affection to engross the soul; 'Whom have I in heaven but THEE, and there is none upon earth that I desire *beside* THEE?'

But, if we might find a consolation in the presence and favor of GOD for every loss, how would it be if we were *bereft* of GOD? What would be our condition if every thing else were left to us, and GOD were taken from us? They who now appear to have little regard for His presence and favor,—were it possible for them to exist without HIM, would have a sense of destitution of which they can now have no conception; and they who have been accustomed to rejoice in His presence, would feel that all that was left, was utterly valueless. 'There is none upon earth that I desire beside THEE.' GOD can supply the loss of *every thing*, but nothing can supply the loss of GOD.

As it is on earth, so it is in heaven. There could be no such place as heaven without GOD. Where

GOD is, there is heaven. It is HIS presence,—however inferior streams of happiness may refresh us,—it is HIS presence which constitutes that ‘river of pleasure’ which was seen by the apostle, in his vision, as proceeding from the throne of GOD. How unwise, then, how mad are they who substitute inferior objects, for GOD; who fix on the creature those regards which are due to the Creator; who are seeking at ‘broken cisterns’ what can only be found at the Fountain of living waters! How unwise are *they*? how regardless of their true interests, who are taking for their portion that which cannot satisfy them; that of which a thousand accidents may deprive them; that, with which, without GOD, they cannot be truly happy; and which, if a pure, legitimate source of enjoyment, should lead them up to HIM, the Fountain whence it flows;—to HIM with whose nature are essentially connected all the qualities, that can engage the heart; and all the perfections of power and wisdom and goodness, on which they may repose with perfect confidence.

And if *they* are unwise and regardless of their true interests, who are suffering the objects on which their affections may be lawfully placed, to engross their hearts, what shall we say of those who are seeking their happiness in that which is *opposed* to GOD; who are not only neglecting the ‘Fountain of living waters,’ but are drinking deep from the springs which sin has poisoned?—The charm will soon be broken. The idols to which the heart has

been knit, will soon appear in their true light; and what will then remain?

In the possession of health and spirits, all this may do, and no great want may be felt, and no serious evil apprehended; but there is a certain hour which one would wish 'all undisturbed and bright,' and that is when we die; when we go hence ne'er to be seen again; the hour when 'heart and strength shall fail.' Where *then* are all the sources of gratification with which the sinner contented himself while in health? Where are they when 'the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved,' and the immortal soul is separated from this scene forever? Where are they when the spirit has entered into eternity, and there is nothing but his sins to come between the sinner and his God?—It is for the imagination only to portray that scene. GOD GRANT THAT, TO US, THERE MAY BE NOTHING REAL!

## SERMON XVII.

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THE EYE OF GOD ALWAYS UPON US.

Genesis xvi. 13. — THOU GOD SEEST ME.

WHEN Moses delivered the law of God to the people of Israel, who were assembled at the foot of Mount Sinai, he spake with all the authority which resulted from the presence of the Law-giver. He could point to the mountain and say 'Behold the glory which manifests the presence of the Most HIGH.'

The effect was instantaneous and irresistible, — however transient. A response was heard from the whole congregation, 'All the LORD hath spoken, we will do.'

And such would doubtless be the effect, my hearers, if the visible presence of God should fill this place, and bring home to the hearts of the worshippers the solemn truth on which we are now meditating.

If that Eye which is never closed, but which is every moment directing its piercing glance at every heart, were now seen in its infinite brightness, penetrating the recesses of our hearts in this season of our apparent devotion, how powerful, how irresistible the influence!

Divest yourselves in imagination, for a moment, of this veil of flesh and blood that surrounds you, and the idea becomes reality.

The eye of the mind discerns the presence of a Spirit filling this sanctuary. **THAT SPIRIT IS GOD.**

To the mental vision, an Eye appears of infinite brightness penetrating the recesses of every heart. **THAT EYE IS GOD'S.**

Let us open our minds to the influence of these reflections.

1. We have come hither to worship. Let each one repeat to his own heart, " ' THOU GOD seest me.' If there is an altar within me devoted to thy worship; if the wood is laid, and the sacrifice prepared, and the fire kindled, THOU knowest it. If there is no altar there, and no sacrifice, and no flame of devotion, it is equally known to THEE. I may deceive others, I may deceive myself, but THEE I cannot deceive. Whilst I believe in Thy presence, may I feel its influence; that my thoughts may be pure; my feelings devout, and my purposes holy; so that this which is ' none other than the house of God,' may prove indeed to me ' the gate of heaven.' "

2. We are to leave this place, and mingle again in the avocations of the world. Let us carry with us, and keep with us, the awful idea which now occupies our minds. Let it be a ' light to our path, and a lamp to our feet,' to keep us from every false and evil way.

In transacting the business of life, let each one say to himself, " ' Thou GOD seest me.' If I am up-

right in my intentions, sincere in my discourse, faithful to my engagements, honest and conscientious in my dealings, it is known to THEE. If my purposes are sinful, and my words deceitful, if to my engagements I am faithless, and in my dealings dishonest, it is equally known to THEE. I may deceive others, but THEE I cannot deceive. I may take advantage of my neighbor's ignorance, and of the confidence he reposes in me. I may reap the reward in unrighteous, ill-gotten gain, but what will it avail me? In every purpose of my heart; in every word I have uttered; in every deed I have done, the Eye of God was upon me, and a fearful retribution awaits me."

And if such were the reflections of every heart in every moment, and in every place, they would have their foundation in nothing else than truth, As surely as there is a God who created all things, so surely must HE be always present with the things HE has made. 'He that planted the ear, must hear; He that formed the eye, must see.' He whose almighty inspiration gave man understanding, must know; and HE will not suffer the workers of iniquity to go unpunished.

In partaking of the enjoyments, no less than in transacting the business of life, the reflection, 'Thou God seest me,' should be ever present with us, to restrain us from sin, and keep us within the limits of rational and innocent enjoyment.

We cannot hide ourselves from God. No, my young friends, — let it be early, and deeply, and ha-

bitually impressed on your minds, — that you cannot hide yourselves from God.

When the eye of parental tenderness and affection is not upon you, the Eye of God is upon you. You may deceive your parents, but you cannot deceive your God. If you are idle and vicious, profane and irreligious, nay, if one evil thought is admitted, one wicked word uttered, one sinful action performed, HE as surely beholds it, as if you could discern HIM without you, or be conscious to HIS presence within you. All your thoughts and words and actions are open before HIM.

Never indulge any thought, then, you would be unwilling HE should know. Never speak any word you would be unwilling HE should hear. Never perform any action you would be unwilling HE should witness. When tempted to do wrong, call up to mind the words of the text, ‘Thou GOD seest me,’ to fortify your minds and keep you from sin. Be virtuous and good, and GOD, who sees you, will love and bless you.

My text is in itself a sermon. It is a lesson of instruction in four words. But, short as it is, if it has its proper influence upon us, it will effect all that religion is designed to effect.

Carry it home with you, my hearers. Preach it to yourselves here and every where; in your business and recreations; in your intercourse with others and in your solitary communion with your own hearts; and in that day when the secrets of all hearts are revealed, may it be manifest that it has not been preached in vain!

## S E R M O N X V I I I .

## THE DEVOUT SPIRIT ALWAYS WITH GOD.

Psalms cxxxix. 18. — WHEN I AWAKE I AM STILL WITH THEE.

IN this chapter the Psalmist, with great sublimity and beauty of language, describes the omnipresence and omniscience of God. ‘O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and uprising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Whither shall I go from Thy spirit, or flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me; the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee.’ ‘Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thy hand upon me. Thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my

ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but Thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.'

The transition from the omnipresence and omniscience, to the care and kindness of God, is natural, and the Psalmist does not fail to make it. 'How precious, also, are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.'

*When I awake, I am still with thee.'*

The language of the text is the language of devotion;—of a soul alive to its dependence upon God, and rejoicing in a sense of His presence. It is the language of trust and reliance; of security and humble confidence. It is the language of one who is conscious of his own nearness to God, whilst he is sensible that God is near. 'When I awake, I am still with thee.' Thy presence ever surrounds me. Thy watchful care is ever extended over me. 'By day Thou dost uphold my steps.' 'By night Thou dost watch around my bed. Thou encompassed my path, and my lying down.' I sleep, and Thou dost guard my defenceless head. I awake, and lo! Thou art still with me. I inhale Thy air, I am cheered by the pleasant light and genial influence of Thy sun. I rejoice again to be, and to be with my Father,—my God.

Such is the language of the text. It is the language of every pious mind. My hearers, is it *ours*? The presence of God at all times surrounds us. Are we sensible of it?—do we rejoice in it? The Providence of God is ever exercised for our

protection and comfort. Do we realize it? Are we grateful for it?

We 'go forth to our work, and our labor, till the evening.' We return to rest in the bosom of our family.

Our neighbor goes forth like ourselves, high in health, elate with hope; but he returns not, like ourselves, to partake of the joys of home. A fatal accident occurs,—sudden, unforeseen,—and if he returns at all, he returns but to die. The snares of death are always laid. The emissaries of death are ever in ambush. Our neighbor has been insnared and is the victim. *We* have escaped. My hearers, we escape every day,—every moment. Our whole life is but an escape from the innumerable dangers which surround us.

At the end of every day's journey, do we erect a monument to the mercy of God? At the close of every day, do we surround the family altar, and offer the sacrifice of praise?

Heads of families! I appeal to you. Do you call your family together, and unite with them in thanksgiving? Is there an altar in your house inscribed with the name of Jehovah? Every evening is the wood laid, and the fire kindled, for the evening sacrifice?

My hearers of every description! I appeal to you. Does the retirement of the closet,—the chamber,—witness your evening devotions? Does no day close upon you unsanctified by prayer? Is there an altar in your *hearts*, and is the flame always alive and burning?

By *night*, as well as by day, we are protected by the watchful providence of God. We commit ourselves to sleep, and sleep securely; for HE, who 'never slumbers or sleeps,' has watched over us, and shielded us from harm.

Our neighbor, like ourselves, has resigned himself to sleep, but not, like us, to awake and inhale the breath of the morning, and see the light, and feel the influence of the sun! *His* eyes are closed in a long, long night. He sleeps the sleep of death. The arrow is ever flying by night; the pestilence is ever walking in darkness. Our neighbor has become the victim. *We* have escaped. Do we open our eyes to raise them in devout thankfulness to heaven? Do we lift our voices to send them up in songs of praise? At the *beginning* of every day do we surround the family altar and offer the morning sacrifice?

Heads of families! I again appeal to you. Do you call your families together and remind them of God's goodness, and unite with them in thanksgiving?

Have not your families shared with you in the care of a watchful Providence? Did you separate, uncertain what would be the issue of a night? Do you meet again to reciprocate the salutations of a new day, and do you not meet to recognize and acknowledge the goodness and mercy that has preserved and blessed you?

My hearers of every description! I appeal to you. Does the retirement of the morning witness your

devotions? Does no day dawn upon you unsanctified by prayer? Do you never venture forth to encounter the hazards that beset your path, without seeking the protection and guidance of an Almighty Protector, and an unerring Guide?

When we look forward at the commencement of a new day, all is uncertainty. It is a sealed book, whose pages God only can unfold.

It may be full of the most important and interesting events to us. It may decide our fortunes for time. It may fix our fate through eternity.

How much may be enjoyed, and ah, how much may be suffered, in a single day! How many bright prospects may be darkened! How many fond expectations disappointed; how many affectionate attachments dissolved! How many blossoms of hope may be withered; how many buds of promise may be closed forever in this world!

A single day has opened a source of joy, or of sorrow, which has continued its streams through life. In one hour, a man has incurred a disgrace which time could never wipe off. In one moment, the thread of life has been broken, and the transition into eternity made.

How many have entered on a new day with their cup overflowing, and their prospects of futurity clear and unclouded. How often, ere the evening, have the notes of joy been exchanged for the voice of lamentation, and 'the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness!'

Who is there, then, among us, so thoughtless, so unwise, as to enter on the duties, the temptations, the difficulties and dangers of a day, without commending himself to God; imploring his protection, assistance, and guidance? Who is there that will not feel himself compelled by every motive of duty, and of interest, to adopt and practise the resolution of the Psalmist, ‘My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord. In the morning will I direct my prayer unto THEE, and will look up.’

*When I awake, I am still with THEE.*

The little child reposes in perfect security on the bosom of its parent. It awakes; looks up; finds itself still guarded by a parent’s eye; still upheld by a parent’s arm; and quietly resigns itself to sleep again.

To us, weak and defenceless creatures, that parent’s eye, is the eye of God. That parent’s arm, is the arm of God. ‘We look up, and find ourselves still with HIM.’

And are we *really* with HIM? Are we with HIM in spirit, — in truth?

God may be with us, our Protector; our Benefactor; and we may be far from HIM. ‘The wicked are far from God.’

‘HE maketh his sun to shine, and His rain to descend’ on the evil and the good; on the thankful and the unthankful; but HE is only nigh, in His favor and love, to those who fear HIM, and ‘call upon HIM in truth.’ We may share in His protection, and be excluded from His favor. — Excluded from

His favor! My hearers, in His favor is life; and His 'loving-kindness is better than life.' Without it, all is darkness and despair. Destitute of the favor of God, we cannot be truly happy; and we cannot possess that favor, if our hearts are not with HIM.

Let us give HIM our hearts. HE vouchsafes to ask for them. And with how much tenderness!

I repeat. Let us give HIM our hearts. Then, in the pilgrimage of life, we shall be secure of the protection and favor of God; and though we must sleep, — and may soon sleep, — the sleep of death, yet WHEN WE AWAKE, WE SHALL BE STILL WITH HIM.

## SERMON XIX.

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DAVID THE KING AND PSALMIST OF ISRAEL.

Samuel i. 13, 14. — A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

THESE words, as you may remember, refer to David, the King and Psalmist of Israel.

It is of him that it was said that he was 'a man after God's own heart.'

They are often quoted. Sometimes in testimony of the excellence of David's character; and as an excitement to the cultivation of those dispositions which are supposed to have given him favor in the sight of God.

Sometimes this passage is quoted for a very different purpose. It has furnished a weapon for infidelity to assail the truth of revelation. The apparent inconsistency between some portions of the conduct of David, and the declaration in the text, has been pointed out, and dwelt upon with no little satisfaction. The complicated guilt of David has been brought up to view in all its enormity; and the question emphatically asked, "Is *this* the man after God's own heart? Can he

who was guilty of such atrocious wickedness, have been regarded with complacency by Infinite Purity and Holiness? Did not the blood of Uriah 'cry from the ground,' and did not the cry come up into the ears of the Eternal? Vengeance indeed slept, and did not pour out the vials of its wrath upon the devoted head of the offender, but can it be believed, that not mercy only, but love, came in to take its place?"

There are no weapons used by infidelity, of whatever nature, that may not be blunted and rendered harmless by truth and reason.

If an answer has not been given to these inquiries, it is because no attention has been paid to the time and the circumstances in which the words of the text were used. It was long before the period to which an allusion has just been made, that David was styled, in relation to God, '*a man after His own heart.*' It was when he dwelt in simplicity and humble obscurity in Bethlehem; the keeper of his father's sheep. It was while he was yet a youth, in the house of his parents, unexposed to the dangers of prosperity, and the seductions of power.

In his external appearance, as it is described in the simple language of Scripture, he was 'ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to,' and we have reason to think that there was a correspondence with this, in the features of his mind.

If we looked no further, then, for a solution of

this difficulty, we might find it here. It might be said of David in the sheepcote, if not of David on the throne, that he was 'a man after God's own heart.' But an attention to the occasion on which these words were used will furnish a satisfactory explanation of them.

They do not refer to the private virtues of David, but to his public conduct. They stand in opposition to the character of Saul, who is described as acting 'foolishly,' and who was deprived of his kingdom for his disobedience to the commandment of God. 'But now,' said the prophet to him, 'thy kingdom shall not continue. The LORD hath sought Him a man after his own heart,' or, as it may be rendered, 'who will perform His will,' — 'and the LORD hath commanded *him* to be captain over this people; because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.'

Saul was rejected because 'he did not perform the will of God,' as king of Israel. David was chosen, or was 'a man after God's own heart,' because he *would* perform that will.

And he did so. He maintained a strict adherence to the civil and religious laws of his country; did not permit idolatry; and in all his public, official conduct, acted in accordance with the mind and will of God, and was thus a man after His own heart.

In reference to his private, or personal moral conduct, the words are never used. They are used only in reference to his conduct as a king; to his

moral fitness to carry into effect the peculiar purposes of Providence in regard to the Jewish people.

Having said thus much in vindication of the text, let the moral character of David have been what it might, it is proper for me to remind you, that, great and aggravated as were his transgressions, they were expiated by his subsequent repentance and holiness.

He had sinned dreadfully; but he was dreadfully punished; and was deeply penitent. His whole life afterwards was little else than a series of troubles; and, as far as we can judge, was a life of penitential sorrow and humiliation. He went 'mourning all the day long,' and 'watered his couch with his tears.'

His penitence, and his confident reliance upon the goodness and mercy of God, are the prominent and most excellent parts of his character. They appear in almost every page of his admirable writings.

His psalms are the breathings of a truly contrite heart, and have furnished language for contrition, and solace for affliction, in almost every age. David, thankful for God's goodness and mercy; David, pouring out his soul in the noblest strains of poetry and devotion that have ever been employed to raise the thoughts of the religious, and carry them up to God, is a very different man from the David who, in the beautiful language of Nathan's parable, had taken away the lamb which the poor man had nourished up; and who added the guilt of murder to his other crimes. He had awakened to a

full consciousness of his guilt, and the tears of repentance had washed it away. He might now be regarded with approbation and favor. As the Psalmist of Israel, he is holy. He who finds his heart kindled into the warmth and fervor of piety as he reads the Psalms, feels that their author is holy; that it is from the 'abundance of the heart that the heart has indited.'

In the passage we have been considering, we have an instance, — and such instances are of frequent occurrence, — of a single, isolated text presenting difficulties which an attention to the context, and the time and circumstances with which it was connected, would entirely remove.

The selection of David to be king of Israel, and the rejection of the house of Saul, are a striking illustration of the importance of obedience to the commands of God. — 'Behold to obey is better than sacrifice. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment of the Lord, which He commanded thee, HE hath also rejected thee from being king.'

The fall and the penitence of David, are alike instructive to us, — the danger of prosperity and elevation, and the efficacy of repentance. In the faithful admonition of the prophet to the king, we are reminded that as no such messenger will come to us as came to him, we have *within* us a monitor which, if it be not stifled or seared, will, on every occasion, tell us honestly 'Thou art the man!' To this monitor, enlightened as it should be, by the

word of God, — let us at all times listen; and may God give us grace to attend to its warning voice; so that if we have wandered, we may be recalled to the path of duty, and be reconciled through repentance, and the mediation of Jesus Christ, to the mercy of God.

## S E R M O N X X .

## THE HIDDEN LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN.

Colossians iii. 3. — YOUR LIFE IS HID.

THE hidden life of a Christian is his spiritual life; the life in which he is devoted to GOD; to the purposes of heaven and eternity. It is the same which, in some parts of Scripture, is called 'eternal,' for it survives the animal life, and, with the immortal spirit, retains its vitality forever. Like the animal life, it is the same principle in its infancy and its maturity; but, unlike that, its infancy is on earth, and its maturity in heaven.

Thus, the spiritual life is eternal life commenced; and eternal life is the spiritual life perfected.

1. It is hidden because its existence is in the heart. The springs by which it is moved, the principles and motives by which it is animated, are concealed from view;—from the view of all but HIM in whom it is said to be hidden; who is its source, and the only witness of its sincerity.

Further. It is hidden, because the means by which it is chiefly sustained and invigorated are concealed from view. The objects on which it fixes its atten-

tion, and from which it draws its nourishment, are invisible. GOD the Author of the spiritual life,—the Source of its strength and happiness, is invisible. Faith fixes its view upon HIM, and discerns his perfections; but ‘mortal eye hath not seen, nor can see HIM.’ CHRIST, ‘the Author and finisher of its faith,’ is invisible. THE HOLY SPIRIT, that Divine Influence which operates on the heart, is invisible. The influence is felt, but is visible only in the effects. *Angels*, and *the spirits of the just made perfect*, after whose intercourse it aspires; the good, whom it knew, and loved and honored on earth, but who live on earth only in the remembrance, are invisible; and the hope of a reunion is one of the instruments by which the spiritual life is sustained. *Heaven*, the end of its wishes, the fruition of its hopes, is invisible. ‘Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath the heart of man conceived, the joys which God hath prepared for them that love HIM.’

*The acts and exercises, by which the spiritual life is maintained*, are concealed from view. The self-communion by which the Christian enters into the secret chambers of the heart; meditation, by which he contemplates earth and heaven,—‘the things that are seen, and the things that are not seen;’ reading, the study of that word whose ‘entrance giveth life;’ prayer, without which the principle of holiness cannot subsist; without which the christian life must languish and die. All these are secret, hidden from public observation, and in the use of these, the life of a Christian is a hidden life.

Secret and hidden, too, are the struggles which a Christian has when inclination is opposed to duty; the conflict in which he is perpetually engaged with the world and sin.

Further. The spiritual life may be said to be 'hidden' even when it is visible, because it is unostentatious and unobtrusive. It is 'clothed with humility,' seeks not to attract notice, but rather shuns it; does not desire 'to be seen of men,' except in as far as its influence may be useful; and is satisfied, if it is only seen of its God.

It is in these respects, — among others, — that the spiritual life is hidden, viz., Its existence is in the heart from which 'are the issues of life.' The means by which it is sustained, the objects of its devout contemplation, and the exercises in which it engages, are concealed and *hidden*. It is unostentatious; and rather retires from public observation than courts it. It is hidden, in some sense, as it pursues its even course, fulfilling in silence its appropriate duties; diffusing around it the tranquillity and peace which itself enjoys. It is in some sense hidden, as in the parent or child, the brother or sister, the wife or mother, in the retirement of domestic life, it is faithful to the calls of duty, with no other motive than the approbation of conscience and of God. And yet it is not hidden, for there are those who mark it, and pay it the homage which is due to its modest worth. There are hearts which feel its value, and yield it the tribute of warm affection. The circle in which its labors of love

and duty are performed, which it has enlightened, and cheered, and made better, by its influence, acknowledges and blesses that influence as it enjoys its benefits.

Lastly. In the hour of dissolution, — when death is performing its work, — its sad work, — of destruction, and is obtaining the victory over the animal life, — the frail and mortal body, — the spiritual life is hidden.

It may be hidden by the veil which death is drawing over the senses, and if not, the world is shut out, and comes not in to disturb ‘the holy quiet that reigns within.’ But yet, even here, it is not hidden. There are those who have gathered round the bed of death, as they smoothed the bed of sickness, and whose privilege it is to behold the patience and pious resignation of the meek spirit that bows to drink the cup which may not pass; to witness the triumph of life over death; of the undying soul welcoming the ‘king of terrors’ as a messenger of peace; and, as heaven opens on its view, adopting the exulting exclamation of the apostle, ‘O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’ — And now, indeed, it is hidden. It is invisible as the God whom it adored, and with whom it has gone to dwell. It is invisible as the Saviour whom it loved and followed. It is invisible as that company of the blessed to whose intercourse it had often looked forward with ardent expectation. It is invisible as the heaven on which the eye of its faith had long been fixed, and of the

fulness of whose joy it now partakes. 'A cloud has received it out of sight.' It can never live on *earth* again, but in the memory of those who loved it here, and in the hearts and lives of those who were blessed and benefited by its labors, its example and its prayers. There may it ever live, enjoying on earth and in heaven the same recompense of reward!

## SERMON XXI.

## A GOOD MAN.

## A CHARACTER.\*

[Concluding part of a Sermon.]

Acts ii. 24. — BARNABAS WAS A GOOD MAN.

IN the early history of Christianity we have many illustrations, beside the one I have now described to you, of its benign influence in the lives of its professors.

They furnish a powerful attestation to its truth in the exhibition they give of its efficacy.

The tree is known by its fruit; and no better evidence can be desired of the truth of our religion than is found in its effects where it has been sincerely and heartily received. When it has stamped upon the character the image of its own loveliness, they must be blind, indeed, who do not perceive that the portraiture is divine.

A character so excellent as that of him whom my text commemorates, is comparatively rare; but there are those, in all times, whose privilege it is to pos-

\* Isaac Smith, A. M.

sess much of that fulness of the Holy Ghost, and of faith, which he enjoyed.

They seem to have been given, that there might not be wanting, in any period, an exhibition of the best influences of Christian truth.

They are lights in the world, burning with a pure and steady flame, and diffusing around them the mild lustre of Christian virtue. They are the salt of the earth, preserving in its purity 'the faith once delivered to the saints,' amidst the corruptions of a sinful world. We have seen them reflecting the light of their example in every condition of life.

I should do violence to my own feelings, and injustice to the living and the dead, if I did not say that, in my belief, it has been our privilege, for a series of years, to mingle our prayers, in this place, with the prayers of as pure and devout a spirit as, since the days of the apostles, has breathed a prayer to heaven.

I have known many good men. I have never known a better man than that revered and beloved servant of God who was accustomed to worship with us here, but has now gone to worship with the spirits of the just made perfect.

It is due to him as a minister of religion; it is due to him as having often officiated at this altar; it is due to him as one of the purest and best of beings; that the praise should be spoken now which his modesty would have shrunk from hearing, but which, even in his humility, he was constantly uttering in the emphatic language of a spotless life.

I have been intimately conversant with him for many years, and more especially since he became a member of this parish; and at no time have I seen in him a deviation, in word or action, from that strict propriety of conduct which became the sacred office.

There was a singleness of heart; a refinement and delicacy of sentiment; a tenderness and gentleness of spirit; a beautiful simplicity and uniformity of deportment, which conciliated the regard of all who knew him; and rendered him an object of peculiar interest and affection to those who enjoyed his friendship.

With a mind enriched by reading and observation, the study of books and of men, his conversation was in a high degree entertaining and instructive.

Retaining to the last much of his youthful feelings, and adapting himself most readily,—as he delighted to do,—to the feelings of the young, he did not fail to find his way to their hearts.

The experience of my own domestic circle can testify how much he endeared himself by these traits of character to which I have referred; how fondly his visits were welcomed, and how sincere was the regret when they were terminated.

In these days of theological contention, when Christians, in their zeal for their systems, so often lose the spirit of religion, he pursued his peaceful way; expressing, indeed, now and then, as far as his gentle spirit would allow, his disapprobation of bigotry and uncharitableness, but breathing kindness and good-will to all.

In early life, after having held an important office in our university, he went abroad, and was led by circumstances to take the charge of a small congregation at Sidmouth, in England; where he was much beloved, and his intercourse sought and valued by the neighboring clergy of all denominations, some of whom were among the most eminent men of their day, and by the most respectable among the laity.

He was in the vicinity of a considerable city; and the town in which he lived was a watering-place, and much frequented.

He is still remembered there by the few who remain, after the lapse of half a century, with lively and affectionate interest.

On his return to his native country, he received a second appointment at the college, and was afterwards, successively, the head of an ancient seminary of learning, and the minister at the alms-house in this city.

He lived without reproach, honored and beloved. Calumny had not breathed upon his reputation, but all united in the testimony that 'in him there was no guile.'

His last days were soothed by the unwearied kindness of those to whom he was most nearly related, and who deemed it a privilege to minister to his comfort; to watch over him in the season of his decay, to smooth his dying pillow, and close his eyes in death.

But more dear to him than the tender assiduities

of affection were the sustaining promises and hopes of religion.

When I quoted to him some of those delightful passages which, for so many ages, have calmed the apprehensions and mingled with the aspirations of the devout spirit, with much emphasis he would say, 'They are very precious.' 'There are a thousand such.' 'The Bible is full of them.'

It was my privilege to hold with him the last conversation he was permitted to hold on earth, and to witness, as indeed I had often done, 'with what composure a Christian can die.'

It had been said of him long since, by one who knew him well, — and it was hardly extravagant to say so, — that he wanted 'only wings, to ascend to heaven.'

His disembodied spirit has been borne up, on angels' wings, to that blessed abode, and may now soar unfettered towards the Source of its blessedness, and fly unrestrained on its errands of love and mercy.

May the contemplation of the character of this good man excite in us, with whom he has sustained so near a connection, a holy emulation.

Whilst we look up, by faith, to mark his ascending flight, may his spirit, as did that of the prophet on Elisha, descend and rest upon us!

## SERMON XXII.

THE BENEDICTION OF THE SAVIOUR ON A WOMAN OF JUDEA ; AND A TRIBUTE TO WOMAN'S WORTHINESS.

Matthew xxvi. 13. — WHERESOEVER THIS GOSPEL SHALL BE PREACHED IN THE WHOLE WORLD, THERE SHALL ALSO THIS WHICH THIS WOMAN HAS DONE, BE TOLD AS A MEMORIAL OF HER.

THE history of the transaction referred to in the text, as recorded in the Gospels, is briefly this :

As Jesus sat at meat in a house at Bethany, there came a woman with an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and in token of her reverence and affection, — a mode of expressing it common at the time, — poured it upon his head ; and anointed his feet with the ointment. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them away with the hair of her head.

Some of the guests, — among them the traitor disciple who afterwards, for a paltry consideration, betrayed his Master, — were offended at what appeared to them an extravagance, saying, ‘ Why was this waste of the ointment made ? It might have been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor.’ Jesus, ever considerate and kind,

vindicated her conduct. 'Why trouble ye the woman? She hath wrought a good work on me. The poor ye have always with you, and when ye will, ye can do them good. But me ye have not alway. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall this which this woman has done, be told as a memorial of her.'

This day, my hearers, is this Scripture fulfilled in our ears. It will be fulfilled in the ears of unnumbered generations in distant ages. The guest, to whom this honor was done, was the Son of God. The gospel which has recorded it, is the gospel of God; and as surely as this gospel 'shall have free course,' and be preached throughout the world, so surely shall this prophetic declaration be verified,—so surely shall 'this which this woman hath done, be told as a memorial of her.'

Nor is this all. Her record is on high. 'This that she hath done,' is written in 'the book of God's remembrance;' and when the judgment is set, and the books are opened before the throne of God, this deed that she hath done will be told of her before an assembled universe; and the guest to whom her humble tribute of affection and gratitude was paid at an obscure house in a small village of Judea, now seated at the right hand of the throne, will again pronounce a benediction upon her.

My hearers, I have related to you an instance of honorable conduct in a woman of Judea. It is but an exhibition of the character of her sex. It is but

one of innumerable instances of conduct which confer honor on woman, recorded in the annals of humanity.

It was for that sex, fervently and unwaveringly, to manifest their reverence and affection for the Saviour of mankind through the whole of his life on earth. No dangers affrighted them. No difficulties discouraged them.

It was in his adversity, indeed, that their affection was most strikingly and emphatically manifested. When his path was darkest, they did not fear to tread in it. When the storm raged most violently, they did not shrink from exposing their unsheltered heads to the tempest.

One, only, of his disciples returned from flight, to be with him in the closing scene of life. And how richly was he repaid in receiving the sacred trust bequeathed by filial piety in words that should sink deep into the heart of every child! '*Behold thy mother!*'

But, when his faint-hearted disciples forsook him and fled, when they were 'scattered every one to his own,' as Jesus had predicted, women followed him, weeping, to the place of crucifixion. Nor was this all. As they were found at the cross, so, with a 'love stronger than death,' they were found, also, 'very early in the morning at the sepulchre, with spices and ointments to embalm him.'

In all times ; in savage and in civilized society ; the same noble, generous, humane, self-sacrificing

qualities have been manifested by them. In active duty, as well as in passive suffering, there is a patience and fortitude, a resolution and energy, — deriving strength from pressure, — for which we look in vain in the stronger sex.

I have sometimes heard that sex speak slightly of woman. If they are sincere, I pity them. Do they forget the mother who nursed their infancy, and watched over them in health and sickness, by day and night, with a love and care which a mother only could know? Or the sister, whose pure and simple affection contributes so much to render home attractive and delightful; or the holy love of a daughter in the care of aged, helpless parents; or the faithful constancy and attachment of a wife amidst the broken fortunes, broken health, and broken reputation of her husband; sustaining those arms that, perhaps, had been raised to smite her, and moistening the parched lips that had been opened to curse her?

Wherever woman is found, she is an angel of mercy; following the kind, sympathizing impulses of her nature, to the shame, too often, of the cold, calculating charity of man.

It is worthy of notice that the only four pecuniary bequests to this parish, of which I have information, are the testimonials of female piety. One of them, to the poor, from her whom all remember as distinguished for all that is dignified and lovely in the female character.\* Another from

\* Mrs. Eliot.

that venerated woman whose recent death has left us poorer than her devise can compensate, by the loss of her example.

It is by the request of the standing committee of the parish, that I announce to-day, in public, what has already been privately circulated, that Mrs. Elizabeth Derby, in addition to numerous other benefactions, has bequeathed to the Sunday School connected with the parish, seven hundred dollars, the interest to be appropriated towards the support of the school; seven hundred dollars, the interest to be devoted to the relief of the aged poor in the parish; and five thousand dollars, the interest to be expended in such a manner as the exigencies of the parish may demand.

The ancestors of Mrs. Derby were members of the parish at its formation. Here her fathers worshipped. Here she was herself consecrated to God in baptism, administered by Mayhew, who stands in the foremost rank among the departed ministers of our country. Here, during the ministry of the judicious and benevolent Howard, she first fulfilled her baptismal obligation to commemorate her Saviour; and here, when the Providence of God permitted, she stately and devoutly paid her vows in the morning and evening service.

She 'loved the habitation of God's house.' She loved *this* house. It was associated with her dearest recollections, and she had no wish to wander from it. Here, and here only, on the returning Sabbath, she felt it her duty and her privilege to

unite with her fellow Christians in Christian worship.

Nor was her fidelity to duty confined to a regular and devout observance of the institutions of religion. It pervaded her whole life, and was exhibited in all her conduct.

As a wife, how affectionate and devoted! 'The heart of her husband did safely trust in her.' Deprived of his sight during a great part of the last years of his life, her tenderness and watchful care were peculiarly needful to him; and they were faithfully and assiduously bestowed. She was his constant companion, watching him, and guiding his footsteps; leaving him only, for brief periods, to perform acts of friendship or mercy. She strictly complied with the apostolic injunction to the married of her sex, to be 'keepers at home.'

When her husband was translated to a world where the inhabitant 'shall not say, I am sick,' she had leisure for more active and diffusive beneficence, and did not fail to improve it. Her ample fortune enabled her to gratify the wishes of her heart in benefactions to the poor. She gave only what belonged to her, and what, therefore, she had a right to give. She gave judiciously, and, therefore, not indiscriminately nor without investigation.

As far as her attention to domestic duties, — which she never neglected, — would permit, she rendered her personal services to such of our public charitable institutions as it was appropriate for her

thus to aid. She was in the government of one of the most useful and interesting of them for several years; and, from her good judgment and experience, her coöperation and counsel were much valued.

This excellent woman has passed away. She can no longer 'go about doing good.' She can no longer join with us in worship in this house of our solemnities, which she loved so well. But she has gone to join with the blessed in the worship of 'a temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

Whilst we call up her virtues to remembrance, may her example of fidelity, hallowed as it now is by her death, be diligently followed out in our lives!

I have felt that it was demanded of me, in noticing so considerable a benefaction to us, to dwell thus much upon the character of our benefactress.

In the present flourishing state of the parish, there was no pressing demand for this legacy. But who can tell what shall be on the morrow? And, even now, there are important objects to which it may be usefully devoted. Respecting the mode of appropriation, I have no anxiety. I only desire, — and the experience of the past warrants me in expecting it, — that no difference of opinion on this subject, may interrupt our harmony; that this, which was designed as a blessing, may not prove a root of bitterness; that the minority will readily

yield to the majority, as, on all questions heretofore, they have done; and that we, and those who come after us, in all future time, — as it has been in the past, — may fully realize ‘how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.’

## SERMON XXIII.

## SUBMISSION.

Job i. 21.—THE LORD GAVE AND THE LORD HATH TAKEN AWAY.  
 BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD!

THE language of the text is not less the language of reason than of piety.

It recognizes God as the Author of our blessings; intimates His right to dispose of them as He pleases; and adores Him, both in His giving and taking away.

He who uttered these words is presented to us as an instance of accumulated sufferings; and as an example of patient acquiescence.

Three successive messengers, and in rapid succession, informed him of the loss of his property; but it was not till the fourth came, and mingled in his cup the bitterest ingredient, bringing him the tidings of the death of his children, that he gave vent to his feelings.

He then 'opened his mouth;' but not to complain. 'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.'

*The Lord gave.* He does not forget, in the midst of his sorrows, to acknowledge the goodness

of GOD in having bestowed the blessings he had lost.

All his happiness in the enjoyment of them, all his anticipations of comfort in their continued possession, we may suppose came up to his mind, and furnished a subject of grateful recollection.

‘If I have had larger possessions than all the men of the East; if I have been the father of a numerous family; the object of respect and deference to the aged and to the young; if the voice of health and joy has been heard in my dwelling, and, till now, no cloud has come over to darken the sun of my prosperity, it is GOD who has made me thus to differ from others; and though I am now stripped of all, I will not forget His past goodness, nor refuse to adore it.’

*The Lord hath taken away.*

In recognizing GOD as the source of his blessings, it was his privilege and comfort to discern the same Being as the author of his calamities. The Sabeans and the Chaldeans had carried away his flocks; fire had burnt up his substance; and a wind from the wilderness had overthrown the house in which his children were assembled, and had destroyed them all. Yet he looked not to the enemy, the fire, or the tempest as the source of his misfortunes. He considered these as but instruments in the hands of Him ‘whose kingdom ruleth over all,’ and ascending from second causes to the first Cause of all things, devoutly exclaimed ‘the Lord hath taken away!’

‘The same hand which bestowed my blessings hath removed them. I rejoice that I am not obliged to ascribe to chance or accident the evils that have befallen me. They have the same origin with my mercies. They are the appointments of Infinite Wisdom. They come from God. *Blessed be the name of the Lord.*’

It was no ordinary effort to maintain his firmness under the pressure of sudden and aggravated calamity. It was a great effort to bend with submission to the stroke. But how sublime the spectacle of this good man lifting his eyes to heaven in devout *thankfulness*, and *blessing* the hand that corrected him. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

‘I bless God,’—so we may interpret this language,—‘for what I have possessed, and that I possessed it so long. I bless God that the experience of His past goodness affords me the fullest evidence that He is still good to me; and that it is in mercy He afflicts me. I bless God that, whilst I am stript of every earthly comfort, I am allowed to repose myself on Him, and to find in Him a supply for my loss. I bless God,’—may we not suppose that *he*,—even though a bereaved father,—could say, ‘I bless God for the lesson He is giving me in this stroke, of the frailty and instability of my possessions.’

Such was the spirit of the patriarch whose pious ejaculation has been the guide of our reflections. He could not only be patient, but resigned, not only resigned, but thankful. Nor was his patience, his

submission, the result of insensibility. If he bore his trials like a saint, he felt as a man. The feelings of nature are continually bursting forth through the whole of the book which contains his history, and they are restrained and regulated by pious trust.

Through a succession of many ages has this example descended to be the pattern and the guide of all who are in trouble. It becomes us to copy, if we may not reach it.

Affliction now, as then, is the lot of man. However fair and bright may be the visions of childhood and youth, they must vanish before the sober and sad realities of mature age.

God has given us kind affections; they are the source of the purest and highest enjoyment; but, sooner or later, they are destined to be the source of the bitterest anguish.

The objects on which they are placed prove unworthy of them; or they are taken away, and the heart must bleed.

But I will not enlarge. I dare not trust myself on this theme. I have no desire to excite your feelings by indulging my own.

If I have sympathized with you in your seasons of trouble, so I am assured of *your* sympathy in my own affliction.

Having now a deeper fellow-feeling, than ever, of your sorrow, I may be better able to minister to your consolation. Experiencing, as I humbly trust I do, the supports of that religion which it is my

office to teach, I may, with the more confidence, present to you those comforts with which, — I would humbly say, — ‘I myself am comforted of God.’

My confidence in the wisdom and rectitude of the Divine administration, is unshaken.

My belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and in the promises of his gospel, is the anchor of my hope, and the source of my consolation.

I have a firm conviction that ‘it is good to be afflicted.’ ‘Whom the Lord loveth, HE chasteneth.’ Not for his pleasure, but for our profit; that we may be partakers of His holiness.

Welcome, then, chastening, if thou art a proof of the love of my God! Welcome thou kind, benevolent messenger of a most kind and benevolent Parent! Though thy countenance be frowning, thy message is peaceful. Though thou comest to interrupt my security, and disturb my peace, thou art the harbinger, — if meekly received, and rightly used, — of more lasting security; of uninterrupted and eternal joy.

I am willing to leave myself in the hands of God; assured that my best interests are safe in His hands; that He will not afflict me more than is needful for me; and trusting that he will give me grace, in every bereavement, to say, ‘THE LORD GAVE AND THE LORD HATH TAKEN AWAY. BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD!’

·S E R M O N XXIV.

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THE DIVINE DISPENSATIONS NOT TO BE QUESTIONED,  
BUT SUBMITTED TO AND IMPROVED.\*

Job ix. 12. — BEHOLD, HE TAKETH AWAY, AND WHO CAN HINDER HIM?

WERE I allowed to follow the impulse of my *feelings*, I would banish from this place all associations that are sad and gloomy, and cause it ever to resound with the notes of joy.

I would come hither to speak only of scenes of unmixed happiness; and to call for a tribute of grateful praise.

But He who doeth His pleasure in heaven and on earth, and who is infinitely wise and good, has ordered otherwise. The providence of God forbids it.

In the cup of life there are many bitter ingredients.

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\* There is an allusion in this sermon to a distressing catastrophe which had just taken place.

A young lady, the wife of one parishioner, and daughter of another, in a storm at sea, was swept from the vessel by the winds into the ocean, and perished in the sight of her agonized husband, who was unable to make an effort for her rescue.

From the day we are born, till the day we die, there is an invariable mixture of joy and sorrow. Blessing and trials, prosperity and adversity, pleasure and pain, succeed each other as surely, though not as regularly, as the return of day and night, summer and winter; and, like the confines of day and night, summer and winter, insensibly slide into each other. God hath joined them, and we cannot put them assunder.

I look round upon this congregation, and my eye can scarcely rest upon a single family into which sorrow in some shape or other has not found admission.

I appeal to the experience of you all.

I behold many of you toiling, with unwearied diligence, for the riches, or the honors, or the enjoyments of the world.

I witness your ardor, your perseverance, your confidence.

I hear you laying your plans; boasting of their wisdom; declaring your assurance of their success; calculating your profits and emoluments.

Suddenly, a cloud appears which darkens your prospects; a tempest arises which sweeps away your hopes, and destroys your confidence.

Again, I behold you in the midst of your families; loving and beloved by them. I rejoice that your mountain appears to 'stand so strong;' and that there is no reason to believe 'it will soon be moved.' I come again and again; and the welcoming voice is the voice of gladness.

Sickness approaches, and damps your joy; or death unexpectedly enters, reverses the scene, and changes your joy into mourning.

The world is full of uncertainties. Its best satisfactions are neither substantial nor permanent. For a while we dream of happiness, but often awake and find it an illusion.

I have been accustomed, whilst I witnessed your afflictions, to do what I was able for their relief; and when you came hither to 'humble yourselves under the hand of Almighty God,' to tender you the consolations which His Word has provided for you.

Topics of consolation, at such times, are peculiarly grateful. Topics of a different character are harsh and unwelcome.

Nor will you do your minister the injustice to believe that he could readily turn his thoughts to other subjects under such circumstances as these.

It is for him to mingle closely in your domestic griefs, as well as joys; to witness 'the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick,' in the case of dying, or the expectation of absent friends; and to witness, too, the extinction of that hope, in the sad, overwhelming certainty, that they will never recover; and never, never, return again.

Called to witness, and to share in,—yes, largely to share in,—the grief of such scenes as these; whilst they weigh down his heart, they dwell in his mind, and must deeply tinge the current of thought, when he is preparing for the service of the sanctuary.

It is well that it is so. Such topics, whilst they bring consolation to the hearts of the mourners, are not without their use to all.

They serve to fortify the mind against the night of affliction which must descend upon every one.

They excite sympathetic emotions towards those to whom they are more particularly addressed.

They bring into closer union the members of a religious society, by the reflections on each other's condition which they occasion, and the feelings of sympathy they excite. They tend to awaken us to a sense of our own condition as dependent, mortal beings.

Having made these prefatory remarks, which I trust are not inappropriate or useless, I proceed to the more immediate subject of my discourse.

BEHOLD, HE TAKETH AWAY; AND WHO CAN HINDER HIM? WHO CAN SAY UNTO HIM, WHAT DOEST THOU?

Religion is not satisfied with directing our attention to second causes. It leads us above them to the GREAT FIRST CAUSE of all things.

It conducts us to that Infinite BEING who, from His exalted throne in the heavens, directs the affairs of this vast universe; who determines in His wisdom the succession of events; who discerns and adopts the fittest means to accomplish the best ends; who 'forms the light, and creates darkness;' 'who makes peace, and creates evil;' and who would always appear to us 'most wise in counsel,

and most excellent in working,' if our feeble understandings could comprehend the design and reason of His operations.

It conducts us to GOD; and presents Him to us under the mild aspect of a Father, always mindful of our happiness; and who has given us so many proofs of this in nature, providence, and grace, as to merit our entire confidence, and unreserved submission.

We have abundant need of the consolation which religion thus affords; and I know not any other source from whence light and comfort could be drawn amidst the evils of our condition on earth.

I see and feel that we are the heirs of sorrow. I find in the revelation which religion has made to me, of the being, perfections, and providence of GOD, the design and end of affliction.

I see and feel that there is much in the present state of things to perplex the understanding, as well as to wound the heart. I find in the revelation which religion has made to me another and better world, where my perplexities will be resolved, and my troubles cease.

I place my trust in the blessings of this life, and find them vain. I lean upon an arm of flesh, and it is 'a broken reed.' I turn to GOD; the GOD whom religion reveals to me. I lean upon the arm of GOD, and it does not fail me. Those whom I love and value,—and who might well be loved and valued,—are taken away from me. 'In the solitude of my soul' I turn to GOD, and find that if all

were taken, 'I am not alone, because the FATHER is with me.'

And in saying this, Christians, do I not speak the language of your hearts? If you are real Christians, I do.

I see you deprived of your health; stript of your substance; or bereft of your friends; and if I did not find a response in your hearts when I speak to you of the wisdom and goodness of GOD; of the consolations and hopes of the gospel of Christ; I should strive in vain to console you.

You have lost, — and if religion had no comfort for you, — irretrievably lost, — one of the nearest and dearest objects of your earthly affection. It is mournful indeed, — nay, it is bitter anguish, which may be felt, but which, if it were desirable, could not be described, — when, in the midst of our earthly happiness, death comes in to blast our hopes for earth, in regard to those who are dearest to us.

At such a moment, philosophy, — valuable as it is in itself, — has no effectual help for us.

It is in vain to tell us that grief is unavailing; that in time it will abate, and that at the longest its duration must be short. It is still more vain to tell us, in the language of ancient stoicism, that 'pain is no evil,' when we keenly feel that it is so. It is in vain to tell us to turn from our sorrows to amusements, when we could not if we would, and should abhor to do so, if we could.

Various and contradictory maxims may be urged upon us, and to all we must reply with the ancient sufferer, 'Miserable comforters are ye all.'

But it is not in vain to tell us to direct our thoughts to GOD; to make an oblation of our wills to HIM; to submit to sufferings which are the chastenings of a PARENT, whose designs are kindest when His dispensations are most severe; to drink of the bitter cup we would avoid, without reproaching the Hand which administered the distasteful, but salutary prescription; and to say, 'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because THOU didst it.'

There is too much disposition in mankind to disregard the Providence of GOD; to overlook His agency in the occurrences of life. Even in those events in which there is the most signal interposition of Providence, this disposition is apparent. In the restoration of health, how common is it to rest in subordinate agents, instead of going beyond them to HIM to whom the praise is chiefly due. 'It was the skill of the physician,' too often it is said, — 'the tender assiduity of friendship, or the peculiar excellence and efficacy of the means that were used.' 'Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?'

Indeed the skill of the physician, and the assiduity of friendship, and the means that were used, were but instruments in the hands of GOD. 'Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it.'

In the loss of friends, too; when the gourd under whose shade we had solaced ourselves is withered; how often do we hear deep, but unavailing regrets that a different course had not been adopted from

that which was actually pursued. 'Had I employed another physician; tried a certain remedy; removed my friend to the country; or retained him in town; he might still have been with me.'

If the course pursued, and the means that were used, were those which, to thy best judgment, appeared to be right; thou hast no cause to indulge the feelings of regret. It was the will of GOD, who cannot err, that thy friend should die. Yet he died but to live again. Was he prepared? he lives in heaven. Be thankful that the blessing was enjoyed. Be submissive now that it is, for a season, withdrawn. Gird up thy loins, and prepare to follow.

There is no time when we feel more sensibly our weakness and insufficiency, than when our earthly hopes are prostrated by the removal of those whom we love.

In vain has been all our solicitude and care; our precautions and our efforts vain. If the will of GOD has decreed it, nothing that we could do, will counteract His purpose. The creatures of His power are subject to His disposal. He who gave life, can take it away, and who can hinder HIM?

But if we feel our weakness and insufficiency; if we feel that our precautions are useless, and our efforts unavailing, against the Providence of GOD; the most thoughtless of us, — it may be presumed, — is never tempted, in the language of presumption and impiety, to say 'What doest Thou?'

'Behold, He taketh away, and who can hinder HIM?'

It was inevitable. We have done what we could to prevent it; to give stability and permanency to what is in its nature unstable and fleeting; to stay the flight of the spirit which God had summoned to Himself, and which was struggling to get loose from its mortal coil. But it was to no purpose. The word had gone forth, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return;' and that which was warm with life becomes cold in death.

It is the part of wisdom, as well as piety, to be 'still.' Our complaints would be as unavailing as our efforts to prevent had been fruitless.

It may be that the Providence is mysterious and inexplicable. A mother's care may have been withdrawn from young children, and that mother anxious and devoted. The stroke may have fallen thrice in the same family in a little time, and the days of youth and loveliness have been numbered.

'The way of God may have been in the sea.' The raging wind may have swept away, the stormy ocean may have swallowed up, some of the dearest objects of our love. We have seen them perish and our help was vain. Or we have waited their return; but 'the place which once knew them shall know them no more.' 'We looked for peace, but no good came.' 'Behold He taketh away, and who can hinder HIM.'

If we should be tempted, in the bitterness of grief, to ask 'What doest Thou?' the inquiry would come back upon us, 'Who art thou that repliest against God?' 'What hast thou that thou didst not receive?'

But if it does not become thee to murmur, it becomes thee to submit and adore; to be grateful for the consolation that is afforded thee in thy recollections and thy hopes; in the word of Him who came to bind up the broken-hearted, and to pour the oil of gladness into the wounded spirit.

Nor is this all. It becomes thee to open thy heart to the devout impressions which the affliction that is appointed thee is adapted to make; to gather instruction from the Providence of GOD; and be able to say with the ancient sufferer, 'It is good for me to be afflicted.'

'Whomsoever the Lord loveth He chasteneth, not for His pleasure, but for our profit; that we might be partakers of His holiness.'

What would become of us if our life were an unmingled portion of good; if our day were never darkened with the clouds of adversity? Should we not say with the apostle on the mount of transfiguration, 'It is good for us to be here;' and put far away from our thoughts what it would be so dreadful to realize? Should we not forget the value of our blessings; and be regardless of the FOUNTAIN whilst the streams were full? Strange as it is, we forget GOD because HE never forgets us. The very multitude of His blessings makes us unmindful of HIM; as the thick foliage of the spreading tree shuts out the light of that sun to which it owes its verdure and beauty.

It is not when the wind is fair, and the sails are filled with a prosperous gale, that the mariner is

found at his devotions, but when the storm is up and the sea rages, and the waves threaten to devour him.

Who is there that does not acknowledge that a blessing is enhanced by the fear of losing it, and that its value is never fully known till it is taken away?

When wearisome days and nights are appointed us, we learn to prize the blessing of health. When pinched with hunger and cold, we duly estimate the blessings of food and raiment.

It is, alas! when we are robbed of our friends, that we fully realize how much we are indebted to God for them; and how much we owe for what still remains to us.

Afflictions, then, are intended as the instruments of good to us. Afflictions which, by the grace of God, we have rightly improved, are real blessings. They come indeed with a frowning countenance, but they bear a message of peace. They come to mingle bitter ingredients in the cup of our enjoyment, but it is to prevent us from being intoxicated by the draught. They come to break asunder the ties which bind us to earth and earthly things, but it is to unite us more closely to heaven and God.

Whatever may come upon us, here is a shelter and refuge in which our spirit may find rest by reposing itself on the bosom of security and peace. Our FATHER is at the helm of the universe, directing all things for the good of all.

Let us then bend our neck to the yoke; and learn

wisdom from the things that we suffer. 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness;' the bitterness of losing what contributed so much to the happiness of life. But it may also know the sweetness of religious hope; of affections placed on higher objects; of mingling, by faith, the spirit that is on earth, with the spirit that is in heaven; of the anticipation of another meeting with those who deserved its love, in a world where 'there is no more death.'

My hearers, I cannot forbear to press upon you the admonition which God, in His Providence, has so forcibly and awfully addressed to you within the last few weeks. Whilst your feelings prompt you to sympathize with the afflicted, forget not that in youth, as well as in maturity and old age, you may be called away. 'As the fishes are taken in an evil net; and as the birds are caught in a snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time when it cometh suddenly upon them.' 'Man knoweth not his time.' 'He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down. He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.'

Death is ever watching at our side, eager to stop the current of life. It may come in the daytime, and arrest us amidst the calls of business. It may come in the night, and the eyes which had closed in security upon the world, may open in eternity. It may come and interrupt our festivities. It may come and find us at our devotions: and happy, — were it so, — if the voice of supplication be exchanged for the ceaseless voice of praise. It may come in

the quiet, gentle approaches of slow and wasting sickness; or, in the suddenness and severity of violent disease. It may come in the retired, peaceful scenes of domestic life; or it may come upon the boisterous ocean, in the whirlwind and the storm. It may come and find us in the bosom of our family; or far from home, 'by strangers honored, and by strangers mourned.'

Come as it will, may we be ready, by the blessing of GOD, to bid it welcome. Come as it will, may it find us watching, 'with our loins girded and our lamps burning.'

There is a voice in nature around us little less impressive than that which addresses us from the grave. It speaks in the fading, withering flowers, and in the falling leaf. Let us not fail to give it language. It addresses itself to our hearts, — 'WE ALL DO FADE AS A LEAF.'

## SERMON XXV.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED IN THE HOUSE OF  
MOURNING.

Eccles. vii. 2. — IT IS BETTER TO GO TO THE HOUSE OF MOURNING THAN  
TO THE HOUSE OF FEASTING.

THESE words, at first sight, appear strange and paradoxical.

By the constitution of our nature we are strongly attracted towards scenes and objects which are cheerful and pleasant, and have an equal repugnance to those which are sad and gloomy.

We prefer the 'garment of praise,' to 'the spirit of heaviness;' the house of mirth to that of sorrow and mourning.

How then can it be well for us to contemplate those objects which are so repugnant to the feelings and propensities of our nature?

Can the bed of pain, and sickness, and death; a family desolate; a husband, a wife, or a parent, bewailing the loss of all that was most dear; 'Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted because they are not;' can such objects as these, — so painful, so distressing, — be fit objects

for our contemplation; and not only so, but the best fitted for it?

It is even so. The author of the text has not presented to us a proposition apparently so strange, without giving his reason for it.

‘It is better,’ he says, ‘to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting, *for this is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to heart.*’

*The living will lay it to heart.*

It would be well, if, in fact, it *were* always so.

It would be well if the living, when they go to the house of mourning, would seriously reflect upon the occasion which carries them thither, and the intimate concern they have with it; and when they come away, would bring upon their hearts a deep impression of the truths they had been taught there.

It may be that they go to witness the keenness of parental disappointment in the early blight of a parent’s hopes. The infant that but just returns the smile of affection; or the little child that has learned to speak its wants, and to respond to the accents of tenderness, is the object of the funeral solemnities. Or a youth is to be borne to the grave; the grave of hopes, alas how fond, and yet how vain!

It may be that they go to witness the severance of the conjugal tie. The husband, or the wife, and perhaps in the early period of their union; and it may be, by a stroke as sudden as it is severe, laid low in death.

They go, in short, to behold the indiscriminate,

and unsparing ravages of the last enemy ; the fairest prospects darkened, and the most interesting and most useful lives terminated.

And how instructive is the scene ! How powerful the voice which speaks silently, but impressively, to the understanding and the heart.

Its first address is to those who have the deepest interest in the scene ; to the parent whose hopes are blighted ; to those who have lost the friends of their bosom, their associates in the duties and cares, the enjoyments and sorrows of life ; to those whose house, in the mournful and mysterious Providence of God, is itself the house of mourning.

Hard indeed is the lesson of mortality which is written in dust, so sacred, so dear.

Mournful, indeed, the voice which issues from the remains of what was once so lovely, and so much loved ! And who will lay it to heart, if they do not ?

Others may come to mix in a crowd ; to behold a show ; to pay a civil compliment to an afflicted family, and the last respect to a neighbor and acquaintance. But it is not so with them. They have a close and intimate connection with what is passing. A part of themselves, of what was bound to them by the closest ties, is taken away ; and it will be required of them, whilst they bow their souls in submission, to learn wisdom from 'the things which they suffer.'

They feel that all they most value is unsubstantial and vain, and they must learn to 'sit more

loosely,' to what they value here, and to lay a firmer hold on what is substantial and abiding.

In religion they will find a source of consolation under trials, however severe; and in GOD a substitute for every other friend. HE gives and takes away in mercy and kindness, and as much deserves our confidence, and love, and gratitude, in taking, as in giving. The time which HE appoints is the fittest. All the circumstances are such as it is best they should be; and if we gain instruction, and spiritual benefit, from our disappointment and suffering, we shall be more than repaid for all.

The season of affliction is a season peculiarly valuable. It is a season consecrated to reflection and prayer. When we have lost that which gave to life its highest charm, or was associated with all our ideas of earthly happiness, the world appears empty and unattractive. In our solitary state, 'whom have we in heaven but GOD; and who on earth do we desire beside HIM?' If we think and feel as we ought, we turn to HIM as our best, our only resource.

But the fire which does not melt, hardens; and in passing through the furnace of affliction, if the heart is not softened, and rendered more ductile to serious impressions, it becomes less alive to them; and the design of affliction is frustrated,—perverted.

Nor is it only for those who are most nearly and deeply interested, to learn the lessons that are taught in the house of mourning. It should be one

great purpose of those who go there, to have their hearts affected by the monitory instance of mortality which is presented to them. They should go with thoughtful minds. They should listen with deep attention to the silent preacher, which, in the Providence of God, is admonishing them of their frailty, and of the instability of their blessings. They should lift up their hearts in prayer that they may be impressed; and awakened to repentance and holiness. They should come away with thoughtful minds, and carry with them, into the quiet and the active scenes of life, into its business and its relaxations, the recollection of what they have seen and heard.

They have a deep concern in it; for what they have seen and heard is an exhibition and warning of what will soon happen to them.

That silent teacher has only taught them what they, in their turn, shall teach to others, in the silent language of death.

And can it be, that any are anxious to banish from their minds what concerns them so nearly, and to get rid of impressions,—if they have been made,—which are so important to their eternal welfare?

Can it be, that any will not seek to revive those impressions, and cherish them, and strive, by the grace of God, to render them influential on their conduct?

That ancient monarch was far wiser who commanded that he should be told every day, ‘Thou

art mortal.' It was a fact, and why should he not be told of it? It was an all-important fact, and why should he not be often told of it? It was a fact adapted to exert an influence on his daily conduct, and why should he not be reminded of it every day?

The young are taken. The middle-aged are taken. The old are taken. They who have little, and they who have much; the happy and the unhappy; and as none are exempt, can any desire to be exempt from the thoughts of mortality, which alone can prepare them for it?

It was the advice of a heathen poet, 'Act every day as if it were thy last.'

' Believe that every morning's ray  
Will usher in thy latest day.'

Though the advice was not given for a Christian purpose, a Christian may profit by it.

If, to banish the thought of death would banish death itself, there would be some reason for striving to forget it. But how strange is the infatuation to strive to forget what it is of infinite moment that we should remember and feel; to shut our eyes on the brink of a precipice!

But why should we be unwilling to entertain the thought of death? What is it? It is not annihilation. It is only a change in the mode of existence. It may be a change for the better. To little children, of whom our Saviour has said 'of such is the kingdom of heaven,' it is an introduc-

tion to *that* kingdom. To the righteous, for whom the apostle said 'there remaineth a rest,' it is to enter into that rest. 'It is better,' and not worse, 'to depart and be with Christ.' It is to be freed from the disappointments and sorrows of this life,—from its vexations and cares, its infirmities and sicknesses, its temptations and sins; from all that troubles and distracts, and weighs down our spirits. It is to be re-united to that from which we are severed, to regain what we have lost, if it will be necessary to our happiness to receive it again. It is to go from what is vain, to what is real; from what is unsubstantial, to what is sure; from what is unsatisfying, to what will fill the largest capacities, and gratify the utmost wishes of the soul.

It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting. 'The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning.'

In the house of mourning there are preachers far more eloquent, my hearers, than any who can address you from this place, and whose eloquence, though silent, is not the less instructive and energetic. The lessons they teach concern you all, and concern you deeply. Their admonition is, 'It is appointed unto all once to die.' Man knoweth not his time. 'He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. In the midst of life we are in death.'

Turn not a deaf ear, I beseech you, to the admo-

dition which these words convey to you. Ponder it! Obey it!

Learn a lesson of instruction from the victims whom death is continually immolating, and *'so number your days as to apply your hearts unto wisdom.*

## SERMON XXVI.

A SENSE OF THE PRESENCE AND BLESSING OF GOD  
INCONSISTENT WITH FEAR.

Isaiah xli. 10. — FEAR THOU NOT, I AM WITH THEE. BE NOT DISMAYED,  
I AM THY GOD.

WE should have reason indeed to fear, if we were left to contend with our own arm against the temptations, or to struggle in our strength under the sufferings of life. It requires but little experience to convince us of the force of these temptations, and the weight of these sufferings, and, at the same time, of our utter inability, of ourselves, to resist or sustain them.

The present world is a probationary state. Both temptations and sufferings are essential to it. We are not to be surprised, then, as though 'some strange thing had happened' to us, when we are called to encounter them. They are a part of the discipline appointed by Infinite Wisdom, and are designed and adapted to promote our improvement and happiness.

Still, they would be irresistible, and insupportable, if there were not strength, superior to our own, to uphold and aid us in the conflict.

Praised be GOD, in the assaults of our spiritual enemies,—when we look for succor,—a powerful arm, stronger than the strongest, is extended for our defence; and in the time of trouble, when the clouds gather around us, and, like the apostles, we ‘fear as we enter into the cloud,’ if we exercise a pious trust, there is a voice from the cloud whose language is, ‘FEAR THOU NOT, I AM WITH THEE. BE NOT DISMAYED, I AM THY GOD.’

Blessed words! How full of consolation! How do they lighten the heavy pressure of calamity, and afford a balm to the bleeding heart!

‘FEAR THOU NOT, I AM WITH THEE.’

And who is it that thus comes, in the time of need, to speak the words of comfort, and to hush our fears by the assurance of his presence and aid? Who is it that, with so much authority, yet with so much tenderness, bids us look to him for help when other help is vain?

It is GOD. Yes, it is GOD. HE who said to the waves of the sea, ‘Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther;’ can control the waves of affliction as they pass over the soul, that they shall not overwhelm us. HE who ‘doeth His pleasure in heaven and on earth;’ who is higher than the highest, whom no power can resist; condescends to ‘pour the oil of gladness into the wounded spirit,’ and to ‘bind up the broken in heart.’

*Be not dismayed, I am thy GOD.* Almighty in power; infinite in wisdom; perfect in goodness; what can we desire more? If HE be for us, ‘who

can be against us?' If He be for us, we need not fear 'though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.'

Though every other prop should fail us, if we lean upon Him we shall be upheld.

Though every other refuge should be withdrawn, if we can flee to the ROCK OF AGES for shelter, we shall find a covert from the tempest. Though every other friend should forsake us, if we are secure in the friendship of GOD, we have enough; for we can always say, in our most solitary state, '*I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*' — The FATHER of spirits, HE who knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are but dust; 'and as a father pitieth his children, hath pity on them that fear Him.'

Behold, then, thy refuge, Christian, in the time of trouble! Behold thy Friend, when other friends fail thee,—thy Protector, when other protectors are withdrawn from thee. Whatever calamity has befallen thee, if thou reposest thy trust in GOD, and doest His will, thou mayest appropriate to thyself the assurance of our text, '*Fear thou not, I am with thee.*' Thou mayest appropriate it to thyself, and it will be sufficient for thee. Thou canst sustain no loss which His presence and blessing cannot supply. Thou canst need no strength which His omnipotence cannot afford thee. His appointments may be mysterious and inexplicable; but HE will give thee to perceive that they are ordered in wisdom. 'Clouds and darkness' may be 'round about Him,' but He will give thee to know and to feel that

‘righteousness and judgment and mercy are the habitation of His throne.’

Thou mayest be allowed to perceive, in the present world, that His darkest dispensations are ordered in kindness and love; and ‘what thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter.’ The clouds and darkness which envelope the throne of the ETERNAL shall be dispelled, and ‘His righteousness shall shine forth as the light, and His judgment as the noonday.’ If thy trials are sanctified to thee, and made the instrument, through the mediation of the Saviour, of procuring for thee ‘an eternal weight of glory,’ standing as on an eminence, thou wilt look back on the path of life and adore the wisdom that marked out thy course for thee, and the mercy that made it, in any respect, a difficult and wearisome pilgrimage.

Let thy faith anticipate this period. Borrow some sweets from the store of futurity to mitigate the bitterness of present grief. Nay, look backward now, whilst thou art yet a pilgrim on earth, and behold how much cause there is for gratitude and trust and consolation in the past. Look around thee, and see how many blessings yet remain, to awaken the sentiment of thankfulness, and pious trust in GOD. Listen to the kind invitation, ‘Call upon ME in trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me;’ and adopt, with the full consent of thy mind, the devout, confiding language of the Psalmist, ‘Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in

God, for I shall yet praise HIM for the help of His countenance.'

To adopt the language of devout and grateful trust in God, is the duty, and may be the privilege, of us all. In prosperity, it is this alone that can render prosperity a blessing. In adversity, this only can take the edge from affliction, and convert a seeming evil into a real good.

No period of life, no favorable combination of circumstances in our lot, can exempt us from calamity. We are 'born to trouble.' It is an inheritance sad indeed, but one which we cannot refuse. We may be happy in our families; prosperous in our affairs; possessed of health; surrounded by friends; but all will not avail to avert the stroke. 'Our mountain' never 'standeth so strong that it cannot be moved.'

The sources of our happiness will be the sources of our misery. If the ties are numerous that have entwined themselves about the heart, the more certain and the more frequent the suffering. If they are close, the more profusely the heart will bleed when they are torn away.

Calamity may come upon us suddenly. A few days, — nay, even a moment, — may reverse our prospects of worldly good.

When the earthly staff of our comfort fails us, if we have no firmer stay, we must sink. When our fairest earthly prospects are reversed, if we have no brighter prospects, our condition must be dark and gloomy indeed.

What comfort,—I beseech you,—is there for him who has no hope in God? None, on earth or in heaven. He is drawing from a broken cistern. He is building on an unstable foundation. ‘His hope is as a spider’s web.’ It will be swept away.

## SERMON XXVII.

THEY ARE NOT ALONE WHO FEEL ASSURED THAT THE  
FATHER IS WITH THEM.

John xvi. 33. — I AM NOT ALONE, BECAUSE THE FATHER IS WITH ME.

OUR Saviour spake these words in reference to one of the most affecting incidents of his life.

They were addressed to his disciples in his last interview with them before his crucifixion.

In adverting to the events that were about to take place, he alludes, — but in a manner far from reproachful, — to their desertion of him, and to his being left alone, unsupported and uncheered by the presence of his friends, in the midst of his enemies. ‘Behold the hour cometh, yea, and now is, when all ye shall be scattered abroad, and shall leave me alone. And yet,’ he adds, ‘I am not alone, because the Father is with me.’

His prediction, in a few hours, was verified. They were ‘scattered every one to his own,’ but the presence of his Father, and the strength that was vouchsafed to him, enabled him to meet his enemies unappalled; and, in the hall of Pilate, and on the

cross at Calvary, to preserve a deportment serene and dignified.

In the garden of Gethsemane so bitter were the ingredients which were mingled in his cup of suffering, that reluctant nature was for a moment unwilling to drink it. But there was a visible interposition of GOD in his support. 'There appeared an angel to him strengthening him,' and he could say, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'

Amidst the horrors and pangs of crucifixion, the mournful complaint was forced from him, — 'My GOD! my GOD! why hast Thou forsaken me?' but again he reposes himself, in that awful hour, on the protection of his FATHER, and into His hands commits his departing spirit.

He had sojourned forty days in the wilderness. He had spent whole nights in the desert mountain. He had wandered about from place to place, not having where to lay his head. Yet, in the deepest solitude, and amidst the severest privations, his nearest and best Friend was ever at hand, to arm him against the assaults of the tempter, to sustain him under the pressure of want and suffering, and to aid him in fulfilling the work of mercy which had been given him to do.

And so at last, when, to use the language of the Psalmist, his friends stood aloof from his sore, and his kinsmen afar off; when he yielded his life an offering for sin, the same FRIEND was near to supply the place of earthly comforters; to accept

his voluntary sacrifice, and to receive the pure and spotless spirit to the place from which it had descended.

There was a peculiar sense in which the presence of GOD was with Jesus Christ.

He was intimately and inconceivably united to the FATHER; and of him it was said, by a voice from heaven, in a sense in which it could be said of no human being, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

We need go no farther; I am ready to acknowledge that my anxious inquiries can carry me no farther.

The nature of the connection between the FATHER and the SON it has not pleased GOD to reveal. Nor perhaps could it be revealed to our imperfect conceptions. We must have other powers than we now have to understand it. It is useless and unprofitable,—to say the least,—to contend where there is so little knowledge. Jesus Christ himself has told us that he is 'the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one cometh to the FATHER but by him.'

But if there is a peculiar sense in which the presence of GOD was with Jesus Christ, there is a sense, too, in which the presence of GOD may be with us, frail children of mortality.

I do not refer to that Omniscience which pervades the universe, which surrounds and pervades all that exists. In this sense *He is* present with us as he was with Jesus, in every hour and in every

place, with the wicked, as well as with the good; with those who are the objects of His displeasure, as well as those who are the objects of his complacency and love.

Yet there is still another sense in which God is with us; the same in nature, though not in degree, in which His presence was with the blessed Saviour.

The wicked man who, in the darkness of the night, is pursuing his unholy purpose, may indeed say 'Thou God seest me;' but he cannot say with the tenderness and affection of the pious, who, in the secrecy of devout retirement, is communing with God, 'I am not alone, because the FATHER is with me.'

He cannot feel as the pious feels, when he is deserted and bereft, that, in his most solitary state, a parental arm, stronger than the strongest, is extended for his support; and the wing of Almighty Love spread out for his protection.

When the tempest beats upon his head, or the 'waters pass into his soul,' he cannot say 'Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.' 'In the secret of his pavilion he will hide me till the tempest be overpast.' No! He would gladly 'go out from the presence of the Lord,' and hide himself from the notice of that Eye from whose penetrating glance none can escape, and under whose protection the righteous repose themselves with filial confidence. And here is the difference. None are alone; but the pious only can rejoice in the presence of God. And they *do* re-

joy in it. It is the source of their highest joy. In prosperity they rejoice in it, for they remember that the Author of their prosperity is the witness of their grateful improvement of it.

In adversity they rejoice in it, for it sustains and consoles them. HE who has wounded is present to heal them, and to pour the balm of consolation into their wounded spirits.

In seasons of doubt and perplexity they rejoice in it, for it enlightens and guides them.

In sickness they rejoice in it, for it 'makes all their bed in their sickness.' In death they rejoice in it, for it fortifies their minds. It sheds a holy peace abroad in their hearts, and inspires a blessed hope full of immortality; and, 'though they walk through the valley of the shadow of death, they fear no evil.'

My hearers, have *we* imbibed so much of the spirit of our blessed Saviour, that, in the most solitary state, we can say with him—'I am not alone, because the Father is with me?'

Is this *our* joy in prosperity, *our* support in adversity; and will this minister peace and consolation to our spirits when they are taking their flight into eternity? If it be not so, hapless indeed is our condition.

If it be so, we have enough. We have all and abound. In poverty we are rich. In sickness we have health. In death we live.

Our friends may die, but our best FRIEND re-

mains to us. The time of our departure may come, but we shall be borne up 'amidst the swellings of Jordan;' and the presence of God, which has been the source of our joy through the brief and fleeting moments of our earthly pilgrimage, will be the source of our joy through the endless ages of eternity.

## SERMON XXVIII.

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### THE FEAR OF DEATH.

Heb. ii. 5. — WHO, THROUGH FEAR OF DEATH, WERE ALL THEIR LIFETIME SUBJECTED TO BONDAGE.

Few, probably, if any, have passed through life wholly unsubjected to the bondage of the fear of death.

It requires a powerful struggle to break this thralldom. It is the noblest effort of the mind, with the full sense of death, and with just conceptions of death, to overcome this fear.

It is an effort which, I hesitate not to say, the pious only can make with success.

Many, indeed, who were not pious have met death apparently unmoved by fear. But were they fully aware of its approach? Had they a just sense of its consequences? Was there no latent hope of escape?

I am not yet convinced that any thing but piety will inspire composure and tranquillity when death is viewed as unavoidable, *and as an introduction to the righteous tribunal of God.*

There are several causes of the fear of death. I shall mention a few of them.

1. The first is inherent in our nature. It is a principle implanted by our CREATOR as the safeguard of life; an instinct, which prompts to self-preservation before the slow process of reason could determine the necessity, or direct to the means. We have an instinctive dread of death, and shrink from it, — involuntarily, but earnestly.

2. The second cause is our attachment to the world in which we dwell; to the scenes and the objects, — not to say the employments and the pleasures, — which render life desirable. We are embarked on an ocean with all that is dear and valuable to us. Death is the shipwreck, and the wreck is total.

3. The third is the uncertainty concerning the state of the departed; the veil that conceals futurity, and, to us, shrouds it in darkness; perhaps the certainty, if called as we now are into eternity, of a fearful retribution.

There is, too, I may add, in some, a constitutional tendency to anxiety and solicitude, which neither reason nor religion can always wholly overcome. It is a weakness of their nature, but is not a proof that they are not safe. Their sun may set in a cloud, and rise in glory.

Such are the causes, — at least some of the principal ones, — of the fear of death.

And what are the remedies?

If, as I have said, the natural dread of death is the safeguard of life, entirely to suppress it were not desirable, even if it be possible.

Life is given for the accomplishment of valuable ends. It is known to HIM who gave it, how long it is fitting and best it should last; and to be reckless of life is as little the part of wisdom as of piety. But the natural dread of death may be moderated by the frequent contemplation of death; at least in such points of view as reason and religion present it to us; by considering it as a means to an important end; as a translation from one state of being to another; and, to the righteous, as a translation to a state inconceivably better and happier than the present.

By such contemplation, the circumstances which attend the 'article of death' become disarmed of their terrors. When a great good is to be obtained, the evils we must encounter in acquiring it lose their importance.

The remedy for the dread of losing the world, and the objects of the world, is to dwell on the recollection of those fairer scenes and better objects which faith, while on earth, can descry, and which piety will realize and enjoy in heaven.

Why should we dread to part with a lesser for a greater good? Why should we cling so closely, so fondly, to what is fading, uncertain, unsatisfying; when we can exchange them for what is lasting, sure, and all-sufficient?

Shall we dread death, if to die is to live forever?

Shall we dread to part from those whom we have loved below, when we may meet with worthier objects of affection above, and are assured that those who were most worthy of our affection here, will be the companions and sharers of our felicity there?

But there is still another cause of the fear of death; and for this, too, we must find a remedy. The uncertainty respecting futurity, or perhaps the certainty, that death to us will be the instrument of misery and ruin.

I grant that there is much darkness and uncertainty respecting the state of the departed.

There is much to lead us to believe, I think, in the immediate transition of the soul to a state of consciousness after death. There is manifestly a difference between the soul and the body; and we do often find that when the body is wasted, and sinking into death, the spirit is animated and vigorous, and aspiring after life. The Scriptures, too, in as far as they give us information, strengthen this belief. The declaration of our Saviour to the thief on the cross, and the parable of the rich man who fared sumptuously, and Lazarus who was 'laid at his gate full of sores,' are to this point. And to these, among others, might be added the allusions to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, as already glorified; the declaration of Paul that for him to depart was to be with Christ, and the appearance of Moses and Elias on the mount of transfiguration.

Yet there is uncertainty respecting the *mode* of existence. 'No traveller has returned from that bourne to tell us what it is.'

The most important information, however, *has* been given us. We are told that we shall live; and that if our life on earth has been holy, our life in heaven will be happy.

More than this, we need not know. More than this, we could not understand. Our powers are finite, and infinite objects are too vast for our comprehension.

As sure as GOD exists, who 'cannot lie,' there is a heaven where piety will find its reward; and a hell where sin will meet its punishment; and this is enough for us to know.

If this knowledge has its proper influence upon us; if it leads us to repentance; the last cause of the fear of death I have mentioned will no longer exist,—the certainty that death will be the instrument of misery.

It is preparation for death alone, that can disarm death of its sting. And will any of you neglect this preparation, and remain in bondage under the fear of death, and feel its sting, and taste its bitterness unallayed, and reap its fearful consequences?

O, be not so unwise! Christ has taken the sting from death, and they who live in Christ, and die in Christ, shall not feel its power.

To them death is conquered, despoiled, destroyed. The clouds that hung over its valley are scattered. The veil is lifted, to the eye of faith the throne of God and of the Lamb, is visible; and the bed of infirmity and death becomes the field of triumph. 'O death, where is thy sting! O grave where is

thy victory!’ ‘Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.’

Fear not, then, pious believer! Thou hast obtained thy freedom from the dominion of sin, and thou hast no reason to be in bondage to the fear of death. By the grace of God, thou hast overcome the enemy to thy salvation; and thou hast in truth overcome the last enemy. It may destroy thy body, but it cannot harm thy soul.

Harm thy soul! It comes to bless it. It comes to release it from the bondage of corruption. It comes to take it from its prison-house where it is fettered and confined, and to introduce it to light and liberty, where it may flow out in unrestrained affection towards the Source of its felicity, enjoy the full fruition of its hopes, and taste of bliss unalloyed, unending.

Fear not, then, pious believer! Thou hast little to lose, and thou hast much to gain. Thou art tossed on a stormy ocean; death shall convey thee to a still and peaceful shore.

The clouds of doubt, and distrust, and fearful apprehension, often hang over thee, and hide from thee the light of God's countenance; and intercept the bright rays of the Sun of Righteousness. The tempest of affliction beats upon thy head. The shades of night will descend upon thee. But fear thou not! Death comes to dissipate the clouds of doubt, and distrust, and fearful apprehension; to still the tempest of affliction; to chase away the shades of night; to restore to thee, forever, the

light of God's countenance, and the bright rays of the Sun of Righteousness.

'And I saw no temple therein,' said the author of the Apocalypse, 'for the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun or the moon to shine in it, for the glory of GOD did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the gates of it shall no more be shut by day; and there shall be no night there.'

Blessed prospect! To be freed from doubt, and to enjoy full, undoubting certainty. To be freed from error, and to be possessed of perfect, unadulterated truth. To be freed from sorrow, and to partake of full, unmingled joy. To be freed from sin, and to possess undeviating rectitude. To be freed from the fear and the darkness of death, and to be introduced to the undisturbed tranquillity, and unveiled light of life.

Blessed prospect! beyond the reach of mortal ken, or the grasp of mortal mind! Do not our souls desire it, and will they not aspire after it, and will they not seek it with intense and unremitting diligence?

What is there on earth to compare with the felicity and glory of heaven? — Poor, vain world! Thy purest pleasures are mingled. Thy brightest glories are clouded. Thy highest honors are fading. Thy largest rewards are poor and scanty. Poor vain world! What hast thou to compare with the pleasures that

flow at the right hand of God,—the glories that surround His throne?

What hast thou to compare with the crown of righteousness; or what reward canst thou bestow that can equal the rewards of a blessed eternity?

Ah wretched sinner! Wilt thou, for the glittering baubles, the unsubstantial enjoyments, the poor rewards of earth, forfeit the joys, and the honors, and the glories of heaven?—Wilt thou cast away thy hopes, and hug thy fetters, and remain in wretched bondage forever?

## SERMON XXIX.

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THERE IS NO DEATH, NOR SORROW, NOR PAIN IN  
HEAVEN.

Revelations xxi. 4. — THERE IS NO MORE DEATH, NEITHER SORROW  
NOR CRYING, FOR THE FORMER THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY.

THE greater part of the Apocalypse of St. John is involved in deep and impenetrable obscurity. It is a sealed book; and no one has yet been allowed to open the seal, and disclose the contents.\*

Many commentators, indeed, have attempted it, but they have rather ‘darkened counsel by words without wisdom,’ than elucidated what it appears to be the will of Providence, — as in regard to most of the prophetic books, — should be understood only in the fulfilment.

But, whatever darkness may rest on the greater

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\* In a correspondence which the author had with Dr. Adam Clarke, the commentator on the Bible, he was happy to find himself corroborated in the opinion he had formed of the obscurity of the book of Revelations. Dr. Clarke declared himself utterly unable to comprehend it, and said he should say but little in the way of interpretation. ‘What was said, would be said by his son, who would write the commentary on that book.’

part of the book of the Revelations, there is a part which is written as with a sunbeam; and it is enough to render this book of inestimable worth to every feeling and pious mind. I allude to the representation of the state of the blessed.

It is more than a representation, if I may say so. It is a picture, complete and glowing, and animated, of their employments and felicities.

I had nearly said it is still more; for, so vivid, so lifelike, is the description, we almost seem to be admitted behind the scene; to breathe the air of heaven; to behold the 'elders around the throne;' and to hear the acclamations of the redeemed.

If the language is sometimes figurative, it is full of meaning; if we are sometimes told that 'there is no more sea,' we are reminded that agitations and contentions have ceased; or, if it is said that, in the place of the stormy, tempestuous ocean, there is 'a sea of glass,' it is a striking symbol of uninterrupted peace and tranquillity.

But the language of this book is not always figurative. It is sometimes plain, direct, and explicit; coming home to the nature and condition, the necessities and hopes of man. Its import every understanding can comprehend, and its value every heart can feel.

Of this nature is the language of the text. '*There is no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither any more pain, for the former things have passed away.*'

It would be an insult to your understandings if I

were to attempt to prove to you that man is mortal; that 'he dieth and wasteth away.' It is not a truth about which we may reason, and receive, or reject it, as the weight of evidence may incline to the one side or the other. It is a fact which is presented to the senses, and we cannot but see and know it. We may turn away, but it will meet us on the other side. We may shut our eyes, but we shall hear it in the sigh of agonized affection; we shall feel it in the 'aching void.'

*'There is no more death.'*

Ye who, all your life-time, are 'subject to bondage by reason of death'! Behold a country where its ravages are unknown; whence its fear is removed; and be excited to secure an interest in 'Him who has abolished death,' and delivered those who all their lifetime were subject to its bondage.

*'There is no more sorrow nor crying, neither any more pain.'*

How various and multiplied are the sources of our trouble on earth! As various and multiplied as the condition and circumstances of mankind. There is no cup without mixture. There is no web of life into which the threads of sorrow have not been woven. 'Man is born to trouble.' The first sound which he utters is a cry of distress; and the path on which he enters, and along which he must travel, is, amidst unnumbered blessings far outweighing the evils, — 'a valley of tears.' In sorrow he enters life sorrow often wrings his heart in his passage through it, and sorrow attends the twilight, and closes the evening of his days.

Our body is the seat of infirmity and sickness. Wearisome days and nights are appointed us. 'Our bones are chastened with pain, and the multitude of our bones with strong pain.'

The mind, too, must sustain its part of the burden. Who has not felt the pangs of regret, or disappointment, or remorse? Whose heart has not bled for the distresses of others? There is a principle of sympathy in our nature. It is the solace and the medicine of life. It doubles our joys; it lightens our toils; it divides and lessens our sorrows.

Yet, in this imperfect state, our kind affections are the sources of care and anxiety. Our happiness is closely interwoven with that of others, and every wound that pierces them, we feel in our own bosom. Can we witness the sorrow which weighs down the spirit of our friend, and not bear our part of the burden? Can we mark the slow, perhaps, but unremitting progress of a consuming disease, and not be filled with anxiety and apprehension? Can we watch around the bed of death and behold the conflict with the last enemy, even though it be met with the composure of Christian resignation and hope, and not feel ourselves a bitterness little less dreadful than the bitterness of death?

Our text reveals to us a country where there is 'no more pain, neither sorrow nor crying,' where 'all tears are wiped from all eyes.'

The kind affections which, on earth, were the sources of anxiety and distress, will there be the sources of unmingled joy. There will be room for

sympathy, but it will be sympathy only with the happy. We may 'rejoice with them who rejoice,' but to 'weep with them that weep' is our duty and our privilege only on earth.

How abundant is the consolation, my hearers, which our subject brings to us when sorrowing for the virtuous beloved from whom death hath divided us! They shall die no more. They shall suffer and sorrow no more.

Look up, by faith, Christian mourner, to heaven. Enter, as thou art permitted *thus* to enter, the abodes of the blessed. Behold their felicity. Listen to the sounds that strike thine ear. They are the notes of joy; the accents of praise. 'Blessing and glory and praise to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, who hath redeemed us to God, by his blood, out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue.'

And wouldst thou call them back to partake again of thy infirmities; to share in thy griefs; to be exposed again to the wants and sorrows of humanity; to struggle with the temptations of an evil world; to taste again the 'bitterness of death'?

No! Let thy faith console thee. Let it animate thee. Let it excite thee to trace the footsteps of the pious departed. Whilst it carries thee up to contemplate their felicity, let it excite thee to aspire after it; to strive for it; and, by the grace of God, to attain it!

## SERMON XXX.

## THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

[Preached on Easter Sunday.]

1 Corinthians, xv. 23. — CHRIST THE FIRST FRUITS ; AFTERWARDS  
THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING.

MANY of our fellow Christians, the past week, have set apart a day for the commemoration of the death of Jesus. They have turned back the eye of their faith to the awful scene of his sufferings. They have accompanied him from his sorrows and agonies in the garden, through the variety of disgrace and pain, till 'he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.' They have seen him laid in the tomb; and the 'stone rolled to the door of the sepulchre.'

To-day the scene is changed. They enter their churches with the voice of gladness. They have seen the stone rolled away from the door of the sepulchre. The tomb is empty. He whom they beheld the captive of death has burst his fetters, and come forth triumphant. They commemorate on this day his resurrection from the dead.

It is not the rule of our church, — as of theirs, — to celebrate the festival of Easter; but we are glad

of every opportunity to sound a note in unison with our Christian brethren. We are accustomed on the first Sabbath of the month to commemorate the sufferings and death of our Master, and on the first day of every week we assemble, as they do, in honor of his resurrection. But the resurrection of Christ is the keystone of our faith, and the anchor of our hope, as well of theirs, and we need never hesitate to manifest, on this theme, our sympathy with them.

To us, as well as to them, it is indeed a joyful theme. The resurrection of Christ is the confirmation of his doctrine; the demonstration of his mission from God. To this he appealed as such, and his predictions were fulfilled.

Our faith is not a vain and airy fabric of the imagination. It is erected on a firm and solid basis; for the resurrection of Christ, on which it is built, is itself supported by incontrovertible testimony. It is supported by the testimony of those who have all the characteristics of credible witnesses;—by the testimony of friends who could not be deceived, and who had nothing to gain, but every thing to lose, by attempting to deceive others;—by the testimony of enemies, who, with the utmost power in their hands, and the utmost malice in their hearts, were unable to allege any thing probable against its truth.

I may add, with deep reverence, by the testimony of God, who accompanied the preaching of it with ‘signs and wonders,’ and thus procured its triumph

and advancement. It is supported by its effects on the apostles themselves, who, before this event, with a weak and tremulous faith, forsook their Master, and after this event, asserted their belief, and their attachment to him, with undaunted resolution. In short, its truth is supported by a weight of evidence which is sufficient, one would think, to force conviction on every candid mind.

We may rejoice with our fellow Christians of every name in an event which certifies the truth of our common religion; of all that it teaches concerning God and Christ; concerning all that has been done and suffered for the deliverance and salvation of sinful man. We may rejoice;—for, if we have a true faith,—the faith of the heart, we may have ‘peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’

Nor is this all. We may rejoice with our fellow Christians in an event which is a pledge that we, too, shall rise again. ‘If Christ be risen, how say some among you,’ asks the apostle, ‘that there is no resurrection from the dead?’ *Our* future resurrection is inseparably connected with the resuscitation of Jesus. As *he* rose from the dead, *we* shall rise. If we are his followers, *certainly*. If we are not his followers, perhaps as *certainly*. The text, indeed, and many other passages, appear to confine the resurrection to those who die in Christ. But in the passage before us,—and the same may probably be said of all the others,—this was all that the occasion and his argument required. It is his purpose to support the faith of the Christians to

whom he wrote under the discouragements and persecutions to which their profession exposed them; that they might 'be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.' Now, the proper argument to produce this effect was such as convinced them that their patience and resolution should be rewarded; that their labor should 'not be in vain in the Lord.'

But that the resurrection shall be *general*, we seem to have abundant assurance in other parts of Scripture. 'All that are in their graves,' says the Saviour himself, 'shall hear his voice and come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.' And in this very chapter, — to mention no more, — St. Paul infers a general resurrection of Christians from the resurrection of Christ. 'As in Adam all died,' — the just and unjust, — 'so in Christ shall all be made alive.'

'In Adam all died.' His mortal nature descended to his children. From them it has descended to us. From us it will descend to the latest generation. 'But in Christ all shall be made alive.'

If Christ had not risen, and it had not pleased God, in His mercy, to provide another ransom, the dominion of the grave would have been eternal. Nothing would have come to disturb its sleeping tenants; nothing to dispel the shadows of the long, long night which enveloped them. When the inexorable doors closed upon them, it would be forever. When they had once entered that prison-house,

there would be no escape. They would lie down to rise no more.

The eyes which had once been cheered by the light of day, and had gazed with rapture on the beauties of nature, would be closed to open no more. The ears which had been soothed and gladdened by the voice of friendship and affection, would be shut to open no more.

The winter of the year might pass away, as it has now passed; the spring might succeed it to clothe the earth with verdure, and cause it anew to bring forth and bud; but an endless winter would reign in the dark domains of death. No spring would come, with its genial warmth and resuscitating influence, to revive what had been buried there. 'There might be hope of a tree, if it were cut down, that it would sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof would not cease.' 'Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground, yet, through the scent of water, it might bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.' 'But man would lie down, and rise not,' even when 'the heavens were no more.' 'No, he would not awake, nor be raised out of his sleep.' Generation after generation might come forward and act its part on the stage of life; but when the scene was shifted, they would disappear forever.

Such would have been the triumph of death, if Jesus had not risen from the grave. 'But Jesus *has* risen, and become the first fruits of them that slept.' The trump of God shall sound, and the fetters of

the grave shall be rent asunder. The repose of the tomb shall be disturbed. 'They that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.' At the voice of the archangel, thousands, and tens of thousands, shall rise to meet their Judge.

Hearer! Art thou prepared for this scene?—It may open upon thee before thou art aware. Thou hast but a slender hold on life. Thy age is no security. Thy health is no security. The remedies for disease are not infallible. The milder skies of a more southern clime may not revive thy drooping strength. The time is approaching,—it may be to-morrow or to-day,—when thou must take thy place with those who are laid in the grave. Art thou prepared for this event?—Hast thou secured an interest in Him who hath vanquished death? If Christ is the 'first fruits,' shalt thou rise afterwards as one 'that is Christ's, at his coming?'—Hearer! thou hast a deeper interest in this than I can describe to thee. Yes, than I could describe to thee, were I to speak with any other tongue than that of inspiration. Art thou living regardless of death and the resurrection, and the judgment that will follow? Art thou leaning upon the broken reed of earthly good, and not upon the Rock of Ages? Art thou seeking thy portion here, and neglecting to lay up treasures in heaven?—Oh, that I might be blessed to awaken thee to a sense of thy condition!—to make thee feel how much thou hast to gain, and how much to forfeit; to call thee back from the brink of the awful precipice on which thou

art standing! Hear me, for I speak the words of truth and soberness. Hear me, for I speak the words of earnest, affectionate solicitude for thy best welfare! Hear me, for I speak in the name of Him who died to save thee, and who rose, and has gone to intercede for thee. BY THE VALUE OF THAT SOUL WHICH IS IMMORTAL, AND THE RETRIBUTIONS OF THAT STATE WHICH IS ETERNAL, I BESEECH THEE TO HEAR ME!

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## S E R M O N   X X X I .

## REGENERATION.

John iii. 3. — EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

THIS declaration of our Saviour to Nicodemus has been the occasion of much perplexity, and not a little contention, in the Christian world. I shall be happy if any thing I now say will afford satisfaction to a serious inquirer.

The expression ‘born again’ is evidently figurative. It refers, not to the animal part of our nature, but to the principles and dispositions of the soul. In these, before a man can ‘see,’ or, as it is afterwards expressed, ‘enter’ into the kingdom of God, a remarkable change must be produced; so great that it may be compared to the change that would happen in the constitution of his body, if he should be born again, and reduced to his former state of infancy.

I have more than once discoursed to you on the change that must take place in our moral condition, before we are in a state of preparation for heaven. I have shown the importance of

regeneration; its necessity; and how it is to be effected.

But, notwithstanding this, I find with many some doubts and difficulties still lingering, disturbing, if not destroying, the enjoyment they would otherwise derive from religion, and keeping them back from the performance of religious duties. I find this with some who, in their temper and conduct, are giving the best evidence that they have experienced this change. I find them furnishing this evidence in the very anxiety they feel to be satisfied that a change has been wrought in them; for an unregenerate state, in its common acceptation, implies insensibility to the moral condition; or at least no real desire that *that* condition should be altered.

They have a vague impression that their feelings and views must be different from what they now are; that a sensible, perceptible change must take place; and that they must patiently wait till it pleases HIM who 'turneth the hearts of men, as the rivers of waters are turned,' to turn their hearts from sin to holiness, from earth to heaven.

They are right in supposing that this change is required. Both reason and Scripture teach its necessity.

The infant of days, though the inspiration of the Almighty has given it understanding, is apparently a creature of sense and appetite. Its intellect is dormant; there is the germ of knowledge, but it is not unfolded; and how great is the change which will take place, when the powers are devel-

*ration.* Every important acquisition is an important oped and cultivated. It is an *intellectual regeneration*.

The infant of days is a moral being. It has a capacity for virtue and holiness. But what indications are there of virtue and holiness, in its infant state? There is the germ of virtue, but it is dormant; how great a change,— a partial new birth,— will take place when its moral sense is in exercise, and its moral character formed! If, by the blessing of God on a pious education, it is formed to piety, it will be a change from a state of *nature* to a state of *grace*.

If evil habits have been contracted, and repentance awakened, and reformation effected, it will be a change from a state of *sin* to a state of *grace*.

In the one case the change will be more sudden, and more perceptible and palpable, than in the other. In both cases a change has taken place; and the change of state which now exists, is a necessary change. A state of *grace* is a state of holiness; and ‘without holiness no man can see the Lord.’

And here is the evidence of the existence of this state. It is not a supernatural revelation; an extraordinary impulse; an indescribable feeling or sensation, which gives the evidence. We have the ‘witness in ourselves,’ — in the temper of our minds, and the tenor of our conduct. ‘If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him!’ If the fruit is good, the tree must be good. If the stream

is pure, the fountain must be pure. Grapes do not grow on the thorn-tree, nor figs on the thistle.

At noon-day we have no doubt of the existence of the sun, though it may be obscured by clouds. In the light which surrounds us, we see and feel the effect, though we behold not the cause.

It is thus when the Sun of Righteousness has shone into the heart. We perceive it in the vivifying influences; in the light which it imparts; in the virtues and graces to which it gives life, and strength and activity.

Here, I think, is an answer to those who inquire if they must not know the precise time and manner of their being first enlightened and renewed. You perceive and feel the effect of the wind, and you know little more than this. You speak your native language, and you have thus a proof that you have learned it; but who of you can remember the time and manner of its acquisition?

It may be thus in religion. If you perceive the *effect* in yourselves, you need not doubt the *cause*. If you have 'the testimony of your own conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity you have your conversation in the world,' it may be to you a cause of 'rejoicing,' as it was to the apostle; for it is an evidence that you are a child of God. 'The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.' If you have the testimony of your conscience that you are better than you have been; that you are more serious and thoughtful about religion than you were, and more anxious to fulfil its requi-

sitions, a change has taken place in you; and thus far, you are regenerated.

If you have been converted from vice and wickedness to virtue and holiness, you must have strong convictions, and fears, and pangs of remorse; and these must be objects of remembrance as long as you live. But here the effect must be gradual. Conviction is not conversion. You are on the brink of a precipice, and have been arrested; but you must go back; painfully retrace your steps; enter on a new and safer path, and pursue it.

You have much to unlearn, and much to learn. You have bad principles to eradicate, and good principles to gain. You have bad habits to discard, and good habits to acquire.

You have come to God; but you must 'acquaint yourself with God.' You are awakened to the necessity of righteousness; but you must 'follow after righteousness.' On the other hand, if you have had early instruction in piety, and profited by it; if, like the disciple and convert of St. Paul, you have been taught the Scriptures from your childhood, and by the grace of God have learned and practised them, you may not remember the commencement of the spiritual life; though you must remember much of unworthiness, and must still be conscious of it.

I have used the terms a state of nature, and a state of grace, in conformity with the language of the Christian World. It is language familiar to many of you. The question, What is our moral

state by nature? is rather curious than useful. The most important inquiry is, What we are by practice? what is our present state?

It is thought by many that we are depraved by nature; and that the conviction of this depravity should occasion penitential sorrow. There is much cause for penitential sorrow, if we have corrupted our own ways and made ourselves sinful. We are not accustomed to repent of the natural deformity of our persons, or of any tendency to debility or disease which we have inherited from our progenitors. If, by our own misconduct, we have brought these evils upon ourselves, there is cause indeed for sorrow, though sorrow may be unavailing.

It is thus with our moral condition. If we are sinners by nature, it is not of ourselves that we are so. If we are sinners by practice, it is our own fault, and we cannot too deeply repent, or too diligently engage in reformation.

It is supposed by some that the declaration of our Saviour in the text, has reference to those who would become converts to Christianity, and be received into the kingdom he had come to establish on earth, which is often designated in Scripture, as the 'kingdom of God;' that when he said 'Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God,' he alludes to the radical change which must take place in the principles and dispositions of those who should embrace his religion.

This opinion certainly receives countenance from a declaration in a subsequent verse. 'Except a

man be born of water and of the Spirit,' that is, except he receive the ordinance of baptism, which is the initiatory rite, and be possessed of a spiritual temper, he cannot become a member of the Christian church. It is also supposed to receive countenance from the fact, that the same phrase 'born again' is used by the Jews in reference to those who had become converts to Judaism; which may account for the surprise expressed by our Saviour, that Nicodemus, who was a Jew, should not at once have comprehended him. 'Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?'

To conclude. A change, then, must take place from a state of nature, to a state of grace and holiness. The evidence of this change is to be found in our disposition and conduct. This change is regeneration. It is effected gradually; and to many, its commencement may not have been known. In effecting it there must be a union of human labor and divine illumination; the Spirit of God rendering effectual the efforts of man.

Let us examine ourselves, my hearers, to see whether this change has taken place in us. If not, let us pray for it, and labor for it.

If we desire it, it has begun; and it is by the use of means, with God's blessing, that it is to be carried on to perfection.

## SERMON XXXII.

## PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN.

Acts viii. 37. — IF THOU BELIEVEST WITH ALL THY HEART, THOU  
MAYEST.

I HAVE read to you this afternoon the history of the conversion of the treasurer of Ethiopia through the instrumentality of Philip the Evangelist.

It presents us an instance of candor and diligence in the investigation of truth, and of the efficacy of religion in promoting the happiness of those who embrace it.

The Ethiopian was already a convert to Judaism; and had come up to Jerusalem, at the season of one of the great festivals of the Jewish church, to worship. His Bible was the companion of his journey.

In order to preserve alive the flame of devotion which had been kindled in his breast by the holy services of the temple in Jerusalem, as he returned, he read, in his chariot, the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Providence of God, which watches over all

events, had, doubtless, directed the subject of his reading, and now sends an interpreter.

The evangelist Philip, driven by persecution from Jerusalem, was travelling in the desert, and was directed by the Spirit of God to join himself to the Ethiopian treasurer, who was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah when the evangelist joined him.

It is a remarkable chapter, — apart from the importance of its momentous subject, — so remarkable, that I shall digress, for a moment, to dwell upon it.

It is a prophecy of the sufferings and death of the Messiah; but, from the form of expression, assumes much the appearance of a history of those events.

‘Wrapt into future times,’ in the spirit of prophecy, the scene comes up so vividly to the prophet’s view, that it appears as if the fearful tragedy was enacted before him. He seems to forget himself, and changes the form of expression from the future to the present tense. ‘He *is* despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.’

The whole scene passes before him. The patient sufferer, ‘led as a lamb to the slaughter,’ is crucified and slain. The scene closes, and the prophet speaks of it as a thing gone by. ‘Surely he *hath* borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He *was* wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our

peace was on Him, and by his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; He hath put him to shame.'

The Ethiopian asks from Philip an explanation of the prophecy, and receives it.

He listened with meekness and candor to the instructions of the evangelist; became a convert to Christianity, and 'went on his way rejoicing.'

No portion of Scripture could have furnished a more appropriate text for the expounder, and, if it had not already employed the attention of his distinguished pupil, he would have done well to begin 'at this same Scripture' when he would 'preach to him Jesus.'

We have not even an abridgment of Philip's exposition.

We may suppose, however, that he discoursed of the nature and offices of Christ; of the design of his coming into the world; and of the influence

which his religion ought to exert upon the hearts and lives of those who should embrace it.

It is evident that he instructed him in the nature of one, at least, and probably of both, the institutions of Christianity, for, as soon as he is a believer, he desires to receive the badge of discipleship, and to be received to the Christian community by the rite of baptism. 'See, here is water, what doth hinder that I should be baptized?'

The reply of Philip was such as we might have expected it would be: 'If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest.'

We then have his profession of faith. And what is it? Does it consist of a long enumeration of articles such as in later times have often been made the condition of Christian communion? Far from it. '*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*'

We are all the children of God. We were created by Him;—we bear His image, however defaced by transgression.

But more than this, far more than this, was intended by this confession.

By the phrase 'Son of God' was understood, by the Jews, the Messiah foretold by the prophets; the Redeemer; the Saviour. 'We have a law,' said the Jews to Pilate, 'and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God,' that is, because he made himself the Messiah, the prophet that was to come.

So familiar was this appellation of the Son of

God who was expected, that the Romans were not ignorant of it. The centurion, and they that were with him, attending the crucifixion of Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, exclaimed, 'Truly this was the Son of God.'

Such was the confession of this new believer; and from this confession we may judge of the nature of Philip's preaching.

On its being made, they alighted from the chariot, and went down into the water, both Philip and the Ethiopian, and he baptized him.

The words in this passage rendered 'into' and 'out of,' might, with as much propriety, have been rendered *to* and *from*; and have actually thus been rendered, by the same translators, in other parts of Scripture. It is of small importance, however, whether the Ethiopian received this rite by immersion, as it is administered by the Antipedo Baptists, (the opposers of infant baptism,) or sprinkling, as the Pedo Baptists administer it, or by affusion, as is practised by the Greek Church.

It is not the *form*, but the thing signified by that form, that is of importance.

Our religion was designed to be universal; and its institutions, in their simplicity, in the fewness of their number, and in the want of any special directions as to the mode of administering them, are adapted to that design.

Whatever mode, under existing circumstances, is

the most convenient, and desirable, is the most proper.

Baptism by immersion could not ordinarily be administered to the sick or the aged, in the midst of winter, without hazard to the life of the recipient; and we can conceive of various circumstances which might render that mode of administering it inexpedient, or impracticable.

For myself, I am free to say that I have not a bigoted attachment to our own mode; but am willing to use either.

It appears, then, that the belief which is requisite in order to admission to the Church of Christ,—for it is by baptism, and not by a reception of the Lord's Supper, that we are admitted to that Church,—is an assent to the fact, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the promised Redeemer.

How much is included in this character of Jesus, why he came, and what he hath done for us, it is for each one to satisfy himself by a diligent study of his Bible.

But is an assent to the simple truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the only requisite to our participation of Christian privileges, and of all the blessings of that salvation which the Redeemer has 'purchased with his blood'? Is not 'repentance towards God,' as much required as 'faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?' Was not this the uniform language of our Saviour, and his apostles? and is it not expressly declared that 'without holiness, no man shall see the Lord?'

If we revert to the language of Philip in the

text, we shall find it in perfect harmony with these declarations; as indeed all the declarations of Scripture are really in harmony with one another. 'If thou believest *with all thy heart*, thou mayest.' 'It is not enough that thou yieldest the assent of thy *understanding* to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah; thou must yield also the assent of thy heart; thou must *feel* this important truth, in order to thy being a true disciple of Jesus, and worthy of admission to his kingdom.'

This, my friends, is not the least important, nor the least difficult part of religion. The truth of our religion is built upon the most solid foundation. It is impossible, one would think, for any one to examine, with candor, its evidence, and refuse his assent.

But it is one thing to acknowledge the truth of Christianity, and another to feel its influence. 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness,' and then with 'the tongue maketh confession unto salvation.'

We may have 'faith enough to remove mountains,' and zeal enough to become martyrs for our faith; and yet may be destitute of that faith and zeal which will render us acceptable to God. '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.'

The faith required, is a 'faith that worketh by love;' a faith that produces the fruits of righteousness; a faith that makes us more humble; more

self-denying ; more forgiving ; more patient ; more submissive ; more devout ; more ready to do, and suffer, the will of God.

Such is the faith which will render us the true disciples of the blessed Jesus, for such was his character ; and it is a faith of more worth than an assent to the longest creed that was ever drawn up, however wise the head, or pious the heart that framed it.

How often have I witnessed the operation of this faith on those who knew nothing of systems of theology which have unhappily divided and distracted the Christian world ; who knew only that their Bible was the Word of God ; who found in that a Saviour ; and, however rugged the path of their pilgrimage of life, like the Ethiopian treasurer, went on their way rejoicing.

May it be ours to possess the same faith, that we may be partakers of the same joy !

## S E R M O N   X X X I I I .

## CHARGE AT THE INSTALLATION OF A MINISTER.

IN the solemn hour of retirement, my brother, you have meditated on the nature and importance of the sacred office. When bowing your knees to 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' you have felt and acknowledged your insufficiency. With unutterable emotions you have looked forward to the day when you should be invested with the pastoral office, and intrusted with the care of immortal souls.

That day,—the day to which so many anxious thoughts had been turned, and on which so many ardent, yet trembling hopes were suspended,—at length arrived. You became a minister of Jesus Christ; the pastor of a Christian church.

You do not come hither, a novice, to be instructed in the rudiments of ministerial duty. You have already been invested with the sacred office; you have received the solemn charge; you have had the care of immortal souls, and you come here fraught, in some measure, with the lessons of experience.

Why, then, should I take upon me to teach you what you may be supposed already to know; to inculcate duties you have already been called to fulfil?

‘They that feared the Lord spake often one to another,’ and it can never be unsuitable for Christians, and especially for Christian ministers, ‘to stir up each other’s minds, by way of remembrance.’

*More* especially is it appropriate on an occasion like the present; and much does it add to its solemnity and impressiveness for an elder to exhort a younger brother; for one around whom the shadows of evening are beginning to descend, to admonish him who has labored only in the morning, and has not yet borne ‘the burden and heat of the day.’

My charge to you might be comprehended in two words. *Be faithful.* Faithful to God who has put you into the ministry; and, amidst conflicting doubts respecting duty, has overruled, as we trust, your decision, and sent you to labor in this vineyard; faithful to the souls, which, in this solemn hour, are committed to your care; faithful to *yourself*, who have been endowed with ministerial gifts, and must render an account of the manner in which you employ them.

Whatever of active duty, whatever of private study, whatever of meditation, watchfulness and prayer, is requisite to this end, neglect not.

‘Take heed to your ministry that you fulfil it;’ to your instructions, that they be ‘drawn from the

oracles of God; to your example, that it be 'such as becometh the gospel of Christ.'

Belong to no theological party, as such. Whatever opinions you may hold in speculative theology, be careful to inculcate *religion*, and let your life be a transcript of the holy doctrine you teach.

Like the eastern shepherds, *lead* your flocks. Mark, with your own footsteps, the path to heaven. Remember that 'Holiness to the LORD' was the inscription on the breast-plate of the high priest, who was appointed by God.

Visit from house to house. You have the example of an eminent apostle for this. You have the example of your Lord and Master for it. 'He went about doing good.'

Twice, at least, every year, — and I care not how much oftener, where it can be done to good purpose, and not encroach on necessary duties, — twice every year have affectionate ministerial intercourse with every family in your charge. Let your stated visits always, and your occasional visits as much as possible, serve for edification. Carry the message which you have received, as an ambassador for Christ, into every house. It is your duty, and, — I now say it in the hearing of your people, — it will be a blessing to them if you do so.

Be often, when the providence of God calls you to it, 'beside the bed where parting life is laid.' Be especially attentive to the sick and sorrowful. In the alarming hour, when the shades thicken, and 'the feet stumble on the dark mountains,' be you

at hand to counsel, to warn, to console, as the occasion may require; to point the sinner to the awful retributions of eternity, and to open, on the eye of faith, the bright visions of heaven.

In the hour of affliction, when a pillar of support has failed; when vain hopes deceive no longer; when every proud, rebellious passion is silenced; when a cloud hangs over the world; when every avenue to the heart is open, be you at hand to pour instruction and consolation into the bleeding spirit.

In the season of spiritual distress, when the 'terrors of the Lord' set themselves in array against the guilty, or when despondency and despair take hold on the timid, feeble soul, be you at hand to apply the healing balm to the wounded conscience; to administer strength to 'the weak hands, and feeble knees, and fearful in heart.'

Be thus the confidential counsellor, the affectionate, sympathizing friend of your people; rejoicing in all their joys, and in all their afflictions afflicted, that when 'the eye sees you it may bless you, and when the ear hears you it may bear witness to you.'

To this end, give yourself wholly to the work. 'Be instant, in season and out of season.' 'Watch for souls, as one that must give an account.'

Thus we charge you. Before this assembly who are the witnesses of this solemn transaction; before the angels who are ministering spirits to the church of God; before God and the Lord Jesus Christ,

who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing, we charge you.

By the mercies of God; by the blood of Christ which was shed for the redemption of a sinful world; by the worth of your own soul, and of these precious immortal souls which are intrusted to your ministerial watch and guidance; by the solemnities of this occasion, and the vows of God that are upon you; we charge you to 'take heed to this ministry,' to 'take heed to yourself.'

In this day, when our churches are rent by divisions, when 'the love of many has waxed cold;' when the voice of the scoffer is heard, 'Where is the promise of his coming?' when the book of nature and the book of grace are so often reading their heavenly lessons in vain; when the understanding, which is itself an impress of the divinity, is employed in denying the Inspiration that gave it; when freedom of thought and action is tending to licentiousness; how much have the ministers of religion to do, even to bear up, under God, the ark of the Lord. How much more to bring into, and keep in it, from the beast of prey, from the noisome pestilence, from the whelming flood of ungodliness, the immortal souls committed to their care!

Whilst you think of these things, does not 'the fire burn within you?' and will it not impel you unreservedly, laboriously, zealously, to devote yourself to this good cause, this high and holy calling?

It is known neither to you nor me, what trials

are before you. 'Fear God,' and you will have nothing else to fear.

It must needs be that you will have occasion often to adopt the plaintive language of the prophet, 'I have labored in vain and spent my strength for nought;' that some seeds will 'fall by the wayside and be trodden under foot of men,' some among thorns, 'and be choked;' some 'upon a rock, where there is no depth of earth;' but it will also be that of that which fell by the wayside, some will be pressed into the earth, and will not die; of that which fell among thorns, some will not be choked, but swell and unfold itself; and that that which fell on a rock will find a crevice where there is good soil, and will germinate and bring forth fruit unto everlasting life. 'If we hope for that we see not, then do we patiently wait for it.' The husbandman tarryeth long, and is patient for the early and the latter rain.

Be thou also patient, and thy labor will not be in vain in the Lord. In due time you will reap, if you faint not. 'Be faithful unto death, and you will receive a crown of life.'

Go forth, then, my brother, in the name and strength of the Lord. Long may you live, approving yourself faithful; and, having finished your course with joy, have many of this people, their children, and the children yet to be born, as your joy and crown in the day of Christ's appearing.

## SERMON XXXIV.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Matthew xxvi. 31. — THEN SAITH JESUS UNTO THEM, ALL YE SHALL BE OFFENDED BECAUSE OF ME THIS NIGHT ; FOR IT IS WRITTEN, I WILL SMITE THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED ARROAD.

I CONSIDER these words as worthy of particular notice ; not merely as containing a prediction which was literally fulfilled, but as connected with the commemorative rite which had just been observed ; and with the character, and subsequent conduct of those who had received it at the hands of Jesus Christ.

The words were spoken after, and probably immediately after, the institution of the Lord's Supper, which had been administered by Jesus himself to his disciples.

I say to his disciples. It is probable, however, that Judas had gone out, and that eleven only were present. Indeed, Judas was excluded by the very terms of the institution, as he was soon by his own act, — and this was well known to our Saviour, — to render himself incapable of partaking of it.

To eleven of the disciples, then, Jesus himself gave it in charge to commemorate him in the ordinance of the Supper; and, immediately after, forewarned them that they would all desert him at a time when he would stand most in need of their presence and support.

‘All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad.’

It was the night of his agony. It was the night of his apprehension, when he was to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies; and, in this night, they whom he had chosen from among the multitude of mankind to be his associates and friends, were to forsake him, to leave him to suffer alone. One of them, and he, too, the most ardent in his protestations of attachment, was to deny, with asseverations and oaths, that he knew him.

Such were the first celebrators of the Lord's Supper. Such were they to whom the Saviour administered the ordinance with his own hand.

I present them thus to you, my hearers, not, as you must well know, as, in this respect, examples, — in as far as they can be, — for those who come after them; not as an encouragement to communicants to be inconsistent in their conduct with their profession; no! but to show that, at the commencement, as it is now, and must always be, they who joined in this rite were frail, erring mortals; weakest when they relied most on their strength; and betrayed into danger and sin by their own confidence of safety.

These are facts which, one would suppose, would serve to quiet many of the apprehensions that are felt on this subject; and to correct the impression that a thorough, radical change must take place in the character before we may venture to partake of the Lord's Supper; that an entire victory over the world must be obtained; and a habit of self-denial confirmed.

Did our Saviour require this? Why then did he admit the disciples to the first celebration of the ordinance, and enjoin them to continue to observe it in memory of him?

Had such a change taken place in the disciples? Had *they* obtained this victory over the world; this habit of self-denial; this self-devotion to Christ, and his religion?

So far from it, that we find that almost in the same breath with which he appointed this celebration, he admonished them of their fall.

Aware of their weakness and danger, for the same reason that he exhorted them to watch and pray, he instituted this memorial; to revive in their minds, when he should be no longer with them, the recollections of his instructions, and his life; all that he had done, and all that he had suffered for them.

It was appointed, not for those who had already attained, but for those who were still struggling with temptation and sin; who had much to do, and had need of much aid to enable them to do it. It was a staff to support them; a panoply

to protect them; a monitor to guide and quicken them, in their pilgrimage of duty and trial.

True, they were to forsake him in the time of his greatest need; they were to forsake him at the moment when he was most strikingly exhibiting his love for them; but the time would come when these simple, yet expressive emblems of his 'body broken and his blood shed' for them, would speak to their hearts in a language which could not be resisted. The time would come when these simple emblems would fill them with shame and sorrow for their weakness and cowardice, in basely deserting him; and nerve them with strength and courage to follow him to prison and to death.

Such was, doubtless, the design of this ordinance. An instrument of spiritual good. The means, and not the end.

It was Jesus who appointed it; and to him, and those who were instructed immediately by him, we must look for information respecting its nature and design.

The language of Jesus, in its institution, is, 'This do in remembrance of me.' The language of an apostle who received it from him, is, 'as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come;' language, I may remark, that indicates the intended perpetuity of the rite.

The Lord's Supper, then, is simply a memorial of Jesus Christ. Divested of the load which human expositions have laid upon it; stripped of the

appendages with which human ingenuity and superstition have arrayed it; it is nothing more nor less than a commemoration of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. It is a history conveyed by sensible objects to the eye, which, of all the senses, has the quickest commerce with the soul. It is a lively picture, presenting to mankind, in all ages, a representation of the most interesting transaction that has ever taken place; and in which all mankind have a deep concern.

From our natural weakness and levity, we often forget, and often receive with indifference, the most important truths which are addressed to our understandings through the medium of language only, without the aid of sensible signs.

Men in all ages, indeed, have been so fully aware of this, that they have always employed some sensible sign to perpetuate the remembrance of splendid achievements, of memorable events, of important services to themselves and their country. Hence the statues, the public monuments, the solemn festivals; designed to speak to the eyes, and to move the soul through the channel of the senses.

Too often, it is true, these ceremonies have only served to consecrate the vices, and the pride of men; the ravages of conquerors, who were the disgrace and scourge of the earth. But the principle is founded in our nature, in the feelings of our hearts, which need to be excited by sensible objects.

We have here the reason for the institution of

the Lord's Supper. It was unquestionably the design of our Saviour, as I have intimated, to present in this institution, a complete, though hasty, picture of all he had done and suffered for us.

The bread broken, and the wine poured out, which signify nothing of themselves, are visible symbols of his body broken and his blood shed for us.

We are so constituted that the objects which call up one idea to the mind, call up a train of relative and dependent ideas. They are often presented at once, or in a succession so rapid that they cannot be perceived; and affect us the more sensibly that they come thus together, and not by repeated efforts of the mind.

The smallest relic of a once valued friend calls up a history to remembrance on which the heart, however much it may be agonized, delights to dwell.

It is thus with the Lord's Supper. These symbols are tokens of love that were left us by our Lord Jesus Christ. How visibly and impressively do they bring to the mind and heart of the thoughtful communicant the affecting history, the beneficent design, and the momentous consequences, of the incarnation of his Lord and Saviour! How powerfully do they excite to feelings of sympathy and love towards fellow communicants, fellow Christians, — all mankind; — to penitential sorrow, and resolutions of holy living!

In the first ages of the Church, all Christian

believers were communicants. The Lord's Supper was a positive institution of Christianity, and it would have been deemed a great inconsistency for believers in Christianity to neglect any of its institutions.

The Lord's Supper made a part of the religious service of the first day in the week. A description of this service is given by an early father of the Church, and, as it may gratify you, I repeat it.

'On the day called Sunday, all of us meet in one place, where the writings of the apostles and prophets are read; exhortations are given; psalms and hymns are sung; and we offer our joint prayers. Then bread and wine are brought, and after repeated prayers by the president, to which the people answer amen, it is distributed through the congregation, and alms are collected for the use of the poor.'

'The reason,' he adds, 'why we all meet on Sunday, is, that this is the first day when God created the world, and on which our Saviour Jesus Christ rose from the dead.'

Such was the obedience of the first Christians to the rules of the Gospel, though this obedience was punishable with death.

As it was in the beginning of Christianity, so it should be now. All Christian believers should be communicants, and thus manifest their consistency, as well as their gratitude and love to Him whose name they bear, by their obedience.

If love the most disinterested demands a return;

if benefits the most substantial give a claim to gratitude; if authority the most exalted has a right to obedience; then is Jesus Christ entitled to the love, gratitude, and obedience of Christians.

All those who believe in Christ, then, I repeat it, should be communicants. It is a public avowal of their faith in Christ, and it is fit that they should thus 'confess him before men.' It is an act of obedience to his positive command,—the last charge he left upon his Church before he suffered. It is an observance of an institution, eminently adapted to promote the spiritual benefit of those who observe it.

Christian believers should come to the Lord's Supper, not hastily and inconsiderately, but with serious preparation of heart, with deep repentance for sin, and earnest purposes of holy obedience. They come to commemorate him who gave his life a sacrifice for sin; and they should come with a 'godly sorrow which worketh repentance.' They come to commemorate benefits of inestimable worth; and they should come with fervent gratitude and strong affection. They come to commemorate the most pure and holy Being that ever appeared on earth; and they should come with the resolution to transcribe into their own life, as far as they can, the lineaments of the spotless character they are to contemplate in this ordinance.

Christian believer! If thou art not a communicant, reflect, I beseech thee, on the inestimable blessings which Christianity has conferred upon

thee, and then ask thyself, whether He, who descended from ineffable glory in heaven, and became a suffering pilgrim on earth to bring thee these blessings, — who lived and died to save thee, — is not entitled to thy obedience, and worthy of thy commemoration in this ordinance of his own appointment.

Look at thy condition, and contrast it with that of the benighted heathen, the slave of superstition, worshipping the work of his own hands, or the vilest reptiles, or beings whom he has invested with the most terrific and disgusting attributes, and whom he seeks to appease by the most degrading rites.

Art thou a parent? And why is it that thou art not doing violence to the feelings of thy nature by sacrificing thy children to some imaginary deity, unrelenting, revengeful, who will be propitiated only by the blood of these innocent victims?

Art thou a man? And why is it that thou art permitted to assert thy native dignity, and to cultivate the noble powers with which the Creator has endowed thee; and how is it that thou art enjoying the blessings of civilization and rational liberty?

Art thou a woman? And how is it that thou art elevated from the low and servile state in which unenlightened heathenism has placed thee, to be the companion and the friend of man?

Art thou a sinner? And where dost thou find thy hope of mercy? Art thou the heir of sorrow, and where dost thou look for consolation? Art thou mortal, and what is it that has dispelled

the darkness which enveloped the 'valley of the shadow of death?' Art thou immortal, and where hast thou learned thy nature and thy destiny?

There is but one answer to all this; and if thou art faithful to thy own convictions, Christian believer, it is the answer thou wilt give to thyself. 'It is Christianity which has made me to differ from the poor benighted heathen. It is Christianity which has elevated me to my present condition; saved me from doing cruel violence to the feelings of my nature by the immolation of my offspring on the altar of superstition; informed me how I may obtain mercy and find forgiveness; opened to me a source of consolation; dispelled the darkness of the grave; taught me that I am immortal, and may aspire after an immortality of blessedness.'

Why art thou not now, then, manifesting thy gratitude by thy obedience? Why art thou not performing this service in memory of Him who has done so much for thee? a service which He himself enjoined, standing, as it were, on the verge of the grave, in the close of a life devoted to thy best interests; the interests of human kind.

Hast thou received the ordinance of baptism? Thou art then a member of the Church of Christ, and consistency requires of thee not to neglect a positive institution of that Church. Art thou conscious of sin? Repent and come to the Lord's table, that thou mayest be strengthened and confirmed in thy repentance.

Hast thou any fears of mysteries to alarm thee?

Come and discover that there are none. Dost thou suffer affliction? Come and behold the sufferings of Him who was 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,' and who drank with meek submission a cup of sorrow, far more bitter than can be mingled for thee; and learn of Him to be patient and resigned. Hast thou friends who love thee, and would do thee good? Come learn, more and more, to requite them by kind offices. Hast thou enemies who would injure thee? Come, and from the contemplation of his example, who on his cross prayed for his murderers, learn to forgive and bless them. Art thou happy? Come and testify thy gratitude. Art thou unhappy? Come, weary and heavy-laden, to Him, who will give thee rest.

## SERMON XXXV.

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 THE FOUNDATION OF EVERY ACCEPTABLE RELIGIOUS SERVICE.

1 Cor. v. 8. — LET US KEEP THE FEAST, NOT WITH THE LEAVEN OF MALICE AND WICKEDNESS, BUT WITH THE UNLEAVENED BREAD OF SINCERITY AND TRUTH.

WE have in these words, addressed by a Christian apostle to his Christian converts, the foundation of every acceptable religious service. It does not consist in much or little speculative knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel; in the manifestation of much or little zeal in the dissemination of Christian truth; in the greater or smaller number of our religious exercises. It does not consist in belonging to any one of the numerous parties into which the kingdom of Christ is divided. It is found in all these parties, and is wanting in all. It is *sincerity*.

When we lift our voice in prayer to God, it is sincerity, and this alone, which gives it efficacy. It is not to the language that God has respect. It is not to the length. It is not to the earnestness and

fervor. We may cull the choicest expressions ; we may dress up our thoughts in the most beautiful language ; we may utter a multitude of words ; we may have a zeal which, like that of the Psalmist, may seem to 'consume us,' and all be of no avail.

On the contrary, we may use the most homely phrases ; we may utter a single sentence ; we may breathe a sigh ; and a prayer will go up to Heaven, and return in blessings upon us.

The prayer, which is of no avail, is the prayer of thoughtlessness, or of hypocrisy. The sacrifice is indeed laid upon the altar ; it may be richly adorned, but there is no fire to consume it. The prayer which is heard and answered, is the prayer of *sincerity*. It is the prayer which is offered under a deep sense of the *greatness* and *majesty* of God, and is therefore a reverent and humble prayer. It is the prayer which is offered with a deep conviction of the *wisdom* of God, and is therefore a submissive prayer. It is the prayer which is offered with a lively sense of the *goodness* of God, and is therefore a grateful prayer. It is, finally, the prayer which is offered in the recollection of the infinite purity and holiness of God, and His utter abhorrence of sin, and is therefore a contrite prayer. With no other dispositions than these should we pray, and, praying with these dispositions, we shall not fail to be heard.

I do not mean that when we pray for temporal blessings, we shall always receive what we ask.

God is wiser than we are, and may know that what we ask is not what is best for us. But I mean that our prayers will never be unavailing, for they will bring us to a nearer acquaintance with God, secure to us a larger portion of his grace and favor, and if our request is denied, we shall be prepared to submit and adore.

In every religious service in which we are engaged, sincerity is equally important. We may come up to worship God, in the church, twice or thrice on the Sabbath, yes, every day in the week; our demeanor may be grave and serious, but without sincerity it will avail us nothing with God. 'If we regard iniquity in our heart, God will not hear us.' The service which is acceptable, is that of the heart. 'God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.'

I mention one other service, and it is that to which our text may appear to have special reference, the service which is commemorative of our Saviour's death. In this, as in every other, it is *sincerity* alone which constitutes its value in the sight of God. It is not our assent,—with the fullest persuasion of its truth,—to the longest creed that has ever been written. It is not our detail, with whatever minuteness, of our religious experiences; it is not our solemnity; it is not our tears; which make us worthy communicants. It is our coming from a conviction that it is our duty to come, in obedience to the will of Christ, and in commemoration of Him. It is our coming with

sorrow for our past sins, and with resolutions of amendment. It is our coming with gratitude for our spiritual blessings, and with a resolution, by the grace of God, to improve them. In this,—I repeat,—as in every other service, it is *sincerity* alone which constitutes its value in the sight of God. Without the dispositions I have mentioned, we should not come. With these dispositions we *may* come, and shall come with acceptance. There is nothing to repel the approach of any one who has a sincere desire to honor and obey the Saviour. For such there is a place provided, and we will bid them welcome.

Are they sensible of unworthiness? So are we. Are they surrounded by temptations in the world? So are we. And therefore we have come; and therefore we bid them come also. Sensible that we are sinners, we come to Christ, the *Saviour* of sinners. Sensible of the temptations of the world, we come to the institution God has appointed, that we may acquire additional strength to meet and overcome these temptations. It is one of the means which God has appointed to make us better, and we thankfully use it. We are sure it will do us no harm. It is our hope and our prayer that it may do us good.

In this hope, in regard to our fellow Christians, who desire to be better, and are laboring by the grace of God, to become so, we invite them to join with us in this memorial of our common Lord. We desire only sincerity; a sincere purpose of holy obedience. Of this sincerity, we are not constitu-

ted the judges. There may be a pompous profession which is hollow and insincere; and on the other hand, there may be a silent, unostentatious performance of duty, which has the sanction of conscience, and the approbation of God.

*They* take upon themselves a fearful responsibility who, by creeds and confessions, by forms and ceremonies, by any mode of human device, prevent a single sincere conscientious Christian from complying with the dying injunction of his Lord and Master. What! Shall the command to do this be given by the Saviour, and reiterated by his apostles, and shall a Christian minister, or a Christian church, assume and exercise the right of preventing a humble believer from obeying this command? On whom, in this case, will the blame of disobedience rest? Not on him, surely, who comes, with every appearance of sincerity, and asks for admission, and is forbidden. No! But *on those who forbid.*

I have said that *sincerity* is required; and sincerity implies an earnest endeavor to be, and to do, all that our religion demands of us. If we have not yet attained to the full position of this desire, it is not a reason for our keeping back from the Lord's Supper. It is a reason for our coming, that we may avail ourselves of the influence which this ordinance is adapted to exert on our character and conduct.

When our Saviour first gave it to his disciples, he knew that they were far from having *attained.*

He knew that they would all desert him when he stood most in need of their sympathy, and that one of them would disown him; but he gave them these memorials in token of his affection, as the future means of reminding them of their ingratitude, and of prompting them to watchfulness and prayer. St. Paul, too, reprehends the conduct of his Corinthian converts whilst partaking, in an irreverent, unworthy manner, of the Lord's Supper, for they made it a drunken and riotous feast; but he does not forbid their participation of it. He would have them partake with seriousness, and self-examination. 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.'

Let *us* examine ourselves, Christian communicants. 'Let us keep the feast, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of *sincerity and truth.*' Amen!

## SERMON XXXVI.

## THANKSGIVING.

Psalms l. 14. — OFFER UNTO GOD THANKSGIVING.

THE various duties of religion are not equally easy to be fulfilled. They require more or less exertion; higher or lower degree of fortitude and resolution, greater or smaller sacrifices, according to the different circumstances in which we are placed.

Sometimes there is a favorite passion to be subdued, which often appears to 'gain fresh strength from fresh opposition,' and therefore requires unwearied attention, and new and painful efforts.

Sometimes there is an injury to be forgiven which has mortified our pride, and wounded our sense of honor; an enemy to be loved and regarded as a brother, although the heart may, at first, revolt against him, and we are prompted to turn away from him in horror.

Sometimes the dearest worldly interests, — property, liberty, life, — are to be immolated on the altar of religion.

It is no such trial of fortitude, and forbearance, and self-command, it is no such relinquishment of our worldly interests, that is now required at our hands; although when religion calls, even for such

exertions, and such sacrifices, we must be ready to make them, and, however painful the effort, it will be abundantly compensated by the reward.

We come here to-day, my hearers, to perform a duty at once natural and delightful; to offer, on the altar of gratitude, the oblation of grateful hearts.

Yes, for it is not the voice of authority, merely, that bids us open our churches, and enter to pay our vows at the shrine of gratitude. It is the voice that speaks within us, and tells us what we are; and what we have; and what we hope; and bids us acknowledge, with humble, fervent adoration, that all is of God.

Childhood, as it sports in happy thoughtlessness, has been taught to think of God who makes it happy. Youth, as it treads the path of knowledge and listens to the voice of instruction, is taught to think of God who gives it the power to be wise. Manhood, as, with thoughtful, anxious brow, it toils in its vocation, remembers God, who crowns its labors with his blessing. Old age, as it bends its feeble steps to the grave, remembers God who has 'carried it even to gray hairs,' and has not failed it when its strength has failed.

And childhood, and youth, and manhood, and old age come up together to pour their votive offering on religion's altar.

I would fain believe that it is the impulse of the heart which brings them hither, and bids them trace the hallowed footsteps of their fathers to the house of God.

They are here, expecting, perhaps, to have their emotions portrayed in language, and brought home again to their bosoms with renewed and quickened energy.

But how shall this expectation be answered? The full heart cannot utter its own feelings, and how can it describe the feelings of others?

It can 'muse in silence, and the fire will burn,' but cannot *speak* of all that GOD has done for itself and for those whom it would impress with a deeper sense of obligation.

Language is too imperfect and feeble, — the language of angels is too imperfect and feeble, — to tell the number or value of the benefits of GOD.

It is a love unspeakable, inconceivable, that has been manifested in our creation; in the preservation of life and in its innumerable blessings; and, above all, — far above all, — in the redemption that has been wrought out for us through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

Nature, with her unnumbered tongues, proclaims through all her works, the goodness of her Author; but religion speaks it in tones of yet deeper interest. 'HE spared not His own Son, but gave him up to the death for us all. And He that spared not his own Son, shall he not with Him also freely give us all things?'

Look within you, intelligent, immortal beings, and by the light which GOD has kindled in your breasts, read your obligations.

Look around you, objects of the Divine care and

kindness, and in the rich provision that is made for your happiness, read your obligations.

Look above you, Christians, candidates for the heavenly glory, and in the hopes which religion inspires, in the prospects which religion unfolds, read your obligations.

In your deliverance from danger and calamity; in your restoration from sickness and distress; in the consolation which has been imparted to you in the hour of sorrow; in the brightness of that favor which has dispelled the gloom that surrounded you; in the prosperity of your handiwork, and the blessing which has been vouchsafed upon your honest industry; in your family enjoyments, and the heart-felt comfort arising from the closer and more endearing connections of life; in the assistance you have received from others, and in the benefits by which you have been enabled to repay them; read your obligations.

You may feel them in every sensation. You may hear them in every breath. Every sensation should be a grateful one, and every breath should be praise to God.

Look abroad upon the earth, my hearers, and contrast your condition with the condition of those who are enveloped in the darkness of heathenism; or covered with the sable mantle of superstition; or groaning under the yoke of tyranny; or subjected to hard and burdensome exactions which deprive them of a large portion of the hard-earned fruits of their labor.

Then look back upon your own condition, enjoying the benign light of Christianity; possessed of a free constitution; and scarcely sensible of the burthen of sustaining the government which protects you, and the administration of the laws which secure to you the possession of your rights and privileges.

Again look round upon the earth; and compare your condition with the condition of those who are enduring the miseries of war; the bare recital of which is enough to freeze the blood, and harrow up the soul.

Behold a Christian nation, associated with our earliest and most interesting recollections; among whom the first of uninspired poets sang, the most eloquent of orators declaimed; and the chief of the apostles taught the knowledge of the only true God, struggling to break the yoke of bondage, and resume their rank among the nations of the earth, but struggling as yet in vain. Their country laid waste; its inhabitants butchered, or worse than butchered,—the victims of lust and avarice.

Who can read without shuddering, the fate of Scio and Cyprus? Who, without indignation, can hear this Christian people lifting up their supplicating voice for help, and not one Christian arm extended for their defence and rescue?

From this scene of horror turn your view to yourselves; and how great is the contrast!

Instead of the sound of the trumpet and the alarm of war; scenes of blood and carnage; villages

in flames, and fruitful fields converted into a barren, frightful waste ; you hear the sounds of busy industry ; witness the peaceful scenes of domestic comfort ; behold hamlets increasing into villages ; villages rising into cities ; and the hand of cultivation changing the barren waste into a fruitful field.

Confine your attention to your own country, and contrast your condition with that of those on whom are entailed the evils of slavery ; a miserable inheritance to the enslaver, and a monstrous injustice and cruelty to the enslaved ; an institution which disregards the tenderest charities of life ; sets at nought the most sacred relationships, — if, indeed, they be permitted to exist at all ; and, deaf to the cries of nature pleading for forbearance and compassion, ruthlessly tears asunder husband and wife, parent and child, to be bought and sold, and driven about like the beasts of the field.

I have visited the land of slavery, and I deem it appropriate in this connection, and on this day of thanksgiving, to repeat a part of what I said to you on my return from that visit.

“ I have travelled through a country which exhibits much that is sublime and beautiful ; with a climate milder than ours ; a rich, luxuriant soil ; and inhabited by a people intelligent and hospitable ; but I have returned contented, far more than contented, to our blessed New England, — though cold its climate and hard its soil, — whose fields are sown and tilled, and reaped by the hands of freemen.

“I have witnessed many of the evils and miseries, though by no means all the horrors of slavery; its deleterious effect on the intellectual and moral powers; its debasing, palsyng influence on the energies of the body and the mind.

“I have witnessed the consequent imperfect, miserable cultivation of the soil, and the destitution of those comforts which are enjoyed by our hardy and industrious yeomanry.

“I have witnessed, too, what is certainly a concomitant, if it be not a result, of the unwise and unrighteous institution to which I have referred. I mean the evils of the want of a proper system of education; of the establishment of parochial schools, and the means of early instruction which we possess.

“Above all, I have seen and felt the want of the means of religious instruction; of the public institutions of religion; — or rather the scanty measure in which they are enjoyed through the extensive country I have visited.

“How much did I miss, in my journeying, the ‘heaven directed spire,’ which adds so much to the interest and beauty of New England scenery; and denotes the observance of rites which are essential to the real welfare of any people.

“If there is a sceptic among you as to the important uses and value of public worship, I should want no better means for his conviction than to place him where they are not enjoyed.

I have mentioned these things, my hearers, not

surely to institute an invidious comparison, but to excite emotions of gratitude to Him 'who has made us' thus 'to differ' from our less favored brethren. They are evils which the wise and good among them much deplore. Let us not forget that to whomsoever much is given, from them will much be required."

Once more. Look at the condition of those, whether at home, or abroad, who are subject to the visitations of 'the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday;' and then turn to your own condition, breathing a pure and wholesome atmosphere, and exempt, in a great measure, from the influence of those malignant diseases to which they are subjected.

Author of our Being! Giver of all our blessings! Accept our grateful thanks. Fill us with a livelier sense of thy mercies, and help us, more and more, to live to thy glory.

Thus, my hearers, in the recognition of past and present mercies; in the anticipation of higher good; and in the exercise of grateful emotions, should we spend this day.

Blessed day! for all the recollections it has awakened, and all the devotion it has kindled, and all the happiness it has brought with it, and will still awaken and kindle and bring with it, till it ceases to be numbered with the days of the year.

Blessed day! It brings with it too many personal recollections, too many associations intimately blended with our tenderest feelings, — entwined

about the closest fibres of the heart; not to be regarded with deep interest, whether it come in joy, or whether it come in sadness. With it may come the living, on whom affection reposes, and with it *must* come the departed, on whom memory dwells.

It is the day, of all the days in the year, which brings together the past and the present; the days that now are, and the days that have long gone by; the friends with whom we still hold converse, and the friends with whom our spirits only can mingle.

Blessed day! Our fathers honored it, and we will honor it. Our fathers rejoiced in it, and we will rejoice in it. Our fathers hallowed it, and we will consecrate it to the purposes of thanksgiving. Children and youth! even now, though with me the frolicsome days of childhood and the ardent, glowing season of youth are past, I sympathize with you in your happiness on the return of this day.

Be thankful if you are permitted to enjoy it with your parents and those who are most dear to you; and when you are older,—if God should spare you to be older,—and those parents are no longer with you, be thankful for the sources of happiness you may then possess, as well as for those which, if you have been virtuous, memory will bring to you.

Be careful so to spend your early and mature life that you may look back upon those days, and call up those friends to remembrance, without the pangs of self-reproach.

And may we all *thus* be thankful. By the piety

of our lives, may we all testify our gratitude to HIM who has given us life, and crowned it with His mercy.

*Offer unto God thanksgiving.*

Nor should this be all. Piety should bring its offering of charity, and diffuse the happiness for which it renders praise. Grateful itself for the blessings of an indulgent Providence, it should give to others, as far as may be, the same motives of thankfulness which itself possesses. If it is truly grateful, it will not fail to do so.

‘The poor,’ said that compassionate Saviour whose office and delight it was to do good,—to lighten the burthens, and soothe the sorrows of the heavy laden,—‘the poor ye have always with you;’ and in saying this, he spoke volumes to the heart of sensibility, or rather to the heart that feels its obligations and responsibility as a Christian.

Go, then, my people, seek for the abodes of misery; bind up the broken-hearted; smooth the pillow of sickness, and bear up the departing spirit on the wings of your prayers.

Go, ‘eat the bread, and drink the sweet, and send a portion to them who have nothing.’

But, ere you go, leave here your gift before the altar, and then go and perform these works of mercy.

Let that gift be as large and generous as your circumstances will permit. It will not be misapplied. I pledge myself that it will not be misapplied.

It will open a stream which will flow in upon the

dry and barren soil of indigence, and refresh and make it fruitful. It will shed a gleam of comfort upon hearts which have few such gleams to cheer them. And it will come back to you in the sweet consciousness of well-doing. It will come back to you in the remembrance of the happiness you have conferred. It will come back to you in the approbation of HIM who, having heard the sigh of the miserable, has witnessed the bounty which converted it into an ascription of *thanksgiving*.

## SERMON XXXVII.

## ON TAKING THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW.

Matthew vi. 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31. — THEREFORE I SAY UNTO YOU, TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR YOUR LIFE, WHAT YE SHALL EAT, OR WHAT YE SHALL DRINK ; NOR YET FOR YOUR BODY, WHAT YE SHALL PUT ON. IS NOT THE LIFE MORE THAN MEAT, AND THE BODY THAN RAIMENT ?

BEHOLD THE FOWLS OF THE AIR : FOR THEY SOW NOT, NEITHER DO THEY REAP, NOR GATHER INTO BARNES ; YET YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER FEEDETH THEM. ARE YE NOT MUCH BETTER THAN THEY ?

AND WHY TAKE YE THOUGHT FOR RAIMENT ? CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD, HOW THEY GROW ; THEY TOIL NOT, NEITHER DO THEY SPIN.

AND YET I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT EVEN SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY WAS NOT ARRAYED LIKE ONE OF THESE.

WHEREFORE IF GOD SO CLOTHE THE GRASS OF THE FIELD, WHICH TODAY IS, AND TO-MORROW IS CAST INTO THE OVEN, SHALL HE NOT MUCH MORE CLOTHE YOU, O YE OF LITTLE FAITH ?

THEREFORE TAKE NO THOUGHT, SAYING WHAT SHALL WE EAT ? OR, WHAT SHALL WE DRINK ? OR, WHEREWITHAL SHALL WE BE CLOTHED ?

THERE are a few passages in the New Testament which appear to inculcate an entire dependence upon Providence, — without any exertion of our own, — for the supply of our temporal wants. The injunction is without any qualification : ‘ Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye

shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.'

These passages have often been misunderstood and perverted. They have sometimes furnished indolence an excuse for neglecting to make provision for the future; or misguided zeal with a reason for the same improvidence.

Happily for them, others have not felt themselves bound to so literal a compliance with the precept; or they would soon have felt the truth of the apostle's warning, 'HE THAT WILL NOT WORK, NEITHER SHALL HE EAT.'

To many serious minds, these injunctions have occasioned uneasiness and perplexity. The requisition was positive, yet impracticable. How far must it be followed, and how far could obedience with safety be dispensed with? To sceptical minds they have furnished food for ridicule; or, at least, weapons for assailing the truth of revelation.

Let not the idle and indolent imagine that they have any foundation in these passages whereon to build their hopes of exemption from labor.

Let not the serious be apprehensive whilst they are seeking for a competence, or even wealth, in the path of virtuous industry, that they are acting in opposition to the precepts of their Saviour, and the will of their God.

Let not the sceptical suppose that they have found in these instructions weapons for assailing, or instruments for undermining the truth of our religion. No. The explanation of these passages

is easy and satisfactory. They may be understood literally, without any impeachment of the wisdom of their Author or His divine authority.

The fact is, that with their original interpretation we have no concern. They were not addressed to us, but to the immediate disciples of our Lord; a part of whom, at least, had already been selected to preach his gospel, and their circumstances were very different from ours. ‘And seeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain; and when he was set, *his disciples came unto him, and he taught them.*’

They were going forth to propagate a new religion. It was important that they should give their entire, undivided attention to the work. At first, they were not to be stationary, but were to go about from place to place to sow the seeds of divine truth; in the faith that, if ‘some seed fell by the way-side,’ and ‘some in stony places,’ and ‘some among thorns, yet some would assuredly ‘fall into the good soil of an honest heart, and germinate, and bring forth fruit.’

They were to give themselves wholly to the work. They would, therefore, have no opportunity to labor for their subsistence; and they could not be careful about the means of subsistence, without a desertion, so far, of their sacred employment.

They had ‘cast away their fishing nets,’ and were going forth to be ‘fishers of men.’ They had relinquished the prospect of worldly wealth,—if they ever enjoyed it,—and were to look for a reversion in heaven.

HE who sent them out on an errand of love and mercy, would make provision for the supply of their wants.

AS HE required them to be sequestered entirely from the busy concerns of the world; they were encouraged to cast themselves upon the protection and support of His Providence.

HE heard the ravens cry, and cared for the fowls of the air; and would ‘He not much more care for them,’ intelligent, immortal beings, engaged in His service?

The plants of the earth, the lilies of the field were warmed into life by His sun, and were nourished by the dews and the rain from heaven, and how much were *they* better than these!

Yes, HE who commissioned them, would provide for them. The workman was worthy of his meat; and care would be taken that *that* meat should be given him.

In this confidence, they went forth without hesitation. And well they might; for the same voice which warned them that they were to ‘go as sheep among wolves,’ addressed them in the soothing language of encouragement. ‘Fear not, little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’

It is thus that we are to understand the passages to which I have referred, and with which our text is connected. The common explanation that our Saviour did not mean that they should be interpreted literally, is not satisfactory. The language

is as explicit as language can be ; and the circumstances vindicate its propriety.

It is true, that in some of the passages the original will perhaps admit of a different translation. 'Take no thought for the morrow,' for example, might perhaps have been rendered 'take no anxious, distressing thought;' for the words may be understood as implying restless solicitude ; and 'to-morrow' may be interpreted according to the Eastern phrase, as meaning all the time to come, however distant.

There is often a force in the original which cannot be given in our language without using terms which convey a still stronger meaning.

When our Saviour would express the far greater strength of the affection which must be felt for him than even for a parent, he uses a phrase, which, in the translation, conveys a very different meaning from that which he intended to convey. 'Except a man *hate* his father and mother, he cannot be my disciple.'

In the passage we are now considering, it is evident that our Saviour intended his disciples to understand that they were to cast themselves and their cares on God. They were to 'take no money in their purse, neither two coats, neither shoes nor yet staves.'

In the spirit of the injunction we are doubtless to find a lesson of moral instruction for ourselves.

To us they must be understood as forbidding the care about the future which is attended with dis-

trust, uneasiness and despondence. Such a care as engrosses, dejects, and distracts the mind. It forbids also a vain and useless curiosity about the issues of things which are in the hands of GOD. It forbids that provision for the present world which would make us forget that we were designed for another.

The religion of the Bible is a liberal, enlightened system. It recommends a stated abstraction from the business of life; the consecration of the seventh part of our time, as much as possible, to the special duties of religion. It recommends retirement from the world, for the purpose of self-examination, and the exercise of those pious affections which are due to our GOD; but it does not require that the exercises of piety, usually so called, shall constitute our whole, or even chief employment.

It addresses itself to men as engaged in the business of active life; sanctions their honest employments by its inculcations to industry, whilst, at the same time, it admonishes them to carry into every employment the fear of GOD.

The interpretation I have given of this discourse of our Saviour is strengthened, indeed I may say confirmed, by the passage in St. Luke, where a part of these admonitions to his disciples is repeated.

Our Saviour illustrates and enforces his admonitions to his disciples, by pointing their attention to the fowls of heaven, and the flowers of the field. 'Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your

Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ?

‘ And why take ye thought for raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore if GOD so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ? Therefore take no thought, saying what shall we eat ? or what shall we drink ? or wherewithal shall we be clothed ? ’

In the same school of nature, *we* may read lectures of heavenly wisdom, and gain improvement in the virtues of the Christian life. We may learn dependence on Providence and gratitude. We may learn from these humble instructors what many of the philosophers could not teach us, that we are not only the constant, but peculiar care of GOD ; and that if a sparrow does not fall to the ground without Him, much more are not we unnoticed and unprotected by His Providence.

We may learn, too, from the fragile and perishing plant, how precarious is our existence ; how momentary our duration on earth.

Nor is this all. We may learn that life will rise out of death and corruption ; that we shall spring from the grave like the seed which is buried in the ground ; and be invested with a brighter and more glorious raiment than the lilies of the field in all their beauty.

Such knowledge as this is open to all. It grows in every field, and meets us in all our paths. At this beautiful season, when, from the frequent showers which have visited and refreshed the earth, nature retains, even in summer, the verdure and freshness of spring; we can find it on every page of the book of nature which is spread out before us.

God is visible in all his works. In silent majesty, or beauty, or utility, they praise HIM.

It is by man that their songs of praise should have intelligent utterance.

‘GREAT AND MARVELLOUS ARE THY WORKS, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY; IN WISDOM THOU HAST MADE THEM ALL. THE EARTH IS FULL OF THY RICHES.’

## SERMON XXXVIII.

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### TEMPERANCE.

1 Corinthians, ix. 25. — TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS.

THERE is a crusade against intemperance, in its common acceptation, and there should be. It is a holy war. I am habitually for peace, but this is a warfare in which I can conscientiously and earnestly beseech you to engage.

The vice of intemperance, in this sense, cannot be portrayed in colors too dark and appalling. It is brutish, loathsome; the parent of sloth, and negligence, and want; of ill-humor, contention and murder; infamy, disease and death; destructive alike to the powers of body and soul; to present peace and future happiness.

It is the most dangerous of all vices, for it puts its miserable victim into the power of every other vice. It is not, therefore, a single vice, but like the evil spirit of whom we have a record in the gospels, 'its name is legion.'

It inflames the blood; disturbs the head; per-

verts the heart; and when the blood is inflamed, the head disturbed, and the heart perverted, what is there to prevent its miserable slave from becoming a prey to every temptation, and every folly in life?

‘Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contention? Who hath babblings? Who hath wounds without cause? They that tarry long at the wine; they that seek mixed wine. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.’

The strong man of the house being bound, the passions arise like robbers, and rifle his goods. Reason, the monarch of the soul, being, for a time, dethroned, the subjects spend themselves in the work of anarchy, and many a step has been taken, and many a deed done, the consequences of which have haunted the perpetrator through all his succeeding existence, making his days wearisome and his nights a burden.

We cannot be too much on our guard, then, to prevent the access of this calamity to ourselves, nor be too anxious to do all that we can reasonably and lawfully do, to avert, or remove it from others.

If there is any one in this assembly who is tampering with this enemy to his peace and welfare, let me earnestly entreat him to give it no place; no, not for a moment; to avoid every thing, to break off from every thing that may tend to make him the slave, the victim, of this degrading, loathsome, destructive vice!

What need have any of us of intoxicating drinks?

Why allow them a place in our house, except in the medicine chest?

If there be a parent here whose conscience testifies that he is chargeable with this intemperance, or with any fondness for intoxicating drink, I would say to him, 'Think of the evil that you are working in your sphere. You are bound to set a good example before your children, and how can this be done while you continue what you are? Remember that you do not stand alone in life, but that from you descends an influence upon your children. Yes, it may be upon your children's children, through many generations.'

But, in our zeal against this wide-spreading and destructive evil, there is danger that other kinds of intemperance will be overlooked. The apostle tells us that we must be 'temperate in *all* things.'

It concerns every one, therefore, whilst he is casting a stone at his poor, degraded fellow-creature who needs his pity, his labors, his prayers, to look to himself, and see if there is 'no beam in his own eye.' Intemperance is not confined to the excessive use of ardent spirits. There are those, I remark first,—and they are more numerous than is commonly imagined,—who are intemperate in the use of food, and who thus pervert what was designed for the preservation and support of life, into the instrument of its injury and destruction.

There is pain and uneasiness in the sensation of hunger; there is pleasure in its gratification. It has been so appointed by our wise and merciful

Creator, for the purpose of impelling us to seek the food which is essential to our subsistence. But many seem to imagine that this pleasure is the *end* of eating, and not the means to an end. The demands of nature are easily satisfied, and when these alone are considered, there is seldom danger of excess. But when we eat merely for pleasure, we go beyond the demands of nature, and are in danger of being led into all the evils of intemperance.

Gluttony is a most degrading, as well as pernicious vice. Its ill effects are hardly less to the individual than those of the intemperance before noticed. By deranging the physical system, it impairs the mental faculties, and, of course, the ability to fulfil, in a proper manner, the duties of life. Let us guard, then, against all approaches to this vice. It deserves our serious consideration that there are few who, in this particular, keep within the strict bounds of temperance, and who do not, therefore, in some measure, unfit themselves for the performance of their appropriate duties. The lightness of spirit, the cheerfulness of heart, the serenity of temper, the alacrity of mind, the vigor of the understanding, the obedience of the will, the freedom from bad desires, and the propensity to good ones, which are the fruit of a prudent, judicious self-denial in the particular I have mentioned, are inconceivable by those who have not experienced them.

Nor is it only those who are intemperate in eat-

ing and drinking, that are obnoxious to the charge of intemperance. The abuse of any of the passions is intemperance in a degree proportioned to the nature and measure of that abuse.

He who habitually indulges in excessive anger is intemperate. Licentiousness is intemperance, and intemperance of the lowest and most degrading kind. The miser and the spendthrift are intemperate; but liberality is temperance, for it is equally removed from covetousness on the one hand, and prodigality on the other.

And what shall we say of the violent partisan in politics and theology? — I do not say *religion*, for in religion there can be nothing but kindness, forbearance, and love.

Politics and theology! How much intemperance is here! What severity, and harshness, and bitter denunciation! How are men carried away by their prejudices! How do they lose their reason, and judgment, and temper, and often when, in principle, there is no difference at all.

There is a tendency in our nature to extremes. Good men, when engaged in the promotion of a worthy end, remember, — it may be, — the injunction of the apostle that it is good to be zealously affected in a good thing; but too often forget that the same apostle has told us ‘there is a zeal that is not according to knowledge.’

Even the wise and judicious suffer themselves to be betrayed by the weak minded and enthusiastic, into measures which, in the exercise of their cool,

deliberate judgment, they would not approve. Nothing eminently great or good, I am aware, can be effected without zeal and enthusiasm, but these are perfectly consistent with wisdom and discretion, and should never exist without them. I shall not be misunderstood, I trust, when I say that I have witnessed, with much pain, the exhibition of intemperance in the cause of temperance; and I have much regretted that this noble cause should be so deeply 'wounded in the house of its friends.' The use of hard words is not so efficacious as sound argument.

Let not any of those who are engaged in the traffic of ardent spirits, — and not a few honorable and excellent men, as I well know, are so, — be prevented by harsh denunciation, from taking a serious, calm and deliberate view of this matter; whether the dreadful effects of the evil use of ardent spirits does not make it a duty which they owe to God and man, to strike off from their business this poisonous branch of it.

For myself, I would say that I know not what would tempt me, — not the wealth of the Indies, — no, not the treasures which the world contains, — would tempt me to have on my soul the burden, even of an apprehension, that I had been instrumental in the corruption, degradation, ruin, of one single fellow-being. Still less, that, — as in the ramifications of society, it might be, — I had been instrumental in the corruption and ruin of thousands of my fellow-beings for time and eternity.

How could I contemplate the family, once united, comfortable and happy, now, through my agency, disunited, poor and miserable?

How could I look upon that wife and those children, whose husband and father I had transformed from a protector, supporter, kind and tender friend, into,—I will not say a brute,—I would not so much dishonor the inferior creation who obey the impulses of natural affection,—but, into a monster, without natural affection, regardless of the closest ties, dead to the tender charities of life; a slave himself, and yet the cruel tyrant and oppressor of those whom he once had loved and cherished, and whom, by the most sacred obligations, he is bound to love and cherish always. How could I lift up my face before my God and Judge, whose image, in the soul of my brother, I had cruelly defaced or destroyed? The thought of it would haunt me by day and by night. On every breeze would come to me the lamentations,—if not the maledictions,—of the broken-hearted and miserable.

No! the gain of the whole world could be no compensation for the thought that I had destroyed a single soul. ‘He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins.’ But not so, he who encourageth the sinner in the error of his way, or tempts him to sin. To him, the language of Scripture is, ‘Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, and maketh him drunken!’

‘They that turn many to righteousness, shall

shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars forever and ever.'

*Be temperate in all things.* My text is itself a sermon. It has been preached to you here. Preach it to yourselves, my hearers, at home and abroad. Carry it with you into your families, your business, your recreations. Be temperate in your feelings, your passions, your words and actions. Be temperate in your joys, and temperate in the indulgence of your sorrows.

It is by temperance in all things, that we are to 'lay aside the weight' that would encumber us on our Christian race.

'They that strive for the mastery,' says the apostle, 'are temperate in all things.' *They* did it to obtain a 'corruptible crown;' WE, AN INCORRUPTIBLE.

## SERMON XXXIX.

## MAKING HASTE TO BE RICH.

Proverbs xxvii. 20.—HE THAT MAKETH HASTE TO BE RICH, SHALL  
NOT BE INNOCENT.

THE book of Proverbs is a store-house of practical wisdom. It is so justly founded on the principles of human nature, and so adapted to the permanent interests of man, that it agrees with the manners of every age, and contains rules for the direction of conduct in every rank and condition of life, however varied in its complexion, or diversified in its circumstances. It would be well if this book were more diligently studied at the present day. The numerous embarrassments which are constantly occurring, are conclusive evidence that its maxims are not known, or, if known, are disregarded. Though not universally and invariably applicable, and though not always to be understood in a literally strict sense, without any exceptions, yet there is enough to serve as a sure and safe guide in the business of life.

• I am not certain that a due attention to the declaration of my text would not be sufficient to prevent all the difficulties, the ruin and distress

which, in the operations of trade, so often take place. It is, probably, *making haste to be rich*, that is the cause of all this; and surely if there were not other and greater evils, — if it did not lead to the absorption of the mind by worldly cares, and an unremitted devotion to worldly business, — ‘He that maketh haste to be rich cannot be innocent.’

1. In the first place, making haste to be rich leads to *over-trading*; to hazardous, perhaps to rash and imprudent, speculations. He that maketh haste to be rich, is not satisfied with moderate profits in a safe and prudent line of business. He must needs project and over-trade. ‘He considereth not,’ as saith the author of my text, ‘that poverty shall come upon him.’ A little consideration would show him that poverty is the ordinary consequence of adventuring in trade beyond what his capital admits and justifies. Demands often come before returns, and returns may *never* come, — at least in proportion to the sum at stake.

Attend to the history of those who have failed in the pursuit of wealth. The most frequent cause of their failure is hastening to be rich by over-trading. Attend to the history of those who have succeeded. The most frequent cause of their success, is prudent, moderate, persevering industry.

I grant that you may point to hundreds, who have succeeded in the foolish, sinful course my text condemns; but tell me how many thousands have been overwhelmed in ruin and misery by it.

I have been told, by the wise and observing, that

of those who come to this place to engage in mercantile pursuits, more than one half, — perhaps two-thirds, — are disappointed, and become embarrassed, or become bankrupt.

It is owing to over-trading, and to another evil which leads to over-trading, and arises from a ‘haste to be rich,’ I mean the practice of excessive *suretyship*. ‘Be not thou one of those that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts.’

I confess that I approach this subject with some hesitation. Not because I have any doubts, or because I have any apprehensions in delivering my opinion, but because experience has led me to fear that it is a fruitless task to oppose it. I should long since, however, have desisted from preaching, if I had been discouraged by the want of the fruit I expected from my preaching. In a multitude of cases we are obliged to adopt the plaintive, desponding complaint of the prophet, ‘I have labored in vain, and spent my strength for nought.’

I have said excessive suretyship. I would not condemn all suretyship. Even the wise author of my text does not wholly forbid it. There are cases in which he says, ‘An honest man is surety for his neighbor,’ though at the same time he says, ‘A man void of understanding becomes surety.’ These assertions appear contradictory, but are not really so. To lend, and to become surety, are offices of friendship which we may sometimes impose upon ourselves, but we must be careful not to exceed the proper limits. If it be to serve a friend in a case of

strong necessity, *and for a sum we can afford to lose*, the case is clear. 'Lose thy money for thy brother and thy friend.'

By excessive suretyship, I mean an amount which exceeds the bounds of propriety. These boundaries are exceeded when you become surety for such an amount as will essentially injure you, if you should be called to pay it. 'If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take thy bed from under thee?' 'Suretyship hath undone many a good estate, and shaken them like a wave of the sea. Mighty men hath it driven from their houses, so that they wandered among strange nations.'

The boundaries of propriety are also exceeded, when you become surety for so large an amount as will tempt your friend to hazard so much as will ruin him, if he should be unsuccessful, and perhaps hang a millstone about his neck, from which he cannot free himself.

To become surety for more than you can afford to lose without distress, is a cruel injustice to your family and those who may look to you for support and assistance. To become surety for so much as will tempt another to risk more than there is a strong probability, — a moral certainty, — he will be able to repay, is an act of cruelty to him. You may be accessory to his ruin. You may be the cause of it. How many young persons have been ruined by the cruel kindness of their wealthy friends, in lending them their names for a large amount! How many have themselves been ruined

by lending their names for an amount, the loss of which they could not sustain !

I have often quoted, and think it well to quote in this connection, the declaration of the apostle, ‘ He that provideth not for his own, especially those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.’

Now reflect, I beseech you, when you are about to give your name as surety for another, whether you are not subjecting yourselves to this denunciation. Reflect whether you are not about to sign the death-warrant to the prosperity,—perhaps the existence,—of those who are nearest and dearest to you. Reflect on your wife and children, and your aged parents. Reflect on the poor whom you might relieve by your bounty ; the works of piety and utility you might promote by your benefactions. ‘ Shall I be the author of misery to my family ? Shall I, to serve one child, beggar *all* my children ? ’—perhaps to serve a stranger,—it may be, to serve one who is utterly unworthy of the favor, and is deceiving me with false pretences at the moment he is soliciting this act of kindness ?

The character of such a one is thus fitly drawn by the author of my text. ‘ Many, when a thing was lent them, reckoned it to be found, and put them to trouble that helped them. Till he hath received, he will kiss a man’s hand, and for his neighbor’s money will speak submissively ; but when he should repay, he will prolong the time and return words of grief, and complain of the times. ‘ The wicked borroweth and payeth not again.’

I have spoken of suretyship as a cause of embarrassment and bankruptcy. But I have sometimes heard of this language being used in connection with pecuniary obligations contracted by suretyship. 'A man is under an obligation to pay his *own* debts, but not to pay the debts of others.'

His *own* debts! Whose debt is that for which he has become responsible? Whose debt is that which he has given a pledge he will pay, if the principal should fail to pay it when called upon to do so?

Is *he* under no obligation to pay on the faith of whose suretyship, on the sight of whose name, the money was loaned? Can any conscientious man use such language as this? 'My soul come not thou into their secret. Unto their assembly mine honor be not thou united.' There is as sacred an obligation to pay such a debt as any debt that can be contracted. Nay, possibly, the obligation may be more sacred than on him to whom the money was lent, because on the surety, in many, if not most cases, the chief reliance for payment is placed. It is for the debtor to remunerate his surety when he is able to do so. It is his duty to remunerate all his creditors to the utmost farthing, when it is in the power of his hand to do it.

I am sensible that, in the vicissitude of human affairs, it has been the lot of not a few of you, my friends, to experience embarrassments and difficulties in your business transactions; but it affords me the highest satisfaction to believe that no one who

now hears me, has, under such embarrassments, forfeited his integrity, or lost any thing of the respect and confidence he had enjoyed.

It is the lot of all to experience disappointments and misfortunes. '*Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth!*'

I have heard of those, — but not among you, — my hearers, who contract debts without the prospect or intention of paying them; who 'enter into leagues to deceive;' who pervert the relations of life; transferring goods from one to another, to defraud their creditors; who 'live at ease, and drink wine in bowls, and chant to the sound of the viol,' while their creditors languish; who betray their trust, and convert to their own use, what was given them for the benefit of others; who surrender nothing that they can secrete; are partial to their creditors; insult those whom they have injured, and pique themselves on the tranquillity with which they can bear to be called villains.

Compassion will and should be felt for one who has lived in affluence and become bankrupt; but if he has been fraudulent, has defrauded his creditors, has bought and built, that he might live luxuriously, the compassion should rather fall on the friend whom he has betrayed; the trader and artificer whose economy he has deranged; the servant who entrusted him with his wages in an evil hour; the widow whom he had caused to weep over destitute children, and execrate him, it may be, in the bitterness of her soul.

Alas! When the bustle of life is over, he who has betrayed the confidence of friendship; defrauded the trader and the artificer of the fruits of their honest diligence; laid his sacrilegious hand on the portion of the widow and the fatherless; if his conscience be at all awakened,—must needs have bitter remembrances of the past, and fearful anticipations of the future.

It is ‘judgment come beforehand.’ But not fully come. Would that it were so!

It is the premonition of conscience of a retribution yet to come, in the awards of eternity.

‘A FAITHFUL MAN SHALL ABOUND WITH BLESSINGS; BUT HE THAT MAKETH HASTE TO BE RICH, SHALL NOT BE INNOCENT.’

## S E R M O N   X L .

## CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY.

[Preached before the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and others in North America, 1830, and first printed at that time.]

Luke xii. 48. — UNTO WHOMSOEVER MUCH IS GIVEN, OF HIM SHALL MUCH BE REQUIRED.

WE cannot contemplate, for a moment, our condition as intellectual and moral beings, as experiencing continual protection, and as enjoying the light and privileges of Christianity, without a deep conviction of the kindness and love of God.

We behold around us innumerable creatures unconscious of the value of existence, insensible to the profusion of beauty and magnificence which surrounds them, and incapable of the enjoyment which results from the cultivation of the powers of the understanding, and the exercise of the affections of the heart. We behold multitudes of our fellow-creatures, possessed of like faculties and affections with ourselves, either destitute of the means of intellectual and moral improvement, or enjoying but the partial and imperfect possession of them; dwelling in the region of heathen darkness and

superstition, or placed in circumstances which exclude them from the full enjoyment of gospel light.

By the condition in which we are placed, the most solemn obligations are imposed upon us. No talent which God has given us should be neglected, and no means of improvement with which He has furnished us, should be unimproved. If He has given us 'more understanding than the beasts of the field, and made us wiser than the fowls of heaven,' it is, that we may devote our powers to noble purposes, and that, being so much exalted by nature above the animals around us, we may rise superior to the enjoyments of mere animal life. If He has distinguished us above many of our fellow-creatures by the means of knowledge; if He has favored us with the instructions and promises and discoveries of the gospel; if the Sun of Righteousness has shone upon us with full and unclouded effulgence; it is, that we may be guided in our opinions by the light which it conveys to the understanding, and be the subjects of that holy influence which it sheds upon the heart and the life. If, aware of our weakness, and the power of sensible objects to draw us from our duty, He has appointed institutions adapted to strengthen our purposes of obedience, and to counteract the effect of the objects around us, it is, that by the observance and use of these institutions, we may be assisted in attaining the end for which the gospel was given us.

Possessed, then, of rational and moral capacities, we should not be satisfied with low attainments in

knowledge and goodness. It is by the mind, the immaterial and immortal principle within us, that we resemble the Deity, and it is only by the cultivation of this principle that the resemblance can be preserved. It is by the mind, the immaterial principle within us, that while on earth, we are susceptible of pure and exalted enjoyment, and that, in heaven, we may attain to ineffable and eternal felicity; and it is only by the cultivation and improvement of this principle, that the purest enjoyment of earth, and the most exalted felicity of heaven, can be secured by us. Enjoying, too, the light and privileges of Christianity, we should use them for the purpose of preparing ourselves, by the grace of God, for our high destination. Communicating to us the most important and interesting truths relating to our Creator and ourselves, we should study the Scriptures, that our minds may be enlightened by the truths they contain, that we may be guided by the instructions they impart, and may transcribe into our characters the examples of piety and virtue which they display. Favored with institutions intended and adapted to advance the purposes for which we were created intelligent and immortal beings and were indulged with the blessings of the gospel, we should yield to these institutions a strict and diligent observance.

But this is not all. We are to cultivate our own powers, and improve our own light, and use our own means of religious and moral instruction, not only that we may advance our own benefit, but be

useful also to others. We are formed for society. We have social affections. We depend upon society for much of our comfort and happiness. Our duties in this state are mutual and reciprocal. Receiving from others, we must impart to others, in return. Nor is this to be confined to those from whom we have received direct and personal benefits. Deriving advantage from the social state, we must labor to meliorate, improve, and elevate that state wherever it exists.

Hence results the duty of diffusing the means of instruction; for the wisest of men has long ago told us, what, indeed, our own observation abundantly confirms, that 'for the soul to be without knowledge, is not good.' Hence, especially, results the duty of diffusing *religious* instruction; for one almost as wise, at a much later period, has left it on record as the fruit of his researches and experience. 'That there never was found in any age of the world, either philosophy, or sect, or religion, or law, or discipline, which did so highly exalt the public good, as the Christian faith.'

But you need not the opinion of Lord Bacon, Christians, to convince you of the worth of Christianity. No, — you are fully aware of its importance to the public welfare, and to private virtue and happiness; how essential it is to the progress of civilization and the useful arts; how much it elevates the tone of public morals; and how powerful an influence it exerts where 'law and discipline' have no control. You are fully aware of its

beneficial effects on our personal condition, and on the relations of domestic life; what light, and comfort, and joy it imparts wherever its influence is felt; how much contentment, and patience, and resignation, and hope it inspires in poverty, and sickness, and sorrow, and death; how it infuses sweetness into the bitterest cup, and tinges with brightness the darkest cloud of calamity; how it has lighted up the passage of the grave, and presented to the inquiring eye of faith a brighter region beyond it. Yes,—it ‘has brought life and immortality to light;’ it has opened the gates of the tomb, loosed the cerements of the dead, and given back the pious departed to the faith of surviving relatives.

In the chamber of sickness, it has smoothed the pillow of the dying, filled a void in the heart which *nothing else* could fill, removed a reluctance to die which nothing else could abate, whispered peace to the departing spirit, and, like an angel from heaven, beckoned it upward to the abodes of everlasting rest and joy.

‘THANKS BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT!’ How many hearts, which have experienced its cheering encouragements, its divine supports, its animating hopes, will respond when I repeat, ‘Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!’

Such, my hearers, so efficacious, is the religion we have received, and which it is our duty, as there is need, and we have opportunity, to impart to others. Wherever the heralds of salvation are sent,

we should devoutly wish them a blessing from the Lord; and to every rational, practicable plan for promoting the diffusion of Christian truth, and of course advancing the best interests of mankind, we should afford, as we have ability, our patronage and aid.

If there is a prospect of success, we must scatter our seeds in the wilds of Patagonia, *cast our bread upon the waters* of the Ganges, open a fountain of life in the Arabian desert, and kindle a flame, which shall diffuse light and heat, upon the mountains of the frozen pole. At least, we must *pray* that the kingdom of God may come, and we may not condemn, however we may hesitate to assist, the feeblest and most unpromising effort.

To human reason, nothing could appear more wild and extravagant than the original project of establishing the Christian Religion, with so many obstacles to overcome, and such trifling and insignificant means for effecting it. Without doubt, if it had been the work of man, it would soon have come to nought. Yet it stood and flourished, and extended itself. 'It has sent forth its boughs to the sea, and its branches to the rivers,' and, from past experience, we may well believe, that the time is hastening on, when all nations shall repose under its foliage, and be refreshed by its fruit.

It is not, however, to such extensive views, to such large and diffusive exertions, however honorable and useful, that we are called by the venerable Society, which I have the honor now to address. It

confines its attention to our own continent, labors to meliorate the condition of the natives of our own forests, extends its helping hand to the piously disposed in our new settlements, and assists in rebuilding the waste places of our Zion.

In this comparatively limited, but actually extensive field of usefulness, it has long and successfully labored. Its efforts to communicate divine and human knowledge to the Aborigines have not been unavailing; and of late, from a change in the mode of operation which experience has suggested, there is the prospect of a richer harvest of good.

Of the instruction it has given to the young who were growing up without knowledge; the warning it has addressed to the careless and irreligious who were *living without God*, the conviction it has brought to the unbelieving who were *without hope* in the world; the comfort it has spoken to the desponding; the consolation it has afforded the afflicted, and the peace it has imparted to the dying, who, without its benevolent interposition, might have died in their sins; of all this, the journals of its missionaries, and the reports of its committee, will abundantly testify.

Its means of usefulness are in no degree commensurate with its opportunities. If it limits its views, as required by its charter, to the northern section of our own continent, still, a field is open before it sufficiently large to occupy its whole attention, and incalculably more than sufficient to exhaust its resources; reaching from the Atlantic to

the Pacific, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Ocean and the frozen shores of Greenland. But it is only in its charter that it takes so wide a range. Over this extended space, it can cast only an anxious, and, but for the *sure word of prophecy*, a hopeless glance. It must return to a narrower sphere, happy if within this sphere it can do something to diffuse the blessings of civilization, and extend the bounds of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Conscious of the dignity and importance of the objects which it labors to promote, it is not ashamed to solicit your coöperation. In doing this, it calls you to the most honorable office, that of 'fellow-workers with God;' to the best service, that of dispensing the Bread of Life; to the highest reward, the reward of those who have 'turned many to righteousness, and who shall shine as the stars forever and ever.'

Nor does it call you to a fruitless service, for, whilst it bids you obey the voice which cries from the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God,' it invites you to hear the encouraging promise, 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.'

Would you be instrumental in accomplishing this glorious design? Would you promote the spread of a religion which is productive of effects so beneficial, which thus softens the most rugged face of nature, converts the dreary waste *into a fruitful field*, and causes the *solitary place* to echo the notes of

grateful praise? Would you bear your part in reclaiming the wandering savage, in teaching him to know and *feel* 'the charities of father, son and brother,'\* and in giving him a *home* of love and peace and piety?—cast in your offering. To objects such as these, it will be faithfully applied. 'Freely ye have received, freely give.'

The apostles of our Lord, and many of the early Christians, sustained the loss of every thing, but a good conscience, and the hope of heaven, that they might bring others to a participation of the heavenly treasure which was entrusted to them. *They* were not satisfied with *enjoying* its benefits, but labored, incessantly, to *diffuse* them. To their exertions, to the labors and sacrifices of these Christian Missionaries and their successors, are we indebted for the exalted rank we hold, and the immortal hopes we entertain as Christians, and, as far as circumstances demand, and opportunities allow, shall we not emulate their efforts?

Consider, I beseech you, my friends, whilst you are providing for the *temporal* comfort of your fellow-creatures, whether you have done enough for their spiritual and *eternal* interests? By aiding some species of charity, you *may* encourage idleness and vice, and thus instead of lessening, may increase the amount of real suffering. But it is far otherwise with regard to the charity which

\* Milton.

I now recommend. By the diffusion of religious knowledge, you furnish the strongest incitements to industry, and the most powerful motives to virtue; for religion hath said, 'He that provideth not for his own, especially those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' Religion also hath said, 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.'

My hearers, we have received much, and much will be required of us. Highly exalted in point of privilege, it will be expected that our views will be enlarged, and our aims proportionably elevated. Happy will it be for us if we diligently improve the talents which have been given us, direct our steps by the light which has been imparted, faithfully observe the institutions which have been appointed for our benefit, and promote, as we can, the improvement and happiness of our fellow-men. Then, when our conflict with the power of temptation is ended, and our warfare with sin and with death is accomplished, we shall be able to give a good account of our stewardship, and, through the mediation of the Saviour, shall receive the reward of our fidelity in the kingdom of God.

## S E R M O N X L I .

## THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT.

[Preached at the Ordination of a Minister in Kennebunk, Maine, 1827.]

ROMANS viii. 9. — IF ANY MAN HAVE NOT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, HE IS NONE OF HIS.

THERE is much contention in the world respecting the essential qualifications of a Christian disciple. By many it is held, that the adoption of certain opinions,—distinct from a belief in the Christian religion and the possession of the Christian character,—alone can give a title to this appellation.

The Christian world is divided into a multitude of sects and denominations, differing from each other, more or less, in their modes of faith, though all acknowledging the same Master, and appealing to the same divine authority. With many of these, the reception of their views, and an adherence to their party, is essential to salvation. All, who are not within the limits they have drawn, must be lost. Hence the contempt,—mingled I trust with pity,—which is discovered, and the harsh epithets which

are used, by many professing Christians towards each other. Hence it is, that, with many, a bold, inveterate, intolerant zeal for favorite tenets, is a more effectual recommendation, and a stronger ground of attachment, than every other quality.

How strangely do such persons mistake the nature of true religion! How do they forget, that, in their zeal for modes of faith, they lose the *spirit* of the gospel, and that, without this spirit, their faith and their zeal can profit them nothing! Their faith, indeed, may be true in speculation, but, in its influence and effects, it loses this character. The faith of the gospel *worketh by love*, and no other faith is genuine. Their zeal, too, is kindled,—not at the Christian altar,—but by the flame of their own passions. It is false and unhallowed, destructive of the kindest and best feelings of their nature. Far better were it that their faith were less sound, and their temper more Christian.

‘IF ANY MAN HAVE NOT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, HE IS NONE OF HIS.’ You have here a test, my hearers, by which you may judge of your own character and standing as Christians, and of that of others. If you have not the spirit of Christ, you are none of his. If you perceive in others a destitution of this spirit, however loud their pretensions, however ardent their zeal, you may decide that they also are *none of his*.

And what was the spirit of Christ? It may be told in a few words. The spirit of Christ was *mEEK, hUMBLE, bENEVOLENT, DEVOUT*. Where this

spirit to any considerable degree exists, *there* is a genuine disciple of Christ. Where any considerable portion of it is wanting, there may be a disciple in *name*, but it is *only* in name. He may have the *form of sound words*, but there is no substance. I care not by what title he is designated, Orthodox or Heterodox, Unitarian or Trinitarian, Calvinist or Arminian,—he is not a Christian. He has not the *spirit of Christ*, and the word of God assures me *that he is none of his*.

It is high time that the language on this subject should be changed. The question should not be,—To what church does he belong? What is his creed? but—What is his *spirit*? Has he the spirit of Christ?

1. IS HE MEEK, or is he passionate?—forgiving, or revengeful?

There can be no such thing as a quarrelsome, revengeful Christian. It is a contradiction in terms. A forgiving spirit is essential to the Christian character. It was the spirit of Christ. He inculcated forgiveness by his precepts. ‘If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.’ He exhibited it in his life. ‘When he was reviled, he reviled not again;’ and when he poured out his soul an offering for sin, it was his dying petition, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they

do.' He hath left us an example that we should follow his steps.

2. IS HE HUMBLE, or is he proud and arrogant? disposed to elevate himself above those around him, and saying to others, in manners at least, if not in words, 'Stand by, for I am wiser, or richer, or holier than thou?'

There can be no such thing as a proud Christian. Humility lies at the foundation of the Christian character. 'The benediction on *the poor in spirit*, is the first of the beatitudes. It has the promise of the kingdom of heaven. It was the spirit of Christ. 'He humbled himself, and took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.'

3. IS HE BENEVOLENT, or is he hard, unfeeling, contracted?

There can be no such thing as an unkind, unfeeling Christian. There can be no such thing as an exclusive, censorious Christian. There may be the *form*, indeed, but the *spirit* is not there. There is a *name* to live, but he is *dead*. 'Love is the fulfilling of the law.' 'The end of the commandment is love. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.' On every page of the gospel, love, diffusive love, is inscribed in characters which cannot be misunderstood, — clear, distinct, indelible.

Can any one, then, be destitute of this spirit, and

yet a Christian? It was the spirit of Christ. His temper was most benevolent and kind. He has displayed to us the character of GOD as love, and has exhibited a perfect pattern of it in his own life.

#### 4. Is he DEVOUT?

Like him whom he professes to serve, is it *his meat and his drink to do the will* of his heavenly Father? Like him, does he have reference in all his conduct to GOD? Like him, does he hold frequent communion with GOD, and delight in such communion?

There can be no such thing as an undevout Christian. Piety to GOD is as essential to the Christian character, as justice and benevolence to man. If to love our neighbor is the *second* commandment in the law, to love the Lord our GOD is the *first*. From love to GOD must love to our neighbor proceed. No man can be a true Christian who merely complies with the *second* table in the law. He may be a believer in Christ, gentle in his disposition, humble in his deportment, benevolent and charitable in his conduct, and yet be destitute of an essential part of the Christian character. He may be all this, and have no love to GOD. He may be all this, and seldom or never think of GOD.

To have the spirit of Christ, he must be able to say, 'I am here, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him who sent me.' To have the spirit of Christ, he must be able to say, and to *feel* it when he says, 'The Father is with me.' To have the

spirit of Christ, he must be able to say, — and from his heart to say so, — however bitter the cup which he is called to drink, — ‘Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt.’

I repeat it, — let not the question be, — To what church does he belong? What is his creed? but, ‘What manner of spirit is he of?’ Where the spirit of Christ is most apparent in a church; where the simplicity, the humility, the piety, the mildness, the condescension, and forbearance of its members are most conspicuous; where a fervent, yet moderate zeal to promote, — not the interest of a party, — but vital godliness, is most eminently displayed, *there* is a church of Christ; a church formed on the model which its head has exhibited; a church which he will not disown.

To be meek, humble, benevolent, devout. Such is the Christian character. Such was the spirit of Christ. SUCH MUST BE OUR SPIRIT, OR WE ARE NONE OF HIS.

MY HEARERS! It was well said by Wesley, or by some one else, that there were no Calvinists nor Arminians in heaven; meaning that all would be united in one faith, as they would be bound together by one bond of affection.

Till we arrive in heaven, if, through the mercy of God, and the mediation of the Saviour, we are permitted to go there, we shall never be united in all the particulars that make up a human creed. Differing as men do in the structure of their minds,

in their constitutional temperament, in the circumstances in which they are placed, in the state of feeling in which they examine the sacred records, it is not wonderful that they should differ about every doctrine which admits of a difference of opinion. It would be wonderful indeed if they did not.

I am not prepared to say that they may not innocently differ, and that great good may not result from their disagreement. I am not prepared to say, that one mode of faith may not be better adapted to a certain stage of progress in cultivation and refinement, or to produce beneficial effects on certain minds and certain dispositions than another. Sure I am that this disagreement has led to the preservation of the sacred text in greater purity and uncorruptness, to the more diligent study of the Scriptures, and has given scope for the exercise of the best Christian grace,—the grace of charity. Alas! for good men, that this purpose is so seldom answered!

But is it visionary to believe that it will yet be answered? that we shall yet be united in this which constitutes the chief ornament of the Christian character? Is it visionary to believe that the professed disciples of Christ will possess so much of the spirit of their Master, as to be kept from *falling out by the way?*

How beautiful is the delineation which is given us of this heavenly grace of charity by the apostle! How beautiful is it in itself! How important,—

how necessary! We may have faith enough to remove mountains, and zeal enough to become martyrs for our faith, and beneficence enough to give all our goods to feed the poor, and yet, if we have not charity, we are nothing.

‘Charity never faileth.’ When tongues shall cease and speculative knowledge shall vanish away; when faith shall be lost in the vision of God, and hope in the enjoyment of celestial felicity, charity will remain, diffusing its benign influence through the abodes of the blessed, and binding those, — yea, and more than those, — together in heaven, whom it had united on earth.

Let me inculcate this charity upon you, my hearers, as that which it is most important for you to possess and cultivate and display. Do you bear the name of Christ? Be ambitious, above all things, to have this distinguishing characteristic of your Master. Remember the prayer which he offered up for his disciples, — for you, — for his followers in all times, — that they might be *one*, even as he and his Father were one. Remember the lesson of mutual kindness and good will which he enforced by an appeal to his own example, ‘By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.’

Cherish those benevolent affections which will prompt you to every kind office, and will restrain you from every unkind word, and from all severe and uncharitable judgment. If you find in the community of Christians those who are exclusive,

bigoted, censorious, — pity them and pray for them, but do not imitate them. If they revile you, if they circulate evil reports of your faith or your conduct, revile not, traduce not again. Return not railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. In as far as they have what you believe to be the truth, — rejoice; in as far as they have the spirit of Christ, — love it, and hope that, notwithstanding their bigotry, they may belong to Christ, and may be found in heaven. Yes, — and may find in heaven, and recognize as brethren, many, very many, with whom they disdained to hold communion upon earth.

Seek for Christian truth, — for the truth once delivered to the saints, but hold and speak the truth in meekness and love. Instead of prying, with too much curiosity, into the deep things of God, study, especially, what is plain and practical. Study, most especially, the instructions and the life of Jesus, never forgetting that THE FAITH WHICH IS ACCEPTABLE, IS NOT SO MUCH THE FAITH OF THE UNDERSTANDING AS OF THE HEART.

In conformity with the ancient, and, I may perhaps add, the invariable usage of the Congregational churches, till the spirit of modern innovation, — wise it may be, — has sought to discard it, I now turn to you, my young friend, who have the deepest interest in the solemnities of this occasion.

The sentiments I have now expressed are not new to you. They have been inculcated upon you

from your early childhood, and find, if I mistake not, a sincere and earnest advocate in your own breast. You have been taught to reject the badge of party, and, whilst you sought with an unfettered mind for Christian truth, to labor above all things to possess the Christian spirit. You have been taught that it belongs not to mortals, frail and fallible, who are neither apostles nor evangelists, to draw the limits within which the mode of faith is safe, and beyond which it is fatal. Thus you have been *taught*. You are now yourself a teacher, and it remains for you to determine how far the instructions of the past shall exert an influence on your future practice. You go from ministerial guidance, to be yourself a minister and guide to others.

There are those, who, as well as you, would forgive me, if I were now to give language to the feelings with which your connection with the transactions of this day has inspired me. But I must forbear. The obtrusion of such feelings would be unsuitable to the place in which I stand, and the occasion on which we are assembled.

And yet, when I advert to the near relation in which I have stood to you as your pastor, and the increased responsibility which your early loss of paternal counsel imposed upon me, I feel as if I might be permitted to breathe, — with more than common fervency, — the prayer that God would ‘preserve and keep you, would cause his face to shine upon you, and give you rest.’ Affection for the living, and the

cherished remembrance of the departed, give strength and earnestness to the prayer.

Go forth, then, with the blessing and the prayers of many hearts, into this field of your ministerial labors. May a better blessing also attend you! 'Let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ, and whether I come and see you, or else be absent, may I hear of your affairs, that you, and the people of your charge, stand fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel.'

## ORDER OF THE SERVICES

AT THE ORDINATION IN KENNEBUNK.

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- INTRODUCTORY PRAYER, by Mr. Frothingham, of Boston.  
SELECT PORTIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES, by Mr. Barrett, of Boston.  
SERMON, by Dr. Lowell, of Boston.  
ORDAINING PRAYER, by Dr. Kirkland, of Harvard University.  
CHARGE, by Mr. Fletcher, of Kennebunk.  
RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP, by Mr. Ripley, of Boston.  
ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE, by Dr. Nichols, of Portland.  
CONCLUDING PRAYER, by Dr. Parker, of Portsmouth.

## SERMON XLII.

[Extract from a Sermon preached in the West Church, in Boston, on the Lord's Day after the death of GEORGE WADSWORTH WELLS, successively Minister of Kennebunk and Groton.]

Psalms xlvi. 10. — BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.

I CAN offer no better consolation, — I need not desire to offer any better consolation, than this, — to my afflicted friends who come here to-day to ask an interest in our prayers, and to receive our heart-felt sympathy. I desire no better consolation for myself under the loss of one whom I loved and valued; who, from infancy, was an object of my pastoral care, and for whom, from his early loss of paternal counsel, I felt a double responsibility.

Through life, he was to me as a son to a father, and they who best knew him will know with what satisfaction I must have witnessed the development of his character, and his progress in knowledge and in Christian excellence. I would fain hope that it was permitted me to do something in aid of his

inestimable mother, — now in heaven, — in the formation of that character.

He was virtuous from his childhood. At school, at the university, — as a student of theology and as a minister of the gospel, — an example of fidelity.

He was modest, unassuming, retiring; yet ‘firm in purpose, inflexible in right;’ of high moral principle; abhorring meanness and deceit; never shrinking from duty at whatever cost; sacrificing, — as it is believed, — life itself to a conscientious conviction of what duty required of him.

As a husband and father, a son and brother, and a Christian minister, I know not where I shall look to find a better model. The heart-bitterness of those to whom he stood in these near relations, and the warm demonstrations of respect and love which his people have given, in his life and at his death, are his best eulogy.

If the devoted attention, day and night, of conjugal affection, of a wife, — alas, how early widowed! — if the fervent wishes and prayers of many hearts, could have availed to save a life so dear and valuable, ‘our brother had not died.’

It is GOD who has taken the husband and father, the son and brother and Christian minister, — affectionate, devoted, faithful, — from domestic happiness and ministerial duty, in the midst of his years and usefulness. GOD has done it. *‘Be still and know that it is GOD.’*

It is a striking illustration of the uncertainty of

human life, the fallacy of human calculations, that, in visiting a parishioner, a little before his death, who was sick of an incurable disease, he took a last leave of her as of one who was on the verge of eternity, but that sick parishioner survives, and he is himself laid, for a little season, in 'the new tomb' which she had prepared for herself.

His death was in harmony with his life. In the early part of his sickness he wished to recover,—or rather, as I believe,—he felt as the apostle felt, when he said, 'I am in a strait betwixt two; having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.'

He calmly resigned himself to the will of God,—took leave of the loved ones who were near him, and 'fell asleep in Jesus.'

'BLESSED ARE THE DEAD THAT DIE IN THE LORD. YEA, SAITH THE SPIRIT, FOR THEY REST FROM THEIR LABORS, AND THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM.'

## SERMON XLIII.

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### WHAT IS NEEDFUL FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD.

[Preached at the Dedication of a Church in Milton, 1829, and first printed at that time.]

Ezra vii. 20. — AND WHATSOEVER MORE SHALL BE NEEDFUL FOR THE HOUSE OF THY GOD — BESTOW IT.

THE temple erected by Solomon was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, about four hundred years after its erection. It continued in ruins fifty-two years, till the first year of the reign of Cyrus, king of Persia, at Babylon. He permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem, from whence they had been carried captive, and to lay the foundation of the second temple. After various interruptions, it was completed and dedicated in the reign of Darius, about twenty years from its commencement. Sixty-nine years afterwards, Ezra, a Jew of distinction, then at Babylon, was commissioned by Artaxerxes Longimanus, a successor of Darius, to return to Jerusalem with the Jews who still remained in his kingdom, and to take with them their silver and gold, and the silver of the temple, and offerings of the king and his counsellors, to buy victims for sacrifice.

The words of the text are a part of the commission that was thus given to Ezra. After enumerating the articles which Ezra was to purchase for the house of his God, the king adds, 'And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God which thou hast occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the king's treasury.'

The temple at Jerusalem, especially the first, was a magnificent edifice. Its decorations were splendid, and the preparation for its service expensive. Gold and silver and precious stones were lavished upon it, and flocks and herds innumerable were offered in sacrifice upon its altar.

It is inconsistent with the genius of Christianity, with the character of its founder, with the spirituality of its doctrines, and the simplicity of its institutions, that its temples should be adorned with magnificence, or its worship characterized by gorgeousness and splendor. It is inconsistent, too, with the simplicity of Congregationalism, whose pattern is the primitive church, which was established and modelled by him 'who took upon him the form of a servant, and was meek and lowly in heart.' But however incongruous in a Christian temple may be magnificence and splendor, a style of architecture chaste and elegant, decorations simple and beautiful, adapted to the improved taste of the age in which we live, are not incompatible with the nature and spirit of our religion, or with the precepts or example of its founder. If God has given us skill, it may be employed in his service, and our ingenuity is

well exerted, and our taste well displayed, when its object is to add to the symmetry and beauty of the sanctuary.

It is honorable to you, my friends, who have called us to this work of consecration, that you have brought, not indeed of your *silver and gold*, but of the firm and enduring product of your soil, as an offering to the Lord; that you have deemed it suitable and proper, whilst these rocks were converted into 'sealed houses to dwell in,' that they should furnish materials also for a house for your God.

And now that you have completed this house, and have consecrated it to HIM for whose service it was erected, I address you in the language of the text, 'Whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of your God,—bestow it.' Be not backward at any time to contribute what *shall be needful* to render it commodious, and to advance the purposes to which it is devoted. Every thing, however trivial, which renders the place in which you assemble for worship an object of more interest, serves to bind you to it and to cement the union of the worshippers.

You have erected and dedicated a Christian temple. We take it as a pledge that you will make honorable provision for the ministration of the word and ordinances of Christianity, and that you will *bestow* upon them, as you are able, your constant attendance. In justice to yourselves you will make this provision, and will not 'forsake the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is.'

Manifesting, as you have now done, your sense of the value of public worship, you will not deny yourselves so great a privilege, or encourage, by your example, the neglect of an institution so important to the best interests of society.

But this is not all. The history of the patriarchs, of the prophets, of the apostles, of the truly pious in every age, furnishes abundant testimony to the profound reverence, to the godly fear, to the deep humiliation, with which these holy men came into the more immediate presence of Almighty God, and addressed him in the language of prayer and praise. When Abraham stood before the Lord, interceding for the sinful inhabitants of Sodom, he offered his supplications in the garb of humility, and with trembling opened his mouth. 'Behold I who am but dust and ashes, have taken it upon me to speak unto the Lord.' When Jacob awoke from the sleep in which he had received a revelation from heaven respecting his own destiny, and the destiny of his descendants, he said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not, and he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the House of God, and the gate of heaven.' When Moses was approaching the burning bush from whence issued the voice of the Deity, that voice bade him refrain. 'Draw not nigh; take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' When Elijah stood at the mouth of the cave to hold communion with the Most High, though he remained unmoved at

the sound of the *thunder* and the *whirlwind*, yet when he heard the *still small voice*, Elijah ‘wrapped himself in his mantle and hid his head.’ It was thus that holy men of old came, I do not say without levity, I do not say with seriousness, but with holy reverence and awe, with deep humility and self-abasement, to commune with God. And well it might be so, for they knew the character of the great and awful Being who condescended to admit their approach to him. Well it might be so, for they knew that this Being was the Creator, not of themselves alone, and of the world, — vast as it was, — which they inhabited, but of the universe; who spake, and it *was*; who might speak, and it would *not be*; the ‘great and only Potentate; King of kings and Lord of lords;’ infinitely greater, infinitely more exalted, than the highest reach of the highest intellect could attain. It was in the presence of such a Being that they prostrated their souls in holy reverence, and hid their faces, and acknowledged that they were but *dust and ashes*.

And it is into the presence of such a Being, my hearers, that you will come whenever you enter this sanctuary, and join in the public acts of religion. It is into the presence of the HIGH AND HOLY GOD, appearing, not indeed as in the terrors of Mount Sinai, but as *in the face of Jesus Christ*, — yet still the HIGH AND HOLY GOD — worthy of the profoundest homage, and of the most exalted sentiments of devotion. The ground on which you will stand is *holy ground*, for it is devoted to the pur-

poses of piety, and will be consecrated by the presence of the MOST HIGH.

‘ Whatsoever shall be needful for ’ the acceptable worship of GOD in this house, *bestow it*. The admonition, ‘ Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of GOD,’ implies caution — heed — watchfulness — lest the deportment be not such as *becometh* the house of GOD, — sedateness, — serious thought by the way. And the further admonition, ‘ Let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before GOD,’ implies that every word should be weighed, that nothing should be uttered by the lips, or proceed from the heart, that has not been the subject, as far as might be, of deliberate reflection.

Let me say, that they are hasty in uttering their thoughts and feelings before GOD, who neglect to make all the preparation they can make for his service ; — who spend the season for this preparation in listless indolence, in idle musings, in vain and trifling conversation, in unnecessary business, or in the preparation of the body in ‘ *outward adorning*,’ and give no portion of it to pious meditation, to self-communion, to prayer for the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, that the approaching service may be engaged in with becoming seriousness, and result in the fruits of holy living. It is recorded of Lydia, that ‘ the Lord opened her heart that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul ;’ and though the age of miracles is past, we have no reason to think that the Spirit of GOD has ceased to operate on the hearts of men, or

that He will withhold now, more than then, His purifying influences from those who seek and desire them.

Let me further say, that it is next to impossible that any can engage with a proper spirit in this service, who have not thus, by previous meditation and prayer, adjusted their minds to the posture of devotion. If they go to the house of God as they go to their ordinary business, or if they go to the house of God as they would go to a rational amusement, I will not say that they cannot, but I will say that there is little reason to believe they can perform an acceptable service. It would be almost a miracle if, in a moment, they should divest themselves of worldly thoughts, and present a pious offering. They may indeed, by the grace of God, be awakened, when they least expect it, and I had almost said, when they least deserve it, to serious reflection, to an intense and absorbing attention to the truths of religion, — they may even come ‘to scoff, and remain to pray,’ but there is more probability that they will go away as they came, unimpressed, unaffected, worldly, if not sensual, with something, perhaps, of God and heaven on their lips, but with little of them in their hearts.

And where will they go? — Alas! how many go to plunge at once into the subjects of week-day interest which for a time, perhaps, had been banished, and to recall the swarm of vain and busy images which, it may be, for a little season, had taken their flight. How many go (in our cities at least)

from paying their homage to God, to paying their civilities to their fellow-mortals, often to the annoyance of those who desire to be uninterrupted, to have a breathing-time from earthly frivolities, to be alone with their God, or in the midst of their families; and often preventing the intrusion of serious thought, where, without this interruption, it might have been awakened. How many are there, in regard to whom we must take up the lamentation of the prophet, 'The ways of Zion do mourn because they come not to her solemn feasts.' How many who turn from 'the ways of Zion, to the tents of wickedness!'

Spirits of our fathers! Ye who fled from the world that ye might enjoy uninterrupted converse with your God in a wilderness! Ye who spent your Sabbaths in sweet communion with one another, and in holy communion with your Maker! With what emotions would you contemplate so wide a departure from your pious usages!

I call upon you, Christians,—you who love your religion and its institutions, and desire their preservation; I call upon you, citizens, patriots, you who love your country, and desire its real welfare; to check by your remonstrances, to check by your example, the growing violations of holy time, the growing neglect of preparation for holy services.

I call upon you all, immortal beings, probationers for eternity, to prepare yourselves for the service of God's house, and to engage in it with seriousness and holy reverence. Never rise to pray, or to offer

praise, without remembering that you rise to address 'HIM who looketh on the heart,' who cannot regard iniquity but with abhorrence, and to whom 'the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination.' He who stands and ministers at the altar is only the appointed leader in your devotions. If he were praying *for* you, it would seem, when the subjects are so momentous, when your dearest interests are involved in the success of the petitions, that you would not be indifferent,—nay, that you would hang, in breathless suspense, upon his lips, lest he should fail to ask what you most need, or to press your petition with sufficient earnestness. But he is professedly praying *with* you; and Oh! how thoughtless, how awful is it, to *come with feigned lips*, or to turn away your minds, and refuse to bear your part in the offering!

Lord! 'Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in Thee?' Thou blessed Spirit who didst erst move 'upon the face of the waters,' and all was order, proportion, life and beauty, breathe into us the breath of spiritual life, reanimate our languid powers, quicken and strengthen our graces, and rekindle the drooping flame of piety in our breasts! May that sacred day, hallowed and consecrated from generation to generation by so many prayers, and so many vows, come to us fraught with its holiest influences, and bearing the message of peace and reconciliation. May the praises we offer come up as incense, the repentance we exercise be *a godly sorrow*, and the vows we breathe, be accepted and registered in heaven!

My hearers! We build material temples for the worship of God. We appropriate certain seasons to the purposes of devotion. We come together and unite in paying our homage to the Creator. It is well. God is the proper object of worship. Material temples facilitate the united performance of it, and union in worship may kindle, or keep alive, and render more bright and vivid, the flame of piety. But material temples, as I have already indicated, are not essential to the worship of God. We may worship God like Isaac in the field, or like Jacob by the wayside, or like Elijah in the desert, or like David in the cavern, or like Peter upon the house top, or like our blessed Saviour in the mountain. For 'God dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Do not I fill the heaven and earth, saith the Lord?'

Nor is union in worship essential, however beneficial and delightful. Isaac was alone when he went into the field for the purposes of devotion; Jacob was alone when he worshipped by the wayside; Elijah was alone when he communed with God in the desert; Peter was alone when he prayed upon the house-top; and our blessed Saviour, leaving even the chosen companions of his earthly pilgrimage, 'went up into a mountain, apart, to pray.' 'Enter into thy closet and shut thy door and pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.'

Nor, further, is any time *exclusively* appropriated to the worship of God. One day in seven, indeed,

has been specially set apart for this purpose, and we are under solemn obligations sacredly to observe it, but it would be sad indeed if we must wait the return of the Christian Sabbath to hold communion with our Maker. 'Every day will I bless Thee.' 'Morning, and evening, and at noon will I pray.' Yes! the father may pray as he labors for the family that is dependent on his daily labor for their daily bread, and find his labor encouraged and sweetened by the hallowed influence of prayer. The mother may pray as she watches the sleeping infant that God has committed to her charge, and feel herself prompted to closer watchfulness and stricter care, whilst she feels and acknowledges her obligations to HIM who bestowed it. We may 'be fervent in spirit,' whilst we are 'not slothful in business,' and be offering sacrifice, whilst we are performing acts of kindness and mercy.

How powerful, Christians, are the motives to habitual seriousness and devotion! — Gratitude, — our interest and happiness, present and future, for time and eternity; our perishable bodies, and our immortal minds. Look round upon the face of nature. Behold the tints of autumn diversifying the trees of the forest. The leaves are already falling, and mingling with the earth. At all times there is a voice in nature which reads a lesson of divine wisdom, and we should attentively listen. It comes with a deeper tone of interest when it tells us we are mortal, when, in the scenes which it has sketched with so much beauty, and arrayed in

the richest and most glowing colors, it presents us with a picture of our fate.

But the thoughtless will not heed this voice, if they hear it, and when they look upon the face of nature, it is only with a transient glance, or perhaps a glance of wonder, or of rapture, and not with the steady eye of contemplation, which reads the moral lesson it has portrayed, and reads to learn and feel it. And it is so too much with the votaries of business, for the hum of business has drowned the voice of instruction, and the thick vapor which surrounds them has obscured the objects which might otherwise engage the attention, and come with impression to the heart. And it is so with those who are trifling away life, or abusing it in vicious indulgences. A siren's voice has more power to allure them than the voice of God. They follow the guide which leads them along blindfold, and turn not to the light which irradiates the path of duty, and true happiness.

'Ah! my friends,' says the voice of admonition, long ago addressed to the thoughtless and irreligious,— 'Ah, my friends, while we laugh and trifle, all things are serious around us. God is serious in calling and bearing with us. Christ is serious who shed his blood for us. The Holy Ghost is serious who striveth against the obstinacy of our hearts. The Holy Scriptures bring to our ears the most serious things in the world. The holy sacraments represent the most awful and affecting matters. The whole creation is zealous in serving God, and

us. All nature is full of ardent energy and exertion, and is in constant labor and travail for our happiness. All that are in heaven, or hell, are seriously engaged. How then can we sleep and trifle? We — for whose sake this universal zeal is expended!’

The associations\* which, in this place, must come up to every mind, impel me to dwell for a few moments, before I conclude, on another theme. We look around upon a fair inheritance. ‘The lines have fallen to us in pleasant places.’ We are enjoying blessings such as belong not to any other nation on earth, and these blessings, under God, are the fruit of our fathers’ labors and our fathers’ blood. The generation which has gone before us, or is fast passing away, has a title to the veneration and gratitude of their successors, such as we never can furnish to those who come after us, — such perhaps, as our descendants can never furnish to the remotest posterity.

The eventful period of our country’s history, of which the *stones* from these hills *shall be for a memorial*, was a period of solicitude and trial, of which we can now have but a faint conception, and they who gave their days and nights to consultations for their country’s safety and welfare, or devoted their wealth to their country’s support, or poured out their blood upon the altar of their country’s free-

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\* See Note at the end of this discourse.

dom, are worthy of all honor, if living,—of all veneration, if dead. Their deeds should be engraven on the tablets of the hearts of their countrymen, and their memories be held in perpetual remembrance.

Let a monument be erected on the neighboring heights; let it bear the inscription of the valor and devoted attachment to their country of those who fought and died there. Thither repair,—thither let your children and your children's children,—and the generations yet unborn,—repair, to learn by how severe a struggle, and at how dear a price, their independence was achieved, and their dearest rights secured to them. Thither let them repair to cherish the flame of patriotism, and render it more glowing and ardent. But this is not all. Oh no! it is the least for which they should go thither. For to what purpose would have been their consultations for their country's safety, if the wisdom of God had not enlightened their councils? or of what avail would have been the valor which encountered danger and death for their country's freedom, if the *arm* of God had not been *made bare* in its defence? Yes!—it was HE who inspired their hearts with courage, and nerved their arm with strength, who 'taught their hands to war, and their fingers to fight.' It was HE who was 'their fortress and their high tower, and their deliverer. If, then, we commemorate the noble daring, the generous sacrifices, the patriotic sufferings, which accomplished the great work of our country's independence, let us not

forget to whom alone it belonged to render that daring, and those sacrifices and sufferings, effectual. Above all, let us not forget to whom we owe it, that a far greater and better redemption hath been wrought out for us by sacrifices infinitely more valuable, and sufferings infinitely more severe. In every *heart* let there be a monument erected which shall reach to heaven, and endure forever, and let it bear this inscription — GLORY TO GOD.

## NOTE.

THE church at the dedication of which this discourse was delivered, was built of stone taken from a quarry in the neighborhood, from which the stone was taken for the monument at Bunker Hill. It was also near the residence of John Adams. It was to these circumstances that there was an allusion in the conclusion of the discourse.

## ORDER OF SERVICES.

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The following is the Order of Performances, with the names of the officiating clergymen at the dedication of the Church in Milton.

- 1.—ANTHEM. — ‘In sweet exalted strains,’ &c.
- 2.—INTRODUCTORY PRAYER, by Mr. Gannett, of Boston.
- 3.—SELECTIONS FROM SCRIPTURE, by Mr. Greenwood, of Boston.
- 4.—DEDICATORY PRAYER, by Dr. Pierce, of Brookline,
- 5.—DEDICATORY HYMN, by Dr. Harris, of Dorchester.
- 6.—SERMON, by Dr. Lowell.
- 7.—PRAYER, by Dr. Harris, of Dorchester.
- 8.—HYMN, by Dr. Harris.
- 9.—ANTHEM, (From Handel and Haydn Collection.)
- 10.—BENEDICTION, by Dr. Richardson, of Dorchester.

## SERMON XLIV.

THE WISDOM AND GOODNESS OF GOD, AS MANIFESTED  
IN THE APPOINTMENT OF MEN, AND NOT ANGELS, TO  
THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

[Preached at the Ordination of a Minister, in Lynn, and in Berlin, Mass., 1830,  
and then first printed.]

Hebrews v. 2. — WHO CAN HAVE COMPASSION ON THE IGNORANT, AND  
ON THEM THAT ARE OUT OF THE WAY, FOR THAT HE HIMSELF IS  
COMPASSED WITH INFIRMITY.

ALL the works of God are works of wisdom and goodness. In saying this, I repeat what has been often said, — what, indeed, must be the sentiment of every reflecting mind, and the feeling of every devout heart. But it is well that it should be often said, as it may excite attention to the indications of this wisdom and goodness where it has not been awakened; may serve to strengthen the impressions of admiration and gratitude already excited; and may lead to a train of thought which shall furnish new topics of admiration, and new incentives to love and obedience.

I shall not traverse a wide field in illustrating the

sentiment I have advanced. It is enough that I direct your attention to that manifestation of wisdom and goodness which bears a relation to the transactions of this day, — which is displayed in the adaptation of the Christian ministry to the circumstances and wants of mankind. With an opportunity for doing this, I am furnished by the words of the text, ‘Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.’

These words, originally applied to the Jewish priesthood, present us with a touching and beautiful description of the nature of the sacred office. It is designed to enlighten the ignorance and reform the vices of mankind; and it is entrusted to those who, from their consciousness of their own need of instruction in knowledge and virtue, may be supposed to have a fellow-feeling and sympathy for the ignorant and vicious.

I remark, then, that the Christian ministry is entrusted to those who are ‘compassed with infirmity,’ and that we discern in this appointment the wisdom and goodness of God. Such is the theme of my discourse. And may HE, to whom, in our ignorance and infirmity, we are permitted to look for light and strength, accompany the teaching of His word with the teachings of His Spirit, that what ‘is sown in weakness,’ may be ‘raised in power.’

It would be absurd for me to offer arguments to prove that the ministry is entrusted to those who are ‘compassed with infirmity.’ ‘I myself also am

a man!' was the language of the first preacher to the Gentile world, and the history of the church bears abundant testimony that his successors in every age might with emphatic propriety repeat the declaration. A man!— what is he? A creature of contrarieties and inconsistencies,— spiritual and material, intellectual and sensual; resolving, and abjuring his resolutions; sinning and repenting; to-day, soaring on the ardent wings of hope— to-morrow, sunk in the lowest depths of despair; to-day, basking in the sunshine of prosperity,— to-morrow, enveloped in the darkest clouds of adversity. The history of the church!— what is it? The history,— too often,— of weakness and error, nay, of crime; the history of the excesses of human passions, of discord and strife, of bitter and endless disputes about the endless dogmas of speculative theology. I would not be misunderstood, and I therefore add, that if such is too much the history of the church, such it *must* be, for these things are public and prominent. It is not the history of *religion*, but of false zeal, which is obtrusive and noisy and violent, breaking out into wars, and overturning empires, whilst religion is silently diffusing its blessings, secretly, but effectually, working on the human heart, and, in a multitude of instances, restraining those passions which it may not eradicate. We hear the rushing of the tempest which levels the forest, and sweeps away the fruits of human labor, while the dews of heaven descend unnoticed by the common eye, though, by

their silent influence, they crown the harvest with plenty, and make 'the valleys to laugh and sing.'

It is to man, thus weak and fallible, as history and experience prove him, that this ministry is committed,—and how does it manifest wisdom and goodness? Is it not in the mysterious and inexplicable Providence of God, that a treasure so precious is entrusted to a vessel so frail? Might it not have been expected that, to guard against mistake and perversion on subjects in which our dearest interests are involved, God himself would condescend to address us? With what awful solemnity, what entire conviction, what deep impression, would not the instruction then come to the heart! Who but would listen, believe, feel, obey? God spake to the Israelites from Mount Sinai, and it was so dreadful that they entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. 'And they said with Moses, Speak thou to us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die.' And what was the effect of this scene so terrible? When the awful scene had passed, and the sound of the voice no longer vibrated on the ears,—yes, even while Moses, at their request, was communing with God on their behalf, they relapsed into idolatry.

But, if it were not suitable that God himself should instruct his creatures by 'a voice from heaven,' might he not have commissioned, for this work, those ministering spirits who surround his throne, and are employed on his errands of love

and mercy? Would not the ministry of angels have been more effectual than the ministry of men? Let the text reply, — ‘Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.’ Elevated, as angels are, above the level of humanity, there would be no community of feeling between angels and men. They might bear the message of peace and reconciliation, they might be convinced of its importance, from the declaration of HIM whose word is truth; they might speak with authority, — they might speak with power, — they might bring conviction to many minds; but this would be all. The awe inspired by the presence of a celestial messenger, and the want of sympathy between that messenger and those to whom he was sent, would, in most instances at least, prevent the truth, which had found a reception in the understanding, from reaching the heart. Nor is this all. ‘Man is born to trouble.’ How comparatively cold and ineffectual, in his affliction, would be the consolations of those who had never suffered! And where could be the example of patient endurance, teaching, more effectually than the most soothing language of solace, the efficacy of religion to bind up the broken heart?

The angel who appeared to Cornelius, did not preach the gospel to him, but directed him to send for Peter. The theme on which he was to address the centurion, was indeed a fitter theme for angel’s

tongue, than for that of a mortal, but an angel could not speak experimentally as the apostle could, — consolations and hopes of the doctrines of religion he promulgated.

It is here that the Son of God, who, having assumed our nature, had a ‘fellow-feeling of our infirmities,’ is most attractive and interesting, and his example most useful to us; it is when he descends to exhibit himself as partaking of the sensibilities and enduring the sorrows of humanity. Had we known only that Jesus was the Son of the Highest, that he had been subjected to contempt and ignominy, to persecution and death, and that, in the midst of all that came upon him, he was patient and resigned, we might say ‘He has indeed been *apparently* subjected to sufferings the most severe, but who can say that they were sufferings to him? Had he the feelings of human nature? Could he suffer like as we? If not, there is no merit in his resignation, no instruction in his example.’

You discern already, my hearers, from what has been said, the wisdom and goodness of God in committing this ministry to men like yourselves, conscious of infirmities and sins, surrounded by temptations, oppressed with burdens, and having the same need of salvation as those to whom they minister. You discern an ability, which even angels would not possess, of penetrating the recesses of the human heart, and touching the secret springs by which the actions of men are moved. The study of themselves is the study of human

nature; and if they know their own hearts, they know much better than angels could, how to gain access to the hearts of others.

Possessed of the same nature, actuated by the same affections and passions, agitated by the same hopes and fears, liable to the same disasters, heirs of the same sorrows as their fellow-men, they can better suit their addresses, than angels could, to the various tempers, and varying humors, and changing circumstances of mankind. Acquainted with the capacity and province of the human understanding, its means of acquiring knowledge, and the obstacles to its acquisition, the best methods of communicating truth, and the hindrances to its reception; acquainted, too, with the influence of the imagination, — its tendency to extravagance, — and able to follow it in its discursive flights, they, better than superior intelligences, can restrain and guide the one, and inform and regulate the other. Conscious of the existence of a moral sense in man, and knowing something, from their own convictions, of the power of conscience, they best can rouse it from its slumbering, and give it a voice and utterance which shall make the sinner tremble. Experimentally familiar with the difficulties and dangers of the Christian life, the struggles between the flesh and spirit, the conflict with the world and sin, the deceitfulness of the human heart, they can best portray these difficulties and dangers, best expose the machinery of the enemy, and best direct to the means of escape or victory. Susceptible, like

others, of joyful emotions from the occurrences of life, and dependent on these occurrences for much of their earthly happiness, they are better fitted by their nature and condition, than celestial beings, to take part in the happiness of others, and 'rejoice with them that rejoice.' Experiencing, as they often do, the depressing, disheartening influence of those infirmities to which the flesh is heir, and knowing, as they must sooner or later know, from their own sad experience, how profusely the heart will bleed when the closest ties are ruptured, when hopes, however fond, are blighted, and joys, however dear, are withered, they best can sympathize with suffering. Feeling, as it must be supposed they do feel, the power of that religion which it is their honor and privilege to teach, and convinced of its efficacy in imparting strength to the sinking spirit, and pouring light upon the darkened mind, they can speak of this power and efficacy with an energy which experience only can give. Mortal themselves, and sometimes, if not often, in 'bondage by reason of death,' from a consciousness of their own imperfections and sins, they can have a closer, deeper sympathy, than immortal natures could have, with the sick and dying.

Nor is it only in the benefit of their sympathy, and the adaptation of their instructions, example and prayers to the nature and conditions of those to whom they minister, that wisdom and goodness are apparent, in the appointment of men to this important work. In their *example*, they can speak

with incalculably more effect than any other order of beings, to the hearts of their fellow-men. To the example of angels men could never look for instruction in the duties and trials of life. It can only be to those who are frail and feeble and fallible like themselves. Such are ministers, — and, if they are humble in prosperity, and resigned in adversity, grateful for benefits, and forgetful of injuries, — if they are meek and patient, and benevolent, and devout, the transcript they exhibit of their doctrine, has a strong tendency to bring conviction to the mind of its truth and power and loveliness.

I might go on, — but I should weary you. I have said enough, I trust, to convince you, if you needed the conviction, that in the ministry, as it is constituted, the same wisdom and goodness are discernible as in all the other works of God.

And is there no practical instruction to be gathered from this subject? CHRISTIAN MINISTERS! there is instruction for you. Whilst you admonish others, there is a silent, yet most impressive, monitor teaching you in the nature which God has given you. Every infirmity of which you are conscious, both of body and mind, — and alas! who can number them? — is giving you a lesson of duty. *Compassed with infirmity*, sensible, as you must be, of weakness, and ignorance, and unworthiness, you are taught humility, meekness, forbearance, forgiveness, and charity; kindness, gentleness, sympathy and compassion; zeal, diligence, watchfulness and prayer. Let it be manifest that you are not un-

fruitful hearers of this voice which speaks within you. Sad indeed would it be, — sad, did I say, — what term can I use to show forth its terribleness? — if, with such strong and unceasing admonitions and motives to personal holiness and ministerial fidelity, you should be wanting in either, — if, *after having preached to others*, you should yourselves be rejected! Rejected! God of mercy, save us from a doom so terrible! God of grace, give us grace to be faithful.

CHRISTIAN HEARERS! there is instruction for you. Be thankful that the ministry of the gospel is committed to those who can have a fellow-feeling for your infirmities, sympathize with you in your joys and sorrows, warn you of your dangers, and describe, from their own experience, the efficacy of the promises and hopes of your religion. You expect them, — and justly, — to be eminent for their piety; but remember they are *men*, and, if you discover imperfections, blame them not for that nature which, in so many respects, is a just and strong recommendation. Be tender of their reputation, — it is your interest to be so. Be candid and charitable in your construction of their conduct, — you stand in need of this candor and charity yourselves, — and allow them to repose themselves on their characters, as a security from hasty reproach. They have many difficulties and trials in the discharge of their duties; many which you know, and many which are known only to themselves. With them, as with you, the spirit is often willing when ‘the flesh is weak;’ and

when you seek an excuse for their apparent neglect of you, or the defects of their services, think of your *own* nature, and find it there. But, whilst I ask you to cover their imperfections with the mantle of charity, I would have no mantle so broad as to cover their wilful offences. '*Brethren, pray for us,*' that, remembering our frailty, we may labor with diligence; and pray for yourselves, also, that we *may not labor in vain.*

It has not been my purpose, my brother, by what I have said, to add to the weight of those reflections which oppress your heart in the contemplation of the transactions of this day. It is true that you are *compassed with infirmity*, and it is also true that, with all this infirmity, you are about to be entrusted with a commission of inconceivable importance. But, if 'we have this treasure in earthen vessels,' it is 'that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man.' When you are ready, like the apostle, to exclaim, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' may you receive, like that apostle, the *strength* that 'is made perfect in weakness,' and, like him, too, 'glory in infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon you.' Go forth to this work 'in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, and his only.' Preach 'Jesus Christ, and him crucified.' My brother, we may differ in our interpretation of this charge. I know not whether you rely, as much as I do, upon the efficacy of that blood which was shed for our redemption, though I would fain hope you do. 'Hast

thou faith? Have it to thyself before God.' In your preaching be plain, direct, evangelical, earnest. Be not ashamed to have it manifest that your lips give utterance to the feelings of your heart. Remember the aphorism of the ancient orator and critic, 'If you would make me weep, weep yourself.' Let your soul go forth with a force which you cannot,—and would not if you could,—restrain. Preach, yes, *preach*, in the houses of your people. Preach by the wayside. *Watch for souls*. May your whole life,—and for myself and my brethren I would breathe the same prayer,—be one labor of love, the overflowings of a soul fraught with love to God and man.

And now, my brother, farewell. I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to keep you from falling. My heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that your ministry may be successful, and that, among this people especially, you may be the blessed instrument of 'bringing many sons and daughters to glory.'

## SERMON XLV.

## WELCOME TO A NATION'S BENEFACTOR.

[Concluding part of a Sermon on the Visit of Lafayette, in 1824.]

1 Kings, i. 11. — AND THE PEOPLE REJOICED WITH GREAT JOY.

DURING the past week, we have witnessed an event which is unparalleled in the history of nations. The excitement it occasioned has not yet subsided. We cannot fail to bring it with us to this sacred place. It mingles itself with our holy services.

The recital of a page from our nation's history will illustrate these positions.

A people, few in number, and with scanty resources, are compelled to contend with a powerful nation, for their rights and privileges.

At the moment of their greatest need, when their cause is almost hopeless, there appears among them a youthful hero, who, by his presence and the succor he brings, revives their drooping spirits, and inspires them anew with courage and ardor. He stakes his life and fortune for their cause.

The work accomplished, and the blessing of God having crowned with success the courage, resolu-

tion and perseverance of the infant nation thus contending for its liberty and independence, he disappears.

A new generation comes into life; attains to maturity; advances towards old age.

They have learned, in infancy, to lisp the name of the youthful stranger who, in the hour of their country's peril, came forth to help them. The story of his deeds has been their delight in childhood; and, when they have grown up, they have told it to their children, and their children's children. They have read of it, and thought of it, and spoken of it, as a thing long gone by.

Nearly half a century elapses. This people who, when small and feeble, had struggled for their liberty, and achieved it, becomes a great and powerful nation. They spread themselves over a vast continent, and two millions become ten. New States are formed. The wilderness blossoms. Cities arise in the midst of the desert. Learning and the arts flourish. Every thing bespeaks opulence, strength and greatness.

There comes one from a distant land, to witness this prosperity, and rejoice in it.

He is an old man. He is a stranger. His features are not recognized. Yet every heart beats high at his approach, and every tongue proclaims his welcome.

And how is this? What is there in this stranger to make him an object of so much interest, that a whole nation opens wide its arms to receive him;

and, with one voice, pronounces a blessing on him? What is there in this stranger, that every heart should thrill at his approach; that lisping childhood, and hoary age, should unite to hail him; should press forward, with equal eagerness, to gaze on him, and seize the hand that is extended to all?

This stranger is he of whom we have spoken; who, long since, in the days of our country's infancy, took up her cause, and pleaded for her with the powerful, and fought and bled in her defence.

This stranger is he whom most of us from our earliest years, and some who are now becoming gray with age, have been taught to reverence and love; of whose romantic attachment to liberty, and the just rights of mankind, whose wisdom, and skill, and valor, — even in early life, — we have read with grateful admiration and enthusiasm.

*This* is he whom a great nation receives again into its bosom; the man whom, with one heart and one mind, we delight to honor.

He remembered *us* in our feeble state, and we do not forget *him* now that we are exalted, and prosperous, and happy.

Well may 'the people rejoice with great joy.' It is a joy which the omnipresent and omniscient Witness will approve.

And the object of all this joy and congratulation is worthy of it.

Had he come to us bearing on his forehead the mark of him who was a fugitive and wanderer in the earth; had the winds, which bore him to our

shores, been mingled with the groans and shrieks of the murdered victims of his ambition or cupidity; or had he come with a reputation defaced and blackened by deeds of infamy; or with a body broken down and enfeebled by vice and dissoluteness, there could have been no such joy. One burst, — I will not say of indignation, — but of deep regret and sorrow, would have met him on his coming. But it is not so. No. I emphatically say, It is not so. He comes to us bringing with him a reputation pure and spotless; a character before which, — were there nothing else, — we might well be constrained to bow with reverence. In scenes the most perplexing; amidst horrors the most appalling; in the court of a king; at the head of armies; in tumultuous assemblies; and in the recesses of a dungeon; he has held fast his integrity, and maintained a consistency of conduct, I believe I may say unparalleled in the history of the scenes through which he has passed; and a firm adherence to principle, and to his high and noble purpose, which nothing could shake or turn aside.

Distinguished by his patriotism, as well as his attachment to this land of his adoption, and eminent for his private virtues, as well as for his public services, we need not be ashamed to give distinct and emphatic utterance to our feelings, and to bid him welcome with all the enthusiasm that is due to a great and good benefactor.

I repeat it, our joy and our gratitude are sanctioned by religion, and are acceptable to God. It

was HE who implanted the feelings which prompt to joy and gratitude ; and who rendered him who is the object of them an instrument of so much good to us.

My friends, we are Christians ; in a Christian church, and assembled for the purpose of Christian worship. It would ill become us to celebrate an earthly benefactor, and pay no tribute to that great Deliverer who came from heaven to free us from the bondage of sin, and the power of the grave, and to translate us into 'the glorious liberty of the sons of GOD.'

Whilst on the tablet of memory we inscribe the deeds of those to whom, under GOD, our country owes its freedom, we should most deeply engrave there the benefits of HIM without whose religion our freedom would not have been a blessing to us ; who, as the inspired messenger of 'his Father and our Father, his GOD and our GOD,' — 'GOD manifest in the flesh,' — has imparted the highest charm to existence here, and the only assurance of happiness hereafter.

To HIM, be glory in his church forever. Amen!

## SERMON XLVI.

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### HOSPITALITY AND COMPASSION TO EMIGRANT FUGITIVES FROM OPPRESSION.\*

[Concluding part of a Sermon preached when a collection was taken up for the relief of Polish fugitives.]

Matthew xxv. 35.—I WAS A STRANGER, AND YE TOOK ME IN.

I HAVE thus shown you, my hearers, that the characteristic of our religion is benevolence; that benevolent spirits heralded its advent with a proclamation of 'good will toward men;' that He who came to teach it was full of this spirit of love; that to do good was the business of his life; that wherever he went, his footsteps were marked by kindness and mercy; that as he lived, he taught; and, himself a personification of God's love, so his doctrine was love; his precepts love.

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\* This sermon was preached some time since, but exhortations to hospitality and compassion are seasonable in all times. Refugees from oppression may often come to us for protection and succor. They should never fail to find it, let them come from whence they may. The directions of Scripture respecting one class of fugitives will be found in Deuteronomy xxiii. 15, 16.

I have told you that his disciples took their lesson from him, and went forth to teach and practise it; that they, too, declared that love was the fulfilling of the law; and remembering, repeated the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is better to give than to receive.' I have told you, further, that, setting aside what we find in the history of Judaism, not one trace or vestige has come down to us of compassion for the sick and the poor among the common orders of the people, which was sanctioned by the government, or the institutions, or general measures, of any ancient nation; that the world is indebted to the influence of Christianity for almost all that has since been done for the alleviation of human misery.

We have received this religion, my hearers, as our birthright. It is happy for us if, with the name, we have received its spirit; if we have embraced it with the full conviction of the understanding and the heart.

An opportunity is now afforded us to exercise the benevolence which belongs to our religion; which characterized its founder and its early disciples.

A people once free, and, from their position and their character, holding an important place among the nations; but who, for a century, have been groaning under the yoke of bondage, have made a powerful, but ineffectual, effort to regain their freedom.

Their story has been briefly, but eloquently, told in the address which was read to you on the last Sabbath.

The greater part of those who were most active in the cause of freedom have have been sent to Siberia; a country whose name freezes the heart of sensibility by its association with cruelty, dreariness and misery.

A remnant escaped, and, of these, a few have come, and are coming, to seek an asylum in this land of liberty.

They come from their homes, not as travellers, to gratify an innocent and laudable curiosity; not as voluntary emigrants, bringing with them their families and the fruits of their former industry; but as wanderers, exiles, miserable outcasts.

Home, around which their sympathies, their affections, and their hopes had clustered; home, in the sound of which, however poor and humble, there is something so inexpressibly sweet to the ear, so dear to the heart,— alas, there is no home for them!

If they had families, where are they? It may be, that they have perished in the flames of their own dwellings; or that their blood has moistened the soil which had been tilled for their subsistence; or that they have been driven, in chains, to the wilds of Siberia, to drag out existence in wretched slavery.

These fugitives, for whom I now plead, have come from their homes, friendless and penniless; with heart-rending recollections of the past, and saddening uncertainties in the future.

But they have come among those who can feel for their misfortunes, — their misery, — and will be prompt to relieve them. They have come among those who are enjoying the freedom which *they* had struggled in vain to recover; who would have rejoiced in their success; and deeply deplore their defeat.

They have come among those who are blessed in the possession of kindred, and country, and home; and who can feel for those who have no kindred, and country, and home; to whom the wide world is a dwelling-place; and that dwelling-place dreary and desolate.

They have come, too, at a period peculiarly auspicious to them; when our country is about to celebrate the anniversary of its independence; that independence for which some of the best lives of *their* country were jeopardized, and for which some of its richest blood was shed.

They have come when we are bending with sorrow at the grave of one who, like them, a stranger, in the darkest hour of our country's peril, took up her cause and pleaded for her with the powerful, and fought and bled in her defence.

It may well be that our joy for our freedom should be hallowed by our hospitality and kindness to those who have lost their liberty.

It may well be that we should deem that the noblest monument we can erect to the memory of Lafayette and his associates in the work of freedom, which is reared by the hand of charity; and

that we should all be eager to bring our portion of the precious materials which compose it.

‘I WAS A STRANGER, AND YE TOOK ME IN.’ It is the Saviour; He who came to deliver us from the most wretched bondage,—the bondage of sin, who thus speaks.

There is a powerful appeal to us in the language of the committee to whom it has been entrusted to solicit aid for these necessitous strangers. There is a powerful appeal in the recollection of the cause in which they are suffering; and of the sympathy and aid we received from their fathers in the darkest hour of our country’s fortunes. There is a powerful appeal in the horrors they have endured, and in the state of entire destitution in which they have come to us. But to the Christian there is a still more powerful appeal in the admonition of the Saviour, and in the recollection that, by our compassion to the miserable, we testify our affection to Him.

He dwells no longer in this troubled scene. He has gone to take possession of his kingdom, and is exalted far above the reach of all those sufferings and sorrows which embitter the life of man. But the afflicted, the poor, you have always with you. They are the brethren of Jesus, and this is the language in which He recommends them to your beneficence. ‘VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, INASMUCH AS YE DO IT UNTO THE LEAST OF ONE OF THESE MY BRETHREN, YE DO IT UNTO ME.’

## SERMON XLVII.

## JERUSALEM.

Lamentations, i. 1. — HOW DOTH THE CITY SIT SOLITARY THAT WAS FULL OF PEOPLE! HOW HAS SHE BECOME A WIDOW! SHE THAT WAS GREAT AMONG THE NATIONS, AND PRINCESS AMONG THE PROVINCES, HOW HAS SHE BECOME TRIBUTARY!

SUCH was the exclamation of the prophet, as he looked upon the capital of his country, a prey to its enemies, and beheld, in prophetic vision, its future destiny, when the denunciations of the Almighty were still further fulfilled, and the devoted city, having filled up the measure of its iniquities, was reaping their bitter fruit.

Such must be the language of every Hebrew pilgrim, when he visits the land of his father's sepulchres, and comes first in view of the venerated place which the prophet had once described as 'the perfection of beauty.'

It is impossible that any language can be more appropriate to its present condition; any delineation more just; any imagery more vivid, than is

contained in these few words, '*How doth the city sit solitary!*' It sits alone; amidst a scene of desolation of which no adequate idea can be presented to the mind of one who has not beheld it.

It has been permitted me to look on that scene. The visions of childhood, the fond, but faint, anticipations of mature life, have been realized.

I have seen Jerusalem, and all the hallowed spots around it; and, as I remembered what eyes had gazed on that scene, what feet had trod that sacred soil, what lips had uttered there the words of peace and consolation, how was I overpowered by the emotions! What a crowd of holy recollections thronged upon my mind!

We had visited the scenes most rich in classic and historic lore. I had, myself, been admitted a member of a learned society in Athens, at a meeting of that society,—its members sitting on the fallen pillars and capitals of the Parthenon, so dear to the memory of every scholar. The plain of Marathon, the groves of Academus, the fields of Troy, Corinth, the Hellespont, Constantinople, 'Queen of the East,' Cyprus and Rhodes, had passed under our view.

We had been where the first of poets had sung, the most eloquent of orators declaimed, and the chief of the apostles revealed to the inquisitive Athenians, the knowledge of the only true God.

We had stood in the forum at Rome; in the Acropolis at Athens; and, above all, on Mars hill.

But what was all this to the scene on which we were now permitted to look ?

‘ Those holy fields,  
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet,  
Which, eighteen hundred years ago, were nailed  
For our advantage to the bitter cross.’

We entered Syria at Jaffa, the ancient Joppa, — whither Jonah ‘ fled from the presence of the Lord,’ where Peter raised Dorcas to life, and, as he dwelt in the house of ‘ one Simon, by the sea-side,’ saw the vision which taught him that God was ‘ no respecter of persons,’ and prepared him to open the door of salvation to the Gentile world.

We passed by Lydda, where the same Peter, in the name of Jesus Christ, had restored health to Eneas who had been ‘ eight years a paralytic ;’ and over the plain of Sharon, once decorated, and, at certain seasons, now decorated, with a profusion of beautiful flowers, — an unenclosed, undulating plain, extending eastward to the ‘ mountains which stand round about Jerusalem,’ — and northward to Carmel, whose ‘ excellency had departed,’ for the curse denounced by the prophet had been fulfilled, and its ‘ top’ had ‘ withered.’

We tarried a night at Ramlah, the ancient Arimathea, the city of Joseph, in whose tomb was laid the body of our Lord ; and which is probably the birth-place and burial place of Samuel, where he anointed Saul to be the first king of Israel.

We traversed the mountainous country, so sim-

ply described in the gospels as 'the hill country of Judea,' where the mother of our Lord went to salute her cousin Elizabeth.

A ruthless and continuous tyranny of eighteen centuries had passed its withering hand over these gardens of Ephraim, and all was sterile and desolate.

Notwithstanding, however, the present sterility, there are indubitable marks of ancient and extensive cultivation. The traces of terraces for vines are every where visible, reminding us of the denunciations of the prophet upon the 'drunkards of Ephraim,' so literally fulfilled, for 'the glorious beauty,' which was in 'the fat valley,' has indeed become a 'fading flower.'

Passing along through a narrow defile, where only one person could pass at a time, and over a road, — if so it might be called, — filled with stones, and apparently the bed of a mountain torrent, we pursued our wearisome way through as dreary and desolate a country as can well be imagined. But we were heedless of dreariness and wearisomeness, for our thoughts were bent on the object we had travelled so many thousand miles to contemplate, and our eager eyes were strained to the utmost, if, haply, at every ascent that we reached, we might descry it. Again and again we were disappointed.

After several hours' travel, we entered an elevated plain, strewed, — I may say, covered — with loose rocks and stones, as far as the eye could reach;

these rocks perforated on every side, as if they had been acted upon by some powerful element.

Suddenly a line of Gothic walls, flanked by square towers, with minarets, and the tops of a few houses above them, appeared before us.

It was JERUSALEM! Jerusalem 'sitting,' as I have said, — as the prophet, many centuries ago, had said, — sitting 'solitary.'

That graphic portraiture of its widowhood was indeed here found to be drawn to the very life.

*And was it indeed Jerusalem?* Jerusalem standing, — it may be, — where the city of Melchizedeck, who blessed Abraham, had stood; — Jerusalem, built by the grandson of Noah; taken by Joshua as the chief place of the promised land; where 'David fixed his royal throne;' where was Mount Zion; and the temple of Solomon, 'the wonder of the world;' above all, where, two thousand years after its erection, a 'greater than Solomon' appeared, and that fearful tragedy was enacted which brought swift destruction on its actors, but pardon, and peace, and life, and immortality to the penitent, throughout the world.

'His blood be upon us and our children,' was the imprecation of the deluded Jews, and how fearfully was it fulfilled! Before that generation had passed away, — as the Saviour foretold, — Jerusalem was a heap of ruins, and, of its proud temple, 'not one stone was left upon another.'

The present walls of the city were built by the Turkish Sultan Solyman, about three hundred years ago.

Near the gate of entrance on the Jaffa side, is a cave, in which the prophet is said to have written the book from which the words of my text are taken, and, not far off is the 'upper pool of Gihon,' where Solomon was anointed king, by Zadoc the high priest; and, on the way to which, 'near the Fuller's field,' the prophet met Ahaz.

We could identify the 'Fuller's field,'—still so called,—and we almost thought, that, with our guide-book, the Bible, we could identify the very spot on which the prophet delivered his message to the king.

Every where, indeed, in the East, we had striking, and often beautiful illustrations of Scripture. How often have we seen the shepherd *leading* his flock, as the 'good Shepherd,' is said to have done! He still 'calleth them all by their name,' as in ancient time, and 'they know his voice, but the voice of a stranger they do not know.'

How often have we seen the 'two women grinding at the mill!' How often have 'the maidens at the well by the wayside,' whither they had gone 'to draw water,' taken down the pitcher 'from their shoulder' to 'give us drink!'

On the same side of the city with the Jaffa gate, a deep ravine still bears the name of 'the Valley of Hinnom,' where the idolatrous Hebrews offered sacrifice to false gods, and where a perpetual fire was kept up which destroyed every thing that was thrown into it.

A little beyond is the 'Potter's field,' which was

purchased with the price of the Saviour's blood;' and in which are many tombs, some of which, — as is usual in Syria and Egypt, — furnished dwelling-places for the poor inhabitants.

It was on Saturday, the third of August, 1839, that we entered the city; and, if we had responded to the prophet's exclamation, 'How doth the city sit solitary!' when we approached it and stood at its gates, how much more ready were we now to exclaim, with the same prophet, 'Is *this* the city that men called the perfection of beauty?' The streets were narrow, crooked, uneven, filthy; the pavement, — where there was one, — broken. The plague, — though, in most places, it does not exist in the extreme heat of summer, or the extreme cold of winter, — was still committing its ravages here.

The Sepulchre of Christ, Calvary, and the rock rent by the earthquake, — so tradition designates them, — are all contained within the walls of a church, originally built over them by the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great; whose ill-guided superstition has done not a little to baffle the curiosity of the Christian traveller.

On entering, you find the Turkish and Arab soldiers, who guard the church, seated smoking, and drinking coffee.

Before you, is a large marble slab, over which are suspended lamps, or lanterns, one burning; and on this slab, — as you are told, — the body of Jesus was laid, to be anointed and embalmed, previous to its interment.

On the left, at a little distance, is a small oblong building, immediately under the dome.

You enter it by a low door, and observe in the centre of a small, square room, a block of polished marble, on which, it is said, the angel sat who announced the glad tidings of the resurrection to the two Marys. Near to this is another door, through which, stooping, you enter a second apartment, about large enough to contain three or four persons. In a recess, is a sarcophagus of white marble. It is without ornament, and covers the place, where, according to tradition, — and, I am inclined to believe, according to fact, — ‘the Lord was laid.’

There are seven lamps constantly burning over it; and a coarse painting, and some pots of artificial flowers, are ranged on a shelf above it.

On leaving this apartment, you ascend about twenty steps, to the place of the crucifixion. Here are shown the holes in which the crosses of the Saviour, and the two malefactors who were crucified with him, were fixed in the ground, and, not far from this, the rent in the rock.

It would be well if it stopped here; but you have the place pointed out where Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, and that where the centurion went to weep after the crucifixion; and even where the cock crowed, reminding Peter of the Saviour’s words, ‘Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.’ I hint at these few things as a specimen of the absurd stories which are told by the priests who conduct visitants, and the conse-

quent air of doubt which is thrown over objects the most interesting.

It is a relief to turn to other scenes, on which the mind may repose itself with confidence and delight. The face of nature still endures. The rocks, the mountains, the valleys are there. Mount Zion, Gethsemane, and Olivet are there.

On the day after our arrival, we went out to the Mount of Olives.

We passed, on Mount Moriah, near to the mosque of Omar, which stands, as is doubtless erroneously said, on the site of the ancient temple; and by the pool of Bethesda, a reservoir about one hundred and forty feet long, and forty wide; dry, and half filled up. Here the lambs, destined for sacrifice, were washed; and it was on the brink of this pool that Christ said to the paralytic, 'Rise, take up thy bed and walk.'

Leaving the city by St. Stephen's gate, through which this proto-martyr is said to have been led to be stoned, we descended the mount, or hill, on which Jerusalem stands, to the bridge which crosses the brook Kedron, then dry, but, in winter, a mountain torrent pursuing its way through the valley of Jehoshaphat, to the Dead Sea.

On this side of the Mount, is the fountain of Siloam, which 'flowed fast by the oracle of God;' and to which you descend into the hill itself by a number of steps. Not far off, is the pool of Siloam, with which the fountain has connection through the hill,—to which our Saviour sent the blind man

to wash and be healed, and which is supposed by the natives, to possess virtue in healing diseases of the eyes. It is a small pool of transparent water, stoned, and a stream issues from it, which descends the hill into a reservoir at its foot.

Crossing the brook Kedron, we came to a piece of ground enclosed by a stone wall, — partly dilapidated, containing eight olive-trees, apparently of great age. This was *the Garden of Gethsemane*. So tradition has, I believe, uniformly testified. And it may really be so. It is certainly on the Mount of Olives, whither Jesus was wont to resort with his disciples, and, therefore, has doubtless been hallowed by the footsteps of the Redeemer. It may be that he has knelt and prayed there to ‘his Father and our Father.’ It may be that he there endured his agony, and manifested a submission as unparalleled as his sufferings.

It was, in that quarter of the world, the first Sabbath of the month, and my thoughts were with those, — far off, — who are accustomed on the first Sabbath of the month, especially to meditate on the sufferings and death of the Saviour.

I would fain have spoken to them then, in language such as Gethsemane would inspire. Or rather, I would fain have had them with me, to listen to the voiceless teachers whose silent eloquence would reach the heart in tones of deeper, more thrilling interest, than words could utter.

The scene has vanished. — Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives are far away. Jerusalem, in its widowed, solitary state, is no longer before me.

But I hear those voiceless teachers still. They speak of sufferings endured for me, for you; — of the unequalled agony, and propitiatory death of Jesus. Every day may we remember him, and may the remembrance constrain us to live to him, who lived and died for us.

With Jerusalem, the ruins of Balbec, near the foot of Mount Lebanon, and the beautiful city of Damascus, ended our journey to Palestine and Syria; and with the ruins of Thebes, the tombs of Sesostris and the Pharaohs, and the Red Sea, our visit to Egypt, and the East.

We returned to Europe through the Adriatic, — passing the island immortalized by the shipwreck of St. Paul, — to Trieste, to Vienna and Venice; then through Italy to France, and from France again to England.

We were absent from Paris two years, and, in this extended journey through the north and south of Europe, in Asia and Africa, — of many thousand miles, — no obstacle, of any importance, opposed our progress; no accident occurred; no insult was offered us; not an unkind word is remembered as spoken to us. As we proceeded, the anticipated 'lions' fled at our approach; the mountains became plains, 'and the rough places smooth.'

We had been in the midst of the plague in the Holy City. We were unarmed, with the wild Arabs of the desert in the deep glens; on the rocky, precipi-

tous cliffs; on the high mountains, and on the solitary plains. They have guarded and guided us; they have carried us in their arms where it was dangerous or difficult for us to trust ourselves; receiving only a kind recognition of their services, and such pecuniary compensation as we thought proper to give them. I have, myself, slept on the sandy desert plain, of many miles extent, with no resting-place but the sand, no canopy but the starry heavens, and no one near me but the Egyptian muleteer who was conducting me between Cairo and the Red Sea.

But we remembered *who* had said 'Fear not, I am with thee;' and, 'trusting under his wing,' we were not 'afraid of the terror by night, or the arrow that flieth by day,' of 'the pestilence that walketh in darkness, or the destruction that wasteth at noonday.' We trusted in HIM, and were delivered. We trusted in HIM, and are here, to 'think of his loving-kindness,'—as we do this day,—'in the midst of the temple.'

**'BLESS THE LORD, O OUR SOULS, AND ALL THAT IS WITHIN US, BLESS HIS HOLY NAME! BLESS THE LORD, O OUR SOULS, AND FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS!'**

AMEN and AMEN.

## NOTES

## TO THE SERMON ON JERUSALEM AND SYRIA.

ON our way from Ramlah to Jerusalem, we passed through the valley of Elah, — a beautiful valley, — that is designated as the place in which Saul defeated the Philistines. We crossed a stream, which, as it runs through the valley, is naturally enough supposed to be the brook from which David took the ‘five smooth stones’ with which he smote the Philistine champion.

In Jerusalem, and probably in other cities in the East, there is a small gate called the ‘Needle’s Eye,’ at the side of each of the large gates of the city; through which pedestrians go in and out. The camels, with their burthens, are driven through the large gate, but cannot go through the small gate without being stripped of their burdens. Is there not an allusion to this in the proverbial saying, which is used by our Saviour in reference to a rich man who trusts in his riches, entering into the kingdom of heaven?

The houses in Palestine, and the East generally, have flat roofs, on which the occupants of the houses are accustomed to sleep, with stairs often, if not always, on the outside of the house, so that, in descending to the street, it is not necessary to go through the house. We have here an explanation of our Saviour’s injunction, Matthew xxiv. 17.

The thermometer (Fahrenheit) at Jerusalem, August 4th, 1839, at 6 o’clock, A. M. was 68°. On the 5th, at the same hour, 63°. On the 7th, at 7 o’clock, A. M. 63°. It was probably considerably higher some part of the day. On the day before we reached Jerusalem, it was 90° in the course of the day.

An accident befel the thermometer, which rendered it useless during the remainder of our journey in the East.

Near to Bethlehem, which is about six miles from Jerusalem, is a small Turkish building, that is said to cover the grave of Rachel, the wife of the patriarch Jacob.

We discovered a large aperture in the back of the building, through which we entered, and found a conical heap of stones carefully laid together and plastered; which, if not the monument itself, may occupy the place of the monument that the patriarch raised to the memory of his beloved wife.

Its situation is, as described in Scripture, 'near to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.'

The Mahometans regard with great veneration, and preserve with great care, the graves of the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament, and of all connected with them. The grave of the beloved wife of Israel, the Israelites would, doubtless, have guarded with peculiar care.

The idea that we might be standing on the spot where they 'buried Rachel,' excited emotions which may, perhaps, be conceived, but which cannot be described.

Bethlehem is still entitled to the designation of 'the least among the princes of Judah.' It is a small, inconsiderable place, remarkable chiefly for the poverty of its inhabitants, who are nearly all nominal Christians, and maintain themselves by the manufacture of beads, crucifixes, and other sacred symbols, which they work in mother-of-pearl, or the fruit of the dome palm. The latter, brought from Mecca, becomes as hard as ivory, and is dyed of various colors. They make some beads, also, of a coral called Jussuah, which is found in the Red Sea, and takes a brilliant color, though it is seldom found without flaws.

The place designated by tradition as the place of the Saviour's birth, is enclosed in a church connected with a monastery of Franciscans. You descend by a long, narrow subterranean passage, and come to a small chapel, where an altar marks the spot on which, — you are told, — was the manger in which the Holy Infant was laid.

There is much decoration and finery here, as there is in the other places supposed to be connected with the Saviour's life and death, and which serves not a little to interrupt the devout musings of the Christian visitant.

The situation of Bethlehem is delightful. It stands on the brow

of a hill, or precipice, overlooking a beautiful valley, in which are vineyards, olive-trees and fig-trees in great abundance.

On our way to Bethlehem we visited the 'Pools of Solomon,' mentioned in the Canticles or Song of Solomon. They are three in number, quadrangular, and on levels one above another. A little above the upper pool, is an arched vault, where the spring is that supplies the pools, and which is supposed to be the 'sealed fountain' which is figuratively used in the Canticles.

Of Bethphage, which was about a mile from the top of the Mount of Olives, and which is mentioned Mark xi. 1, and Luke xxix. 19, there are no remains.

Near to Bethany, the way to which is on the side of the Mount of Olives, you are shown what is traditionally called 'the grave of Lazarus.' You descend many steps into the side of the hill to a small room, or cellar, capable of holding three or four persons, in the floor of which is a trap-door opening into a vault about large enough to contain a single body. Here, it is said, the body of Lazarus was laid.

From the top of the Mount of Olives, the Dead Sea and the Valley of the Jordan are distinctly visible.

At Jerusalem we received much attention from the English consul; from Mr. Nicolaison, the English missionary to the Jews, and from Mr. Laneau, of South Carolina, the American missionary; as we did afterwards from Mr. Thompson at Beyrout, and had previously from our missionaries in Greece and Turkey. Our ministers, *chargé d'affaires*, and consuls every where, were assiduous in showing us every civility and affording us every assistance in their power. The consuls who were foreigners, were, by no means, less attentive than our countrymen. Among them, Mr. Chasseau at Beyrout, Mr. Hoskear at Christiania in Norway, the consul at Ystad in Sweden, Mr. Swartz at Vienna, Mr. Campbell at Genoa, and Mr. Om-brosi at Florence, should be particularly mentioned.

Damascus, which we visited on leaving the Holy City and its intensely interesting neighborhood, is one of the most ancient cities now in being. It existed in the time of Abraham.

The view of it, as you approach it, is exceedingly beautiful. So it has been described by all travellers, ancient and modern, who have visited it, and so we found it.

As it bursts suddenly upon you in turning round a high projecting rock on the top of Mount Lebanon (Anti Libanus), nothing can exceed its beauty; extending along a rich, fertile valley occupied by gardens, for more than nine miles in extent, and three in breadth; two or three rivers winding through it; the trees in gardens of the city itself rising, mingled with minarets, above the city walls.

The gardens of Damascus, with their fragrant trees, flowers, and their marble fountains, carried us back to the days of childhood, and brought up again to the imagination the enchanted scenes of the 'Arabian Nights.'

The prejudices against, — or as it might with more propriety be said, — the hatred of Christians, has been stronger at Damascus than in any other place in Syria. No Christian was allowed to enter the city except on foot. If he came to the gate riding, he must dismount and walk. On entering, he was treated with great contempt and rudeness, if he even escaped violence. But things have greatly changed. The prejudice is much ameliorated. We rode into the city on our mules, were received kindly, and remained there several days, passing constantly through the streets, and visiting the places the most interesting to us.

We were informed that General Cass, when he visited Damascus, entered the city on horseback, with his suite, and the American flag flying, and that the governor gave orders that all who were in the streets should rise as the procession passed, and make their obeisance.

There is a Roman Catholic monastery there, where strangers are hospitably received, and lodged and boarded without any compensation but what is gratuitous. There are also two or three boarding houses. Our attentive and excellent friend, Mr. Chasseau, the American consul at Beyrout, had given us a letter to the French consul at Damascus, who was very attentive, and furnished us with not a little information.

At Balbec, the ancient Heliopolis, or City of the Sun, described by the Arabians as the 'Wonder of Syria,' about fifty miles from Damascus, whose ruins (Balbec), though less extensive than those of Palmyra, have more beauty in the detail, an interesting and beautiful incident occurred, illustrative of the kindness of the Arabs in Syria.

We had pitched our tent on the bank of a small stream at the

foot of the principal 'Ruin,' — the Temple of the Sun. After looking at the remains of this splendid structure, we went out to visit some other ruins in the village. On leaving the last of these, the writer recollected something that he wished to look at again, and requested his wife, who accompanied him, to stand still a moment, while he went back to do so. On his leaving her, she thought she would make her own way to the tent, but was soon at a loss, and stopped and looked round her. The door of a house opened and two Arab women came out. They approached her gently, one of them placing a hand upon one of her shoulders, and the other a hand upon the other shoulder, and smiling in her face as if to say 'Do not be alarmed, we mean to do you a kindness and no harm,' they each took one of her arms and led her, with the utmost gentleness, to her tent. They had doubtless been watching our movements from a window in the hovel, had marked what was done, had seen her perplexity, and, with the sagacity of women, had comprehended it, and came out to relieve her.

They were *women*. Woman is the same kind, compassionate being, — the same ministering angel, — in civilized and in savage life.

In the East, there is a species of locust-tree, which bears a kind of fruit that is sometimes eaten. Some have supposed this to have been the 'meat' that was eaten by John the Baptist, but, as there appears to be but little nutriment in it, and as the locust of entomology (*gryllus*) is said to be a great delicacy when salted and dried, and to be gathered in great abundance by the Arabs, and laid up, dried, for winter provision, it was doubtless this insect which was the 'meat' of John the Baptist in the wilderness.

We found Egypt, to which we went on leaving Syria, 'the basest of kingdoms,' as had long since been foretold of it; suffering under the severest and most cruel exactions of ruthless tyranny. It seemed to us that every third person we met had been subjected to mutilation, inflicted either by themselves or their parents in their childhood, to prevent their being torn from their homes to supply the armies of the tyrant. How imperious must be the cruel necessity which would impel a mother to mutilate her child! But even this was often rendered unavailing by the ingenuity of their oppressor.

Mehemet Ali had redeeming qualities, and deserves credit for some wise and good deeds. He established a few manufactories,

and two or three seminaries of learning, and he sent a number of young men to France to be educated in science and the arts. But he had European advisers about him (chiefly French) more enlightened than himself, and he was exceedingly ambitious of a good reputation in Europe.

The lives and hard earnings of his subjects, however, were constantly the prey of his cruelty and cupidity.

One or two facts will illustrate this assertion. When the crop was ripe for reaping, the agent of the pasha made his appearance, and addressed the owner of it to this effect. 'You have a fine crop. The pasha has occasion for it, and will take it at its value. The tax is so much, (naming a sum probably to three quarters the worth of the whole,) here is an order upon the treasury at Cairo for the balance.' Cairo might be some hundred miles off. If the owner demurred, he would probably be threatened with the bastinado, if it were not indeed actually applied. The poor wretch sets off for Cairo; but has hardly started, it may be, before he is seized by the emissaries of the pasha, robbed of his order, and carried off to the army. If he escapes this, and reaches Cairo, and presents his order, he is informed that there is no money for him at present; the pasha wants the money to pay his army, but that he can take the order to the Jews, who will buy it of him and get the money when they can. The Jews are the agents of the pasha, and buy his order for a trifle.

After wasting some time at Cairo, he starts for home again, and, if he escapes the fate before designed for him, returns empty. Such was the constant practice under Mehemet Ali in 1839.

While we were at Alexandria, the Turkish fleet arrived, with a large sum in piastres on board. These were disposed of in Alexandria. The pasha immediately issued an order lowering the value of the piastre, and bought them in at the depreciated value. He then issued an order raising their value, and paid out his piastres at the increased value.

Mehemet Ali was born in 1769, in Cavalle, a little port in Roumalie, of poor parents. Under age, an orphan, he was adopted by an aga. His courage and quickness were remarkable. He married a rich widow, and acquired independence by commerce in tobacco. When the French invaded Egypt, the Porte levied troops to dispute this province with Bonaparte, and ordered three hundred men to

be raised in the town in which Mehemet Ali lived. He took an active part in levying them, assisted at the battle of Aboukir, distinguished himself, and, ere long, received the command of one thousand men.

He held this rank when the French evacuated Egypt. He was sent to fight the Mamelukes, whom he eventually exterminated. He supplanted the then pasha, who was unpopular, by the aid of the French consul, and soon threw off his allegiance to the Porte.

It is stated in this discourse, that we were obliged to use great precaution in Jerusalem to avoid infection from the plague. It is by no means a settled point that the plague is contagious. Certain it is that we were constantly compromised in regard to it ; riding upon the mules, which animals often died of the disease, and being often lifted upon the mules by the muleteers, who had free intercourse with every one, and took no precaution to avoid infection. We were cautioned to avoid all contact in passing through the streets, even of our garments, with the passers-by, and we had an amusing instance of the similarity of the habits of childhood every where. The little girls would run up and pretend they intended to touch us, in order to frighten us.

We were at Constantinople at the time of the death of the Sultan Mahmoud, and the proclamation of his successor, the present sultan, Abdul Medjed. The funeral of the old grand seigneur was conducted with a good deal of quiet and simplicity. His body was carried in a barge, richly decorated, accompanied by a procession of barges on the Bosphorus, to its last resting-place.

The procession at the first public appearance of the new sultan, realized to us the pictures presented in eastern romance.

The gorgeous apparel of the attendants on the sovereign, the splendid caparisons of their steeds, and the whole display of magnificence and splendor, exceed description.\*

The sultan himself was on horseback. He wore a large plume (if so it may be called) of diamonds in his turban, but had much less finery about him than those who attended him. He appeared to be, as he was, a youth of sixteen ; thin, pale and effeminate, having spent his life, thus far, within the walls of the seraglio

His father (degenerate disciple of Mohammed) died of delirium tremens. This assertion is made on undoubted authority.

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\* It has happened to the writer to be present at the first public appearance of three sovereigns. Napoleon 1st, Victoria, and the present Sultan of Turkey.

In Turkey and Egypt, and in Syria as well, the effect of commerce, and of the increased facility of international communication, has been to loosen the hold of Mussulmen upon the religion of the Prophet of Mecca ; and the time is hastening on when they will come into the household of the Christian faith. The late Sultan of Turkey has been thought not to have been unfriendly to such a consummation, and Mehemet Ali, the late Pasha of Egypt, has been suspected of a like predilection. The English and American missionaries are indirectly promoting the same event.

In Turkey, the sultan adopted not a few customs of European nations ; among them, — as many of his subjects are said to have done, — the free use of intoxicating drinks.

The introduction of the system of quarantine into Turkey, as it strikes at the root of fatalism, is a falling off from the Mohammedan faith. It was violently opposed by the people, and a mob of the populace, of whom not a few were women, attempted the destruction of the quarantine establishment when it was first opened. The government, however, persevered, and it was fully established.

Near the close of the discourse to which these notes are appended, I have alluded to our return through Italy and France.

On leaving Egypt, we went through the Adriatic to Trieste, passing the island which is immortalized by the shipwreck of Paul. It has been commonly supposed that Malta was the scene of this disaster, but this has been clearly shown to be an error by the learned Bryant and others. Some years since, a British naval officer surveyed the harbor of Malta, and at once determined, from the description in the Acts, that this could not be the spot. Indeed, the narrative of Luke himself, places it in the Adriatic, which was the way to Rome, not in the Mediterranean, which was not the way.

In Rome, on our introduction to the Pope, though he received us very kindly, he disclosed, perhaps involuntarily, the fact that Boston was associated in his mind with the destruction of the Ursuline Convent.

In the vestibule of one of the churches at Rome, there is a placard on the wall giving notice that, by a decree of Pope Gregory the Great, every person who says mass in that church shall have the power of releasing a soul from purgatory. The reason of this decree is affirmed to be this : Gregory was one day passing the church, before which

was an image of the Virgin Mary. Being engaged in thought, the Pope passed without making obeisance to the image. He heard a voice calling him by name, and, on looking up whence it proceeded, he perceived the lips of the statue moving, and heard himself thus accosted : ‘ Gregory, do you know that you have passed the image of the Holy Mother, without paying homage to it ? ’ Gregory immediately prostrated himself on the ground, and felt so honored that the Virgin Mother had condescended to address him, that he issued the decree given above.

In Naples, the priests have in their possession a phial, which, as they affirm, contains the real blood of Januarius, a Roman Catholic saint, which they exhibit once a year ; and which is liquid, or congealed, as the priests choose to have it. When it is not liquid, they say it portends calamity, otherwise, a blessing. While it remains congealed, the people are in a state of great excitement and distress. When the French had possession of Naples during the reign of Napoleon, the blood remained congealed, and the populace were so much excited, that there was much tumult and great danger of an insurrection against the French, whose presence, it was supposed, prevented the liquefaction. The French General in command, sent a message to the priests, that if the blood was not liquefied in ten minutes after the message was received, he would take off all their heads. The effect was instantaneous. The blood was immediately exhibited to the people in a state of liquefaction, and the tumult subsided.

The Italian character has been much misrepresented. We were domesticated in Rome a number of months, and had frequent and familiar intercourse with respectable families, and nowhere have we seen more domestic affection or more propriety and delicacy of behavior than there. The writer, before his first visit to Italy, was assured by his friend, M. Coqueril, the eminent Protestant minister in France, who had resided long in Italy, that he would find the Italian character as above represented. In regard to their integrity and sense of honor, Mr. Hammatt, the American consul at Naples, stated that he had been engaged in business transactions there for a good many years, to a great amount, and that he had not lost a farthing by a bad debt. There is, undoubtedly, much dissoluteness and trickery here, as well as elsewhere, but much less than has been imputed to them.

There is much scepticism in Italy, and even in Imperial Rome itself, at least among professional men and the higher classes, in regard to the Roman Catholic faith. This was communicated to us with a freedom which surprised us.

In all the Italian states there is an ardent aspiration after political freedom, but little or no prospect, at present, at least, of their obtaining it. The system of Austrian espionage is complete; and Austrian bayonets are always at hand to put an end to any symptom of revolution. The sad indifference to their fate, both in Europe and America, damps the hope of any assistance from abroad. The fate of Hungary is too recent and too striking to give them much, if any, encouragement. The mildest government in Italy is the Tuscan, but there is as much desire for a change there as elsewhere.

In France, every thing, with respect to religion, is unsettled. There is undoubtedly much scepticism, — certainly as it regards Popery, — but the French, as was stated by the eminent Protestant minister to whom I have before referred, are seeking a religion. France, I think, will become a Protestant country, though it may be long first, as only one thirtieth of its population are Protestants. The rest are nominally Roman Catholics; but many are actually sceptics, or in a state of transition from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism. In the House of Peers there are sixteen Protestants, (1839). In the House of Assembly one twentieth are Protestants.

No questions are ever asked in the elections, or appointments to office, respecting the religious belief. It was so, at least, in 1839. The policy of the present government of France is intolerant and persecuting. How far this may accelerate or retard the progress of Protestantism, remains to be seen.

BOSTON, 135 WASHINGTON STREET.  
DECEMBER, 1854.

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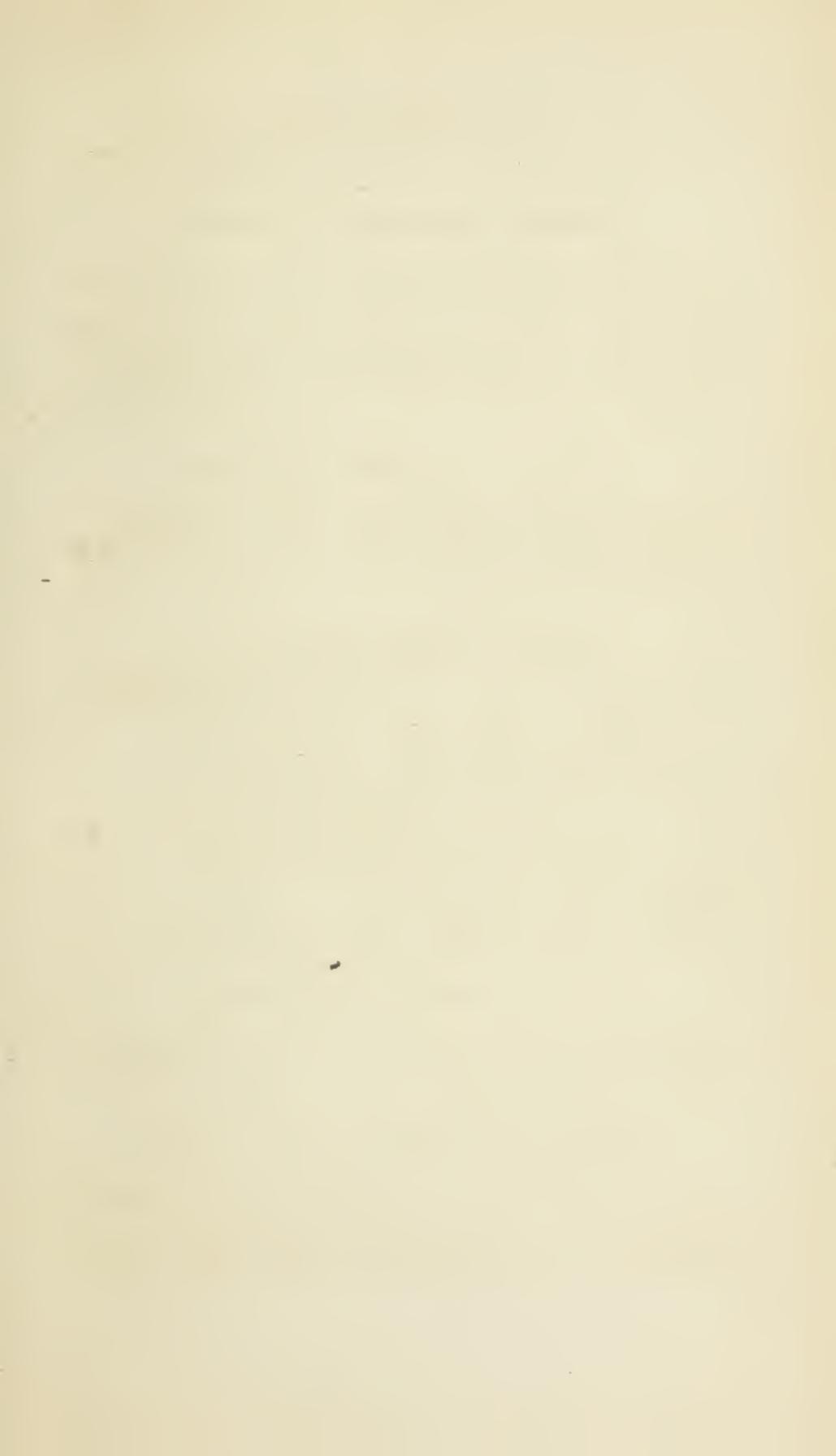
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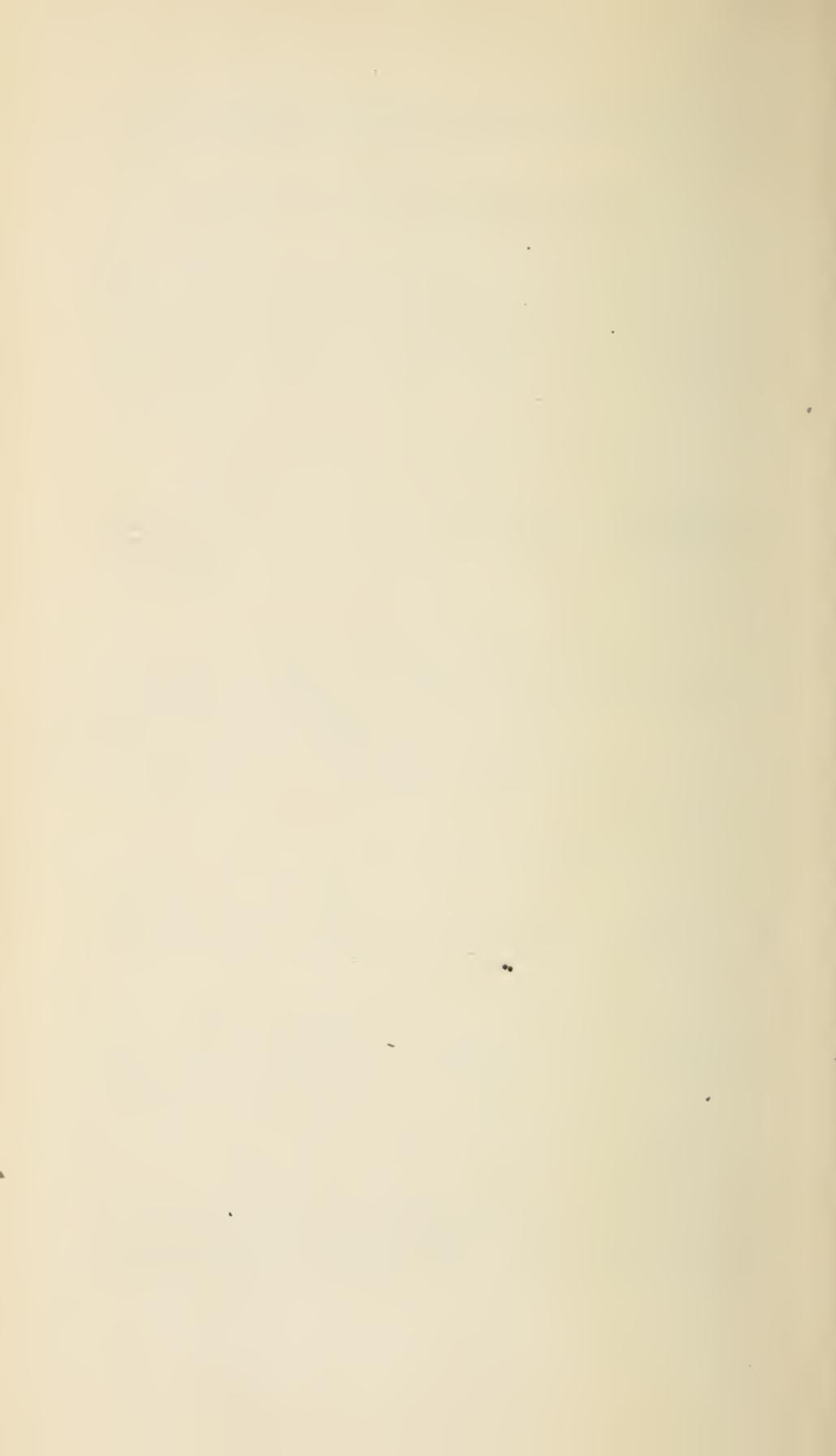
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