

Monergism

SERMONS BY THE LATE

**REV. EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, D.D.**

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE

**WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D.D.**

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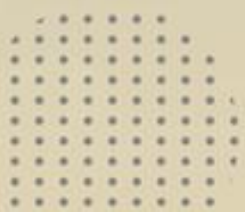
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BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D.D.

MINISTER OF THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION  
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# MEMOIR OF REV. DOCTOR GRIFFIN

## CHAPTER I

### FROM HIS BIRTH TO THE TIME OF HIS SETTLEMENT AT NEW- HARTFORD

EDWARD DORR GRIFFIN was born at East Haddam, Connecticut, January 6, 1770. His father was GEORGE GRIFFIN, a wealthy farmer, a man of a vigorous intellect, of great enterprise, and of a superior education for a common one of that day. His mother was EVE DORR, of Lyme, and is said to have been distinguished for her lovely and engaging qualities. She belonged to a family strongly marked by good sense, and extensively known in the civil history both of the state and nation.\* He had two brothers, (Col. JOSIAH GRIFFIN, of East Haddam, and GEORGE GRIFFIN, Esq. an eminent lawyer of the city of New-York,) and five sisters, all of whom were married. He was named after his uncle, the Reverend EDWARD DORR, of Hartford, and was, in the intention of his parents, devoted to the ministry from his birth; a circumstance which was certainly somewhat singular, as neither of his parents at that time made any pretensions to piety. His uncle, who married a daughter of Governor TALCOTT, but had no children, would probably have educated him if he had lived, but he was removed during his nephew's infancy.

As he was intended for the ministry, and withal was incapacitated by bodily indisposition to labour much upon the farm, he was kept almost constantly at school up to the time of his entering college. His preparatory studies were chiefly under the Reverend JOSEPH VAILL, of Hadlyme, towards whom he continued till the close of life to cherish the most grateful and filial veneration.



In September, 1786, he became a member of Yale College. Here he distinguished himself in every department of study, and gave unequivocal indications of a commanding and splendid intellect. He graduated with the highest honors of his class, in 1790.

While he was at home during one of his college vacations, a circumstance occurred by means of which he had well nigh lost his life. His father had a fine young horse, whose spirit no one had been able to subdue. Edward mounted him, rode him for several hours, and returned in high spirits, declaring that he would have him for his Bucephalus. Shortly after he mounted him a second time, upon which the horse instantly stood erect upon his hind feet, and fell backwards upon Edward with his whole weight. When he was taken up, all signs of animation had fled, and his friends for some time supposed that the vital principle was gone. By the blessing of God, however, upon the vigorous applications that were made to his body, he gradually revived, and at no distant period was able to return to college and prosecute his studies with his accustomed alacrity.

The following account of the commencement and progress of his religious impressions is extracted from some brief recollections of his early life, which he committed to writing but a short time previous to his death.

I had religious impressions occasionally from my earliest childhood. When I was quite young, certainly not more than four or five years old, one of my companions, a little older than myself, told me, while in the fields, about death and a future state. I remember I was deeply affected. My mother afterwards informed me that I came home weeping, and asked her about these things, and appeared not to get over it all day. In later life I have often been affected at the condescension of Him who frequently visited a poor, ignorant, wicked child, and forced him into the secret corner to pray. I remember some instances in which my prayers were so earnest that I thought I should prevail, and was determined to take the kingdom of heaven by violence. Once in a time of sickness, my distress of mind

was succeeded by a hope; but it was full of self-righteousness, saying to others, "Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou." I remember that, in looking around among those I knew, I could see none whom I would allow to be christians. They all fell short of the standard which I had erected. With all these motions of conscience, I know not that any person supposed that I was other than a thoughtless, light and playful child.

I went to college in hope of being fitted for the ministry. I not unfrequently attended the Saturday evening prayer meeting, and found my conscience affected by it. I used to calculate that if I were not converted while in college, I should probably die in my sins. I always shrunk with horror at the idea of going into the ministry without religion. If then I should not be a christian when I graduated, I should study law; and the temptations of that life and society would carry me farther and farther from God, and in all probability would seal my ruin. Thus I calculated. Still I remained unchanged. When I entered my senior year, I thought it was high time to fix on my future course; and as God had not changed my heart, I said to myself, "What should I wait for the Lord any longer?" (2 Kings 6:33) and devoted myself to the law. For nearly two years I threw off the restraints of conscience, and made up my mind to be a man of the world; but my habits and sense of propriety kept me from vicious courses.

After I graduated, I engaged as principal of an academy at Derby, about ten miles west of New-Haven, where I spent nine of the gayest months of my life. In July, 1791, I was taken sick. The thought which I had frequently had before in sickness returned upon me with greater power: "If I cannot bear this for a short time, how can I bear the pains of hell forever?" I have no distinct recollection of the exercises which accompanied this uneasiness. I can only say that I found myself resolved to lead a different life, and to devote myself to the service of God. I had often formed such a resolution, but this seemed to be more deep and real than any which I had formed before. That was all I knew about myself. After my recovery, these

thoughts continued and increased; but it was two or three months before I durst conclude that I was a child of God. Still the thought of changing my profession never entered my mind. I have often wondered how this could be; but I believe it arose from a natural fixedness of purpose, which renders it difficult for me to change. One Sabbath, in the course of that fall, my mind was strangely tried throughout the day with occasional thoughts about my future course as a lawyer,—the wide separation from domestic friends it would occasion, &c. The course appeared more fraught with trials than ever it had done before. Still not a thought of change once crossed my mind, any more than though there had been but one profession. After the second service I returned to my lodgings, and taking a small Bible and putting it under my arm, started for my chamber. A stray thought, as I passed through the room, occurred to me—"I have seen ministers carry a Bible thus to the meeting-house." The question instantly came back upon me—"And why should not you be a minister?" It made no impression. "And why should not you be a minister?" Still I turned it off. "And why should not you be a minister?" By the time I had reached the top of the stairs, this question had been thrown back upon me so often, and seemingly by another, that I was brought to a solemn resolution to examine it seriously. I had little christian experience or knowledge, and probably was presumptuous in looking for guidance to the passages to which I should open: but so it was. I prayed most earnestly that God would reveal my duty by the portion of scripture to which he should direct me, and then opened the Bible and read. I did this several times, and every time opened to something which seemed, at least to my imagination, in favor of the change. I turned then to the thing itself. I had not gone too far to change. That was the time of life for me to choose a profession. I had finished my academical education. I hoped I possessed religion: I had looked forward to the ministry in case I should obtain that qualification, though of late I had wholly lost sight of the object. Why should I not return to it? I was afraid I was tempting God by asking for direction in the way I did: but I ventured to entreat him to guide me again, and I would ask but that once; and I opened to Christ's sermon on the mount.

Instantly the whole character of Christ as a preacher opened to my view. There had never been but one perfect example: And how did he spend his time in his passage through this world? Not in contending who should have that flock of sheep or that piece of ground, but in preaching the everlasting gospel and plucking souls as brands from the burnings. My mind was settled at once. From the time the thought had first occurred to me, till my purpose was as fixed as it ever has been since, was not more than half or three quarters of an hour. I had been habituated, with my proud heart, to pour contempt on the ministry; and it presented itself before me, at that moment, as "the loss of all things." I had been accustomed, with my vain mind, to anticipate the highest civil honors in the profession of the law. The disappointment which I should bring to friends by this relinquishment, stood full before me. And yet with all this sacrifice on the one hand, and all this contempt on the other, I chose to be a minister. I hugged the cross. And though the age of missions had not yet dawned, I well remember that, in Dr. Craft's chamber, that memorable afternoon, I felt that I should be willing to spend my days among the pagans of the wilderness, if such should be the will of God.

Shortly after this he commenced his theological studies under the direction of the Reverend Dr. JONATHAN EDWARDS of New-Haven, afterwards President of Union College. While attending to his duties as an instructor, he pursued the course of reading which Dr. EDWARDS pointed out, and wrote extensively on his system of theological questions.

In the spring of 1792 he joined the congregational church at Derby, and soon after left the academy and returned to East-Haddam, where he had the smallpox. That disorder having left his eyes weak, he spent part of the summer at his father's house. Here he found himself in peculiarly trying circumstances. He was the only professor of religion in a family of ten; and neither his regard for his relatives, nor his convictions of duty, would suffer him to remain silent upon what was with himself the all-engrossing subject. He conversed with

them earnestly and affectionately, beseeching them with tears to attend to the things that belonged to their peace; and the event proved that his labors and struggles in their behalf were not in vain. Nor was his influence confined to his own family; for he statedly attended a prayer meeting in the neighborhood, at which those who were much older in the christian life than himself found themselves at once quickened and edified by his fervent prayers and thrilling addresses.

The latter part of the summer and most of the autumn he passed at New-Haven, completing his theological studies. He was licensed to preach, by the West Association of New-Haven County, on the last day of October. Early in November he returned to his father's house, and on the evening of the next day accompanied his youngest sister to a prayer meeting at the place where he had been accustomed to attend. When she left the meeting she took his arm, and burst into tears, saying, "The singing of those christians convinces me that they have something which I want." That, as he afterwards declared, was to him a moment of great triumph. When they arrived at home, his father's family, and his brother's family in the neighborhood, were made acquainted with the fact; and while his sister lay weeping in anguish of spirit, he was making his appeals to those around him. "That," said he, "was the beginning of American revivals, so far as they fell under my personal observation; and from that moment I know they have never ceased." His youngest sister, his mother, his brother's wife, and several others of the family were brought to hope in God's forgiving mercy; and before any breach was made in the domestic circle, all were members of the church but two.

His first sermon was preached November 10, 1792, at Hadlyme, in the pulpit of his venerable friend under whose tuition he had been fitted for college. In January succeeding he commenced his labors at New-Salem, a small village about seven miles from his father's house, and continued there till the last of May. His preaching was almost immediately attended by manifest tokens of the presence of the Holy Spirit. A revival of great power commenced, and a church was

gathered where there had not been one for more than forty years. In New-Salem, and the parts of East Haddam and Lyme adjacent to it, about one hundred were hopefully added to the Lord.

In the early part of June, 1793, he commenced preaching at Farmington as a candidate for settlement. The manner in which he was there received, and the circumstances which prevented his becoming the pastor of the church, may be seen from the following extract of a letter from the Rev. NOAH PORTER, D. D. then a member, now the minister, of the congregation to which Mr. GRIFFIN was called.

"There are few men whom I remember with more affection than Dr. Griffin. He was the first minister of Christ of whose preaching I have any distinct recollection, or from whom I received any deep and permanent sense of divine things. I was twelve years old when he preached in this town; and I remember his person, attitude, dress, modulations of voice, and some of his texts and illustrations, as though they were presented but yesterday. Simplicity and impressiveness you know were remarkable characteristics of his preaching. All was on a level with the capacity of a child. It was not till two or three years after this that I began to consider myself a christian; but the impressions of truth which I received from him have probably contributed more to make me what I am, (so far as there is any thing good belonging to me,) than what I have received by means of any other man.

"In the year 1796, a committee of the church, of which the late Governor Treadwell was a member, was appointed to draw up 'a compendious history of the church from its origin' to that time. This was done by Gov. Treadwell; and the extract which I am about to give you, contains the answers to some of the inquiries suggested in your letter. For several years previous to Dr. Griffin's introduction to this pulpit, the society had been divided; and the mutual animosities of the parties were sometimes violent; first relative to Mr. Olcott, for some years pastor of the church; and after his dismissal, relative to

Mr. Jonathan Brown, a candidate for the ministry, who preached here immediately before Dr. Griffin, and had warm admirers in the society, but to the greater and better part of the church was unacceptable. 'Mr. Brown,' the record says, 'preached here till March, 1793,' and adds, 'After he had left us several efforts were made by his friends to recall him, but without success. The society then invited Mr. Edward Dorr Griffin to supply the pulpit. He accordingly supplied it until December then next, with great ability and reputation; when, having been invited by the society, the church called him to the work of the ministry almost unanimously; and temporalities being adjusted, he accepted the invitation in April, 1794; and in May following a council was called to ordain him. But a formidable opposition, consisting chiefly of those who felt aggrieved at the loss of Mr. Brown and of those who differed from Mr. G. and the church on the subject of baptism and the doctrines of grace, remonstrated before the council; which, after a hearing, determined not to proceed, principally by reason of objections against some of the members of the council, and against the form of the contract between the society and Mr. Griffin. Wherefore, as no decision was had on the merits, the church in the month of June following voted to call a second council to ordain Mr. Griffin, with which vote the society concurred. Accordingly another council was convened; and the opposers persevering in their efforts, laid in sundry unfounded charges against Mr. Griffin, and the proofs not being prepared, the council adjourned: and being again convened, and the evidences taken, Mr. Griffin was acquitted with honor, and his character fully vindicated. But the gloomy prospect before him induced Mr. Griffin in that stage of the business to request the council not to proceed to ordain him, if they judged he could fairly be released from the obligations of his contract; and accordingly the council, on consultation, thought proper to proceed no further.' "

In July and August, 1794, he preached several sabbaths at Middlebury, Conn. where he introduced meetings on week days as usual, and was instrumental of the hopeful conversion of several individuals. He also supplied three other places for a short time

previous to the commencement of his labors at New-Hartford. In referring to his views at that period of life, he says,

I felt it to be a principal recommendation of a place as my residence, that the people would allow me to hold as many meetings as I pleased. I held extra meetings in every place where I preached, which was a new thing at that day. What then appeared strange, bating some youthful indiscretions, has long since become the general usage. I had an opportunity to see the whole field of death before a bone began to move. And no one who comes upon the stage forty years afterwards can have any idea of the state of things at that time.

## CHAPTER II

### HIS RESIDENCE AT NEW-HARTFORD

Mr. GRIFFIN was ordained and installed pastor of the congregational church at New-Hartford, June 4, 1795, having supplied them for some months in the capacity of a candidate. Almost immediately after he commenced his labors, there was an increased attention to religion among his people, and a revival of considerable power succeeded, which resulted in the addition of about fifty persons to the church.

On the 17th of May, 1796, he was married to FRANCES HUNTINGTON, daughter of the Rev. Doctor JOSEPH HUNTINGTON, of Coventry, and niece and adopted daughter of Governor SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, of Norwich, Conn. formerly President of Congress, and one of the Signers of the Declaration of American Independence. Doctor H. and Governor H. were brothers, and married sisters. Governor H. had no children; and Mrs. GRIFFIN'S mother dying when she was two years old, gave her and her brother SAMUEL (afterwards Governor of Ohio,) to her sister



and her sister's husband the Governor, who brought them up as their own children, and made them their heirs.

In the year 1797 he commenced a regular journal of his christian experience, which he continued, not however without frequent and sometimes protracted interruptions, till the close of life. Under date of July 12th of that year, he writes thus:

This day ever memorable to my soul for the commencement of these memoirs, has been set apart as a day of secret prayer and fasting. It has pleased God, I hope, to return to me after a painful absence of several months, and after I had almost despaired of so great a blessing. May I be humbly thankful all my days that the Lord, as I hope, has come to look up and bring home his long lost wandering sheep. May the pains of absence teach me to wander no more. Alas, how have new relations, and the new cares of a family state, drawn my mind away from God. There are more dangers in every pleasing earthly scene than the inexperienced are aware of. Adversity, I find, is a much safer state than prosperity. May adversities uninterrupted be my lot, if a humble dependance on God and sweet communion with him can be enjoyed on no easier terms. Sure I am that the possession of the whole world for the same space of time could not produce so much happiness, as the absence of God for fourteen months past has produced misery. The conclusion is, that all the world cannot countervail the loss of God. I have now lived in God's world more than twenty-seven years. It is just about six years since. I hope, he effectually turned my attention to religion; and yet (with regret I say it) I have never kept any journal of God's dealings with me before now. By this neglect I believe I have lost much. May God enable me to be more faithful in future. I find none of my own exercises committed to writing, except a covenant which contains sundry resolutions, bearing date April 20th, 1793, with a space left to insert new ones; all which, with some small alterations, I will transcribe, and now solemnly renew in the presence of God.

RESOLVED, in the strength of Christ, to lay aside vain conversation, puerile behavior, excessive levity, pride of life, improper exertions to please the world, the lusts of the flesh, reflections on things unlawful to speak or act, impatience or discontent at the dispensations of providence, gloom and dejection contrary to the direction "Rejoice evermore," slander, flattery and deceit, self-sufficient airs, authoritative or dogmatic assertions of my own opinion, and every thing opposed to an humble deportment; petulance, harshness, and impatient expressions in my family or elsewhere; want of attention to please and to interchange civilities from indolence, pride and sourness under the garb of deadness to the world, careless disregard of the minute principles of prudence and correct behaviour; waste of time, and whatever is inconsistent with the character of a disciple and follower of Jesus,—a minister of the everlasting gospel,—a guide and example of souls, to whom those are committed for whom Christ died: remembering that the eyes of a censorious world and of a holy God are upon me, and that for every breach of this covenant I must give an account.

RESOLVED at the close of every day to repeat the above resolutions, and compare my conduct through the day therewith.

RESOLVED that it is best ordinarily to mingle more praises and thanksgivings with our devotions than is usually done.

RESOLVED generally to close evening devotions with fixed contemplations on the glory of God, of Christ, of Heaven, on the vanity of the world, &c.

RESOLVED to devote a portion of time on every Sabbath morning to contemplations on God and Christ, and Heaven, and divine love, and the great things commemorated by the day; on the solemnity of divine worship,—on the importance of the place which I am to fill in the course of the day; on the worth of souls, and the weight of the charge committed to me, &c.

RESOLVED to devote a portion of time every Sabbath evening, to examine into the manner in which the duties of the day have been performed,—to apply the preaching to myself, and to enter into a fixed, full self-examination.

RESOLVED to confine myself generally to practical books on the Sabbath, and when possible, avoid writing sermons on that day.

The experience of more than four years has convinced me that "he that trusteth to his own heart is a fool." When these resolutions were written, they assumed the air of assurance that they would be kept. But alas, I find I have more reason to be diffident of my own heart than I was sensible of at that time. I would now, with dependance on the strength of Christ alone, form some new resolutions.

RESOLVED to set apart, as often as is convenient, days for private prayer and fasting.

RESOLVED to spend as much time as possible in making religious visits to my people, especially to the sick and afflicted, and to spend as little time as possible in visits where religious conversation cannot be introduced, and to attend as many religious meetings as are convenient out of season.

RESOLVED to pay particular attention to the religious instruction of the children, and to take measures to catechise them.

RESOLVED to be much in prayer for my people, to set good examples before them, and not conduct so as to grieve the Spirit of God away from us.

RESOLVED, as a husband, to avoid all petulancy and pretensions to authority and superiority,—to maintain a manly tenderness,—to be much in religious conversation with my wife,—to seek to help her onward in the divine life,—to pray for her,—to avoid idolatrous affections, and endeavor to support her, by benevolent sympathy, under the unavoidable trials of life.

RESOLVED, as the head of a family, to avoid harshness and severity of expression or discipline, to mingle decision with tenderness in order to unite in the minds of the children respectful fear and affectionate confidence; to reprove in a way to convict, to talk frequently with them on religion, and to pray for them.

RESOLVED to avoid a stoical severity in my deportment, and to win, by a kind, affable address, the confidence and friendship of those whom it is my duty to serve.

RESOLVED to keep up an epistolary correspondence with a number of pious faithful friends, and not forget them in my prayers.

RESOLVED to avoid intimacies with the wicked.

RESOLVED to retire to rest by nine, to arise (unless it becomes necessary to have different hours in the winter) by five; to devote to reading and transcribing from the Bible and to devotion all the time until eight; exercise until nine; study until twelve; rest until two; study until five; exercise, rest or visit, until night; necessary visits and company excepted.

RESOLVED to begin early in the week to write my sermons, and to endeavor to keep some sermons beforehand.

All which resolutions may God, in his boundless mercy, enable me to keep unto the end, unless he shall convince me of the propriety of making some alterations in them. Amen.

Sabbath. July 16. I find that one great cause of coldness and barrenness in religion is the indulgence of vain, worldly, romantic thoughts. Therefore,

RESOLVED to employ my mind, when not engaged on other necessary subjects, in profitable contemplations.

How much more knowledge might I store up by a due observance of this rule one year, than I have gained in all my life. May God enable me to keep this resolution, for without him I have learned that I can do nothing. I find that my spiritual enemies will never be overcome without a most diligent watch kept up against them, and without a life of prayer. I would, therefore, though my own weakness is evident, wish to RESOLVE evermore to "watch and pray that I enter not into temptation."

Wednesday, July 26th. Last night a young man came to converse with me, who I never knew was serious, but who has at turns been anxious for himself these several years, and has, in the course of the last two months, indulged a hope. The occasion, I must say, was exceedingly joyful and animating to me. It encouraged me to hope that God was again returning among us. After he went away I had the most precious season that I have had these fifteen months. My soul went forth, as I really thought, in prayer for this precious people, and for Zion at large. My greatest desire seemed to be for these objects. I could scarcely think or pray for any thing else. I was, as I frequently have been of late, affected with the great things which God is doing for Zion at the present day. O may thy kingdom come!

Sabbath evening, July 30th. I view it a matter of so much importance to ascertain with precision my true character, that I have

RESOLVED to write down carefully the result of every examination, whenever I can bring my mind to any point; that, by a retrospective survey of my exercises, I may always have before my eyes the summary of the evidence in favor of my adoption. In this part of my memoirs I resolve to observe, if possible, a more scrupulous exactness than in any other. God forbid that I should flatter myself where flattery may prove everlastingly fatal!

EXAMINATION. I have been endeavoring to determine the grounds of my uneasiness in view of my conduct this day. Can say no more than this: It gives me pain that I have acted such an unworthy,

inconsistent part, by which leanness has been brought into my own soul, and my ministrations rendered comparatively useless. It is difficult to trace my motives any farther. My exercises are indistinct. Alas, if I had lived more at home, I should have been more acquainted with myself. I once pursued this duty with more faithfulness, until it became comparatively easy to search about my heart; but it has now been so long neglected, that I find myself a stranger at home, and have forgotten the way around the different apartments of my mind.

It seems at times perfectly incredible, and almost impossible, that so much sin can consist with grace. I have lately had more doubts than before. My doubts increase accordingly as I neglect the duties of prayer, contemplation, watchfulness, and examination.

August 2d, Wednesday morning. This day is appointed to be set apart by me in company with some of the neighboring ministers, as a day of fasting and prayer. I would wish through the day,

- (1.) To banish every worldly care and thought.
- (2.) Strive to possess myself of a deep sense of my sin.
- (3.) As the chief object of our prayers is to be, by express agreement, the advancement of Zion, I would wish to possess myself of views of the worth of the church, and of the importance of her being advanced.
- (4.) Guard myself, when leading in prayer, against a wish to appear artificially ardent or humble.
- (5.) Guard against introducing or joining in any conversation, even though it may be of the religious kind, which shall tend to take my mind off from the immediate business of the day.
- (6.) Strive to ask all truly in the name of Christ.

Evening. Upon a review of my exercises through the day, I find much cause for shame and humiliation, and that it is much easier to make resolutions than to keep them.

Sabbath morning, August 6th. Expect to preach to-day in opposition to what is commonly called the half-way practice; to which many of the people are strongly attached, and which threatens to raise disturbances among us, the Lord knows how serious. Have also to administer the Lord's supper. It is my desire this day not to be actuated by a wilful, haughty resolution to carry my point; not to exhibit any imprudent, effeminate weakness or fear; to exercise a deep concern that the people may walk in the true order of the gospel, and that they may not break to pieces and injure themselves. I wish to go to the sanctuary under a sense of my own unworthiness, and apprehensive that my imprudences, negligences, and unfaithfulness, may have given occasion to the discontents which appear. I wish to feel humility and fervency in prayer; to have close, fixed attention in singing God's praise; and at the sacrament to exercise humility, penitence, and faith, and make a renewed dedication of myself to God.

Sabbath evening. Have reason to bless God that he has given me a better Sabbath than I have been wont to have. But I fear I have not possessed a sufficiently tender, humble spirit; that I was desirous to convince my people that I was not afraid of them. Have felt the operation of spiritual pride in consequence of some enlargements. This, alas, is no new thing.

I fear I have been too willing that the people should send me away, under the notion of getting a better place. I have endeavored to correct myself, and have made the following resolutions:—

(1.) Let me not be so selfish as to be unaffected with what will injure the people, out of respect to private interest. (2.) Let me not wish myself removed from a place in which God has placed me and blessed my labors. (3.) Let me not do any thing to effect a dissolution

of our connexion; but be as faithful, prayerful, prudent, and humble, as though this was the only place in which I could labor; and then, if the Lord send me away, I can go with a good conscience, with good reputation, and with his blessing. (4.) Let me be humble, patient, and resigned in all my conversation on the subject.

EXAMINATION. Have tried myself on the subject of leaving this people, and think I can say that I would not, by any means, exchange this for a more agreeable place, without God's approbation and direction: Because, (1.) I dare not run away from a place in which he has put me, for fear of carrying his curse with me. (2.) I would be where I can be the most useful, and that he can best determine. I think I would rather be useful in a poor place than useless in another. The interest which I am to take care of seems too great to be sacrificed to private considerations. Besides, I feel as though the pleasantest place without the approbation and presence of God, would be very unpleasant. "Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor, and with thee rich, take what thou wilt away."

I think I can farther say that I would rather the Lord should determine all the circumstances of my life than choose for myself; because this will conduce most to the general good, and to my own happiness. I think the first motive is the strongest. I think that I wish the Lord, whose I am and who has an important interest to promote, to direct where and how I shall serve him. I wish to be at his disposal and command. I feel it a happiness that I am in his hands, and that he will dispose of all things so as best to answer his most excellent purposes. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." If afflictions will make me better, I know I am willing to bear them; or if they will help forward the redeeming plan, I think I am willing God should impose them, at least to a considerable degree. My heart is deceitful—I dare not go any further. And yet I must say, it seems that, feeling as I now do, I should not object if the Lord should take any thing which I have, if it would promote that cause which Christ died to promote, which is the cause of all truth and of all happiness.



Sabbath morning, August 13th. I expect to preach this morning from Genesis, 5:24. The subject has been sweet to me. I desire (1.) to deliver it with a sincere desire to maintain in future a more close walk with God myself, and to persuade others to do so likewise. (2.) To avoid the pride which is too apt to arise from the belief that I am delivering a good sermon.

From some symptoms discovered in the place, and from the increased desires of my own mind, I have had some hopes that my sermons this day will be blessed. The weather however looks so unpromising, that I fear few will attend meeting. But I desire to go, not discouraged at this, but believing that God can make it a most glorious day,—a day of extensive good, though the meeting be thin. O Lord, in mercy, I entreat thee, grant me this desire of my mind!

Noon. My thoughts have this forenoon been scattered, my mind for the most part dark and dead, though possessed, I hope, of some sweetness in the duties of the sanctuary. How much need have I to preach to myself the things which I preach to others! O that I might in future maintain a more intimate walk with God.

This afternoon I expect to preach on the importance of the soul, from Matt. 16:26. May I be influenced through all the exercises by an humble concern for souls, and not be unmindful of my own vineyard.

Evening. Blessed be the Lord, I hope I had this afternoon some sense of the worth of souls, and some desires for their salvation. But yet much self was mingled with my exercises. Much of my apparent zeal, I fear, arose from pride and animal affection. If souls are so important as I have represented, may I in future be more concerned for my own and for those committed to me; and not sleep away my life in security, and amuse myself with toys, or at best with vain speculations, while thousands for whom Christ died are perishing all around me. I own I have not a realizing sense of these things.

"EXAMINATION. The greatest desires of my mind at present seem to be, (1.) that God would reduce me to a mild, tender, sweet-tempered, amiable Christian, in all my deportment towards my family, towards my people, and towards the world. (2.) That he would direct me to adopt the best possible plan to promote the immortal interests of this people, and to spend my time, and to exercise my faculties, so as to answer, in the happiest manner, the purposes of my existence (3.) That he would come down among this people with the powerful influences of his Spirit. It is my hearty desire that he would bow the hearts of my bitterest enemies with the influences of his religion. I find nothing in my heart opposed to an affectionate wish that they may be happy in Christ. I should exceedingly rejoice in an opportunity of pouring into their distressed souls the consolations of the gospel, and leading them to the Saviour.

I feel greatly pained with the opposite of a soft, mild, sweet disposition. I am firmly persuaded that if habits of good temper are not formed in youth, they never will be, without almost a miracle; and age must be soured and ruffled with November storms. Therefore, with great seriousness, I have

RESOLVED to avoid every appearance of impatience in the manner of my conversation with all, and never to consider any circumstances sufficient to justify a departure from this rule.

Further, I do firmly believe that if mild, tender, lenient measures, attended at times with unimpassioned correction, and followed up with exhortation and prayer, do not effect the purposes of family government, nothing will. Therefore,

RESOLVED, never to speak to my domestics with any appearance of temper, nor adopt a system of harsh treatment of them, but to speak to them tenderly and mildly, even in reproof; and not to undertake to reprove them for every little slip, lest they grow hardened.

I must fix it in my mind not to expect every thing according to my wishes in those with whom I have intercourse. Others have to bear things in me, and why should not I bear with the weaknesses of others? It is no excuse for me to lose my temper, that others do wrong.

Thursday, August 17th. RESOLVED, (extraordinaries excepted,) to begin to write for the Sabbath on Monday, to complete my sermons Monday and Tuesday, and to devote Thursday to visit my people for religious purposes; or if any thing, when I am not on a journey, and when no fast, thanksgiving, ministers' meeting, or concert occurs, should prevent my visiting that day, to spend two days the next week.

RESOLVED, for the present, to devote the first Wednesday in every other month, viz. January, March, May, July, September, November, to correspond with christian friends and to pray for them, though they must not be forgotten daily.

RESOLVED to read some devotional piece, besides the scriptures, every day.

RESOLVED to set apart some day as near as convenient to the 6th of January, (my birth-day and the commencement of a new year,) and to the 6th of April, (the next quarter, and not far from the time when I first made a profession of religion, and first became acquainted with her whom providence has given me for a wife,) and to the 6th of July, (the next quarter, and about the time from which I have dated what I hope was a saving conversion, and about the time of commencing these memoirs; also between last quarter day and this, both my marriage and my ordination took place;) and to the 6th of October, (the next quarter day, and not far from the time when I was first licensed to preach the everlasting gospel, and also about the time of first coming to New-Hartford;) as days of fasting and prayer. On these days I purpose to call to mind the events above enumerated and make suitable reflections on them, renew the dedication of myself to God, make suitable confessions and humiliations, and

enter into a train of self-examination; review my resolutions, &c. Besides these, I will from time to time set apart days for special devotion, as God shall put it into my heart.

RESOLVED to keep a book in which to insert the result of the intercourse with my people, in my visits, and any names, or cases, or memoranda, which shall appear useful to me as a minister or a christian.

EXAMINATION. Sabbath evening, August 20th. I have been this evening examining my feelings towards God, the law, and Jesus Christ, and the plan of salvation by him. I have asked myself such questions as these: Am I pleased with a God who sits on the throne of the universe, governing all matters so as to promote the highest happiness of the universe; who, in the exercise of infinite benevolence, has entered on a system of operations most conducive to manifest and diffuse himself, and to complete a kingdom of holy, benevolent, and happy beings; who is perfectly pure and holy; and who, as the faithful guardian of the universe, has resolved to punish every thing which opposes its happiness; who abhors every sin, even mine; who has manifested his abhorrence of sin in the destruction of the old world, Sodom, &c. and on the cross, and in the punishment of my sins; who is just, merciful, patient, and faithful; who has made discoveries of these perfections in the gospel, and in all that he has done for Zion, from the days of Adam; who requires himself to be loved and respected supremely? &c. Do I love the law which requires perfect benevolence and sinless perfection, and condemns for every transgression? Would I wish for a law any wise different? Have I any hopes of being able to atone for my sins? Am I pleased with the character and offices of Christ and the way of salvation by him? That he should have all the praise of my salvation, and that I should be exempt from punishment in consequence of the opportunity which he has given God to manifest, in his treatment of him, his abhorrence of my sins? &c. And after the most serious and elaborate examination, I dare not come to any fixed conclusion, though I hope my heart is pleased with this representation of God, and the law, and

Christ. I think I feel ashamed that while so many hearts in heaven and earth are flaming with love and admiration in view of these truths, mine is so little affected by them, that I cannot decide whether I love them or not. Yet I solemnly determine not to give up the examination until I can answer decisively. I am resolved to pursue it to-morrow. And O, may the Lord give me light to see and know myself, and to love him with fervency.

EXAMINATION. Monday evening, Aug. 21st. This morning I pursued the examination which was left unfinished last night; but was again unable to come to any fixed conclusion. Have been on the subject, at turns, through the day. This evening I have renewed it with more fixed attention, and blessed be God, I have enjoyed more clearness of views, by which I have been enabled to render the following answers to the following questions:

Would you consent to see your house in ashes and to be stripped of every thing on earth to rescue your greatest enemy from an eternal hell, and to secure to him increasing eternal glory?

Yes, certainly: I would give up every thing that I could, give up, of an earthly nature, for this purpose.

Are you pleased that God has given a law requiring such a temper in all?

Surely I am. What a most beautiful and glorious society does such a law tend to produce!

Does not God, by enacting a law to make such a temper general, act like an excellent being?

Yes, his encouragement of such a temper proves him to be a most excellent being.

Does not the manifestation which Christ has made of such a temper, cause him to appear, independently of gratitude, an excellent being?

Yes, benevolence to the great whole looks amiably, let it exist where it may.

If the law is such an excellent rule, does it not look desirable that every one should conform to it?

Most certainly it does. What beautiful society would this produce! What a foundation for immortal union, love, and happiness!

Does it not appear desirable that, in order to sanctify and honor and support this most lovely rule, transgressions of it should be severely frowned upon and punished?

It seems that any measures which conduce to the universal, or even general establishment of this rule, so essential to the happiness of the universe, are desirable.

Since it would have tended to lessen the respectability of this rule, had my transgressions of it escaped without a frown, am I pleased with the idea of not being pardoned but in consequence of the opportunity which was given on the cross to manifest this frown?

As Christ came to honor and magnify that law, (which he said required only love to God and man,) by his obedience and death, I am pleased with his coming into the world. Further, I am willing to be pardoned, and to have it understood that I am an undeserving rebel, saved by sovereign grace. I wish to have it openly declared that I was a monstrous rebel in opposing such an excellent law, in order that the law may be supported and sin discountenanced. I should wish to make the declaration myself, and condemn my conduct before three worlds, if there was no other way to have it condemned.

Since I have sinned, and since it must be known in order that God's righteousness may appear, I wish to have it publicly understood that I am a vile undeserving wretch indebted to boundless grace for pardon. I wish by all means to have it understood that my sins are not winked at, and that God manifested his abhorrence of them by

what took place on the cross, and that it was in consequence of this manifestation that he gratified his grace in my pardon, and also in consequence of the intercession of my Advocate. I think I rejoice in Christ as my prophet, priest, and king; and can with pleasure commit to him the care of all my spiritual interests.

Does not the belief that all the works and operations of God have the same design as the law, viz. to promote general happiness, and that he has the temper required in the law, make him appear very amiable and worthy?

Most lovely and glorious. So far as I can know my heart, this is the God whom I approve and love. This is the God whom I choose for my everlasting portion. How rich is the universe in containing such a God! With pleasing adoration I look up and say, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. To him be glory for ever. Amen.

EXAMINATION. Wednesday, August 23d. Since Monday, God has appeared as sitting on the top of the universe, and pouring out the law from his very heart. Methinks I could trace this golden chain, which binds the world together, up to this heart, in which it in a sense originates. This view of things, I think, has given me pleasant thoughts of God.

I have in times past found it extremely difficult to gain, a realizing view of the need and fitness of Christ's dying to atone for sin. This has appeared the gordian knot in divinity. I thought I could more easily see the propriety of his advocacy: but it was hard to see how my sins were properly punished, or any frown properly manifested against them, by the sufferings of Christ. Lately I have been particularly solicitous to look into this matter more deeply; and have by a divine blessing been enabled, I trust, to see and feel the beauty and excellency of this way of pardon, and indeed of all the offices of Christ. I think he has truly appeared the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. I could, with far more understanding and clearness than ever, realize the force of that text,

"To them therefore which believe, he is precious." Such a succession of views as the following, has led to a more realizing sense of the propriety and fitness of the atonement.

Might it not appear to the universe that God was an enemy to the sin of him who offered a sin offering in Israel? Is it not easy to see that, if the world sees me standing by a lamb whose life God is taking, by mutual agreement, in the room of mine, and on which he lays his rod avowedly as a substitute for me, the death of the lamb expresses God's feelings towards my sin, (so far as the death of the lamb is of weight,) and discountenances transgression, and supports and sanctions the law in its preceptive part, and as much, to say the least, in its penal part? If I am to be pardoned by Christ, the Lord expressly and avowedly laid his wrath on him as a substitute for me, as much as though I was the only sinner to be redeemed, and as much as though I was present on the spot attending on the sacrifice. And previous (in the order of nature) to my pardon by the substitute, there is as much a mutual agreement between God and my soul, that the anger which was about to fall on my sins, should still be expressed, and should fall on Christ, as though the agreement had been made before the cross. If then any resentment against a son could be expressed by resentment against his father who should purposely step into his place to take the blow, God's anger towards my sin was expressed, and the law vindicated and confirmed on the cross.

I think, in reading the 7th, 8th, and 9th chapters of Hebrews, yesterday and to-day, I have indeed seen the insufficiency of the ancient sacrifices to atone for sin, and the desirableness that so great a sacrifice should be made. How could the sacrifice of a pigeon or a dove express God's full abhorrence of sin, and show the world what an evil it was to transgress the law? I feel that in proportion to the greatness of the sacrifice, is the law honored. I cannot therefore bear the thought of an atonement by a less sacrifice than Jesus Christ. I rejoice in him as my atonement, for the honor which he has done to



the law. I do not wish to be saved without such an atonement. This, I think is the deep feeling of my soul.

EXAMINATION. Saturday morning, August 26th. Last night, in closing my prayer with "for Christ's sake," the propriety of Christ's advocacy rushed on my mind with new light. It appeared undesirable that any blessings should be bestowed on me for my own sake; for this would be patronizing my iniquity, which is the whole of my natural character. It appeared desirable that they should be bestowed avowedly for Christ's sake, that it might be publicly understood that they were bestowed in consequence of what took place on the cross, and out of respect to a perfect righteousness, that they might be removed the farthest from the appearance of being a favor to sin. Hence appeared the propriety of his intercessions for his people, and of favors bestowed in consequence of his intercessions. It was clearly opened to my view how that his advocacy was founded on his atonement for sin and obedience to the law.

My heart has been lately desiring to look into these things; to trace the spiritual glory and beauty of them. I never so realizingly perceived the importance of growing in knowledge, and of attaining a deep acquaintance with the scriptures. At the same time, I never so fully saw the impropriety, and even profaneness of studying these things for the sake of mere speculation. It looks like handling infinitely important things idly and carelessly, and akin to taking God's name in vain. O may I in future avoid this great sin, of which I have been so deeply guilty!

Monday, August 28th. This day I have set apart for special devotion, to seek God in regard to a journey which I expect to commence to-morrow. I expected to have commenced the journey to day, and hoped to have spent a day in devotion last week. But necessary avocations disappointed me in regard to the latter object, and a disappointment (which at first seemed grievous, but now seems a mercy,) postpones my journey till to-morrow, and affords me opportunity to make preparation for it by a day of devotion.

My requests in regard to my journey are,—that God would prosper me therein, succeed me in all my business, preserve me and my wife in health and safety, and return us in due time to our family laden with rich experience of his goodness: that he would keep my house and family and parish in safety until my return; that I may find my friends in peace and happiness and enjoy them; that in all business I may feel my dependance on God alone for success; that I may be preserved from irritated feelings, and from imprudent or passionate expressions, in consequence of any diversity of opinions or misunderstandings in business; that I may be preserved from vain and wandering thoughts, from vain conversation, from a mean conformity to the world in things improper; and on the other hand, from sour, morose rigidity, and in a word, from being drawn away from God by intercourse with the world; that I may be preserved from any airs which would be an expression of pride and self-importance, and consider myself as a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus, and as such, watched by a censorious world; that I may be preserved from the neglect of daily secret prayer in my absence; that I may enjoy my religious friends in a religious way, more than in former journeys, and derive more instruction, animation, and refreshment from them; that I may keep in mind that the honor of religion depends greatly on the conduct and examples of Christ's ministers; and that I may keep up a punctual observance of all my former resolutions during my absence.

These shall be my special petitions through the day. I resolve furthermore to devote some part of the day to prayer for friends, and that I will look over my memoirs and resolutions, make suitable reflections on myself, enter into a train of self-examination, and renew my covenant with God; that I will remember Zion at the throne of grace, adore God for light lately received, and make those common petitions which appear suitable.

Evening. I have reviewed my memoirs and find myself too neglectful in observing my resolutions, especially some which (I am ashamed to say) were almost forgotten; though perhaps they were not of the first

importance. God grant me grace so to conduct myself, that these resolutions will not rise up in judgment against me. Let me ever remember, that "it is better not to vow unto the Lord, than to vow and not pay."

I have been rather desultory in my petitions to day, and have been not so clear as before in examination. I find it does not answer to seek God negligently, nor to think of enjoying a day of special devotion, unless the day is wholly consecrated to devotion. It will not answer to have the attention divided between religious and secular things on such days, and to resolve to devote only as much of the day to religion as shall seem convenient. Hours must be fixed and unchangeably consecrated. However, I have enjoyed some happiness, and I believe some fervency to day, and conclude with expressing a hope of the divine presence and blessing in our journey.

Sabbath morning, Sept. 10th. Last night I returned from my journey, laden with rich experience of God's goodness. Never did we find friends universally so kind and tender. We have accomplished our business more to our mind than we expected. No misunderstanding arose. All was love and success, and our temporal interest is better than we anticipated. Throughout the journey God appeared, more than in any former journey, willing to attend upon me whenever I was disposed for a moment to turn aside from the world to attend on him. He did not hide himself from my search. But I have abundant matter for self-accusation. I have, to a cruel degree, forsaken and forgotten God. I have abundant reason to accuse myself of vanity in thoughts and words, of levity, of worldly-mindedness and undue attempts to please the world by improper conformities, of idolatrous affections, &c. &c. Never was a visit more agreeable, so far as the world could contribute to make it so. And circumstances have been so ordered seemingly on purpose to give us a fair opportunity to determine whether the world or God can afford the most satisfaction. And here I record it to the praise of our adorable Master, that the happiness which I feel this morning in contemplating the affairs of his kingdom, is far superior to any which the world has afforded

during my journey. I most deeply realize how much religion is superior to worldly good, how much better God is as a Master than the world.

Wednesday, Oct. 4th. In consequence of reading the prayers of Miss Anthony, and discovering her intense desire to obtain more clear and transforming views of God, I have been led to reflect on the great difference between her prayers and mine. I have been, for the most part, asking for particular exercises of divine power, to produce effects in regard to me, my friends, my people, and Zion at large. And in prayer my mind has been more on the desired effects, than on that fulness and glorious sufficiency of wisdom, power, goodness, majesty, condescension, patience, faithfulness and truth, which there is in God. Thus I have stopped at the threshold, without getting into the temple. Had I in prayer been more intent to gaze into God, and had I exercised myself more in adoration and praise, I believe my acquaintance with God would have been vastly greater, and my mind more transformed into his likeness. Let it in future be the burden of my prayer, "Lord, show me thy glory."

Sabbath morning, Oct. 8th. Expect to preach both parts of the day from Exodus 33:18. May I, under the influence of a delight in the essential glory of God, long, through the day, to bring it out to view, in order to exalt God in the esteem of men, to show them what ground of everlasting joy there is, to prepare them to enjoy the good which is within their reach, and to prepare them, by proper exercises towards God, to compose a part of a duly proportioned, well adjusted, harmonious, happy universe.

Sabbath, Dec. 17th. EXAMINATION. I have a solicitous fear that I shall be left of God to fall into sin. This is my most distressing apprehension. I fear sin more than any other evil. But why? Is it for fear of public shame? Is it for fear of final punishment? Is it for fear of those dreadful stings of conscience which devils possess and dread? I think the reason is, that sin is wrong, and is what my nature, in sober frames, abhors. Good men may have stings of conscience.

And if the heart hates what the conscience disapproves, it is a proof of religion. Well, if I know what it is to hate, I think I do detest those sins which most easily beset me. I think I hate to break sacred obligations and act an unworthy, wicked part. I think I hate to oppose that law and divine benevolence which seeks the diffusion of happiness. And if any good was offered me to be enjoyed in this world, I think I should choose exemption from sin and the free enjoyment of God before any other. O that I might keep my ordination vows and adorn my profession by holy examples!

Dec. 18th. Some years ago in a distant town I gave a poor disciple a coat. Last night he came, wearing the coat, and brought a boy to live with me, which I exceedingly wanted. Had it not been for the coat he would not have brought him. I was affected, and was reminded of the Scripture, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." May I never forget that it is profitable to lend to the Lord.

During the course of twenty-four hours the Lord has bestowed upon me four peculiar and distinguishing favors, and three of a less kind which are still worthy of more than common notice. Three of the four I had, I hope, trusted God for. The other was an unexpected and surprising favor. Is it not good to serve and trust the Lord? Indeed, he is a good Master. May I never forget the lesson which these dispensations have taught me.

Sabbath night, Dec. 24th. Have had a pleasant afternoon, though attended with some wanderings. Preached on the design and duty of prayer in consistency with the immutability of God. In the first prayer, had a train of reflections which left an impression on my mind of the folly of making calculations for happiness on worldly circumstances, and of indulging painful feelings on account of situation, &c. It appeared that all happiness must be derived from God, and that if I am bound down to the necessity of being happy in God, or being wretched, I ought to consider it a great mercy. For, being in such a necessity, I have less temptation to forsake God for

other objects. And I have learned that I cannot endure such temptations. If this situation be less calculated to wean me from the world, to afford me an opportunity to overcome my pride and other corruptions, to prepare for a life of usefulness and for a world of happiness, here let me live, and here let me die, and thank God for having put me in circumstances so favorable to my eternal well being.

EXAMINATION. Why is it that I feel calm and happy tonight? I think the following reasons conduce to this. (1.) A sense of the kindness and mercy of the Lord. (2.) More hope of his favor. (3.) More expectation and hope that as God has not cast me off forever, he will assist me in overcoming my corruptions and enable me to lead a holy, happy life. That God should own and bless and undertake to carry me through my warfare, seems the most desirable thing that could happen to me. I long to be delivered from pride, anger and vanity. The mercies of God seem affecting and pleasant. That he is on the mercy seat to hear when sinners pray, seems an inexpressible favor and happiness. The prophetic office of Christ, and the knowledge which he communicates, appear precious. It seems desirable that he who redeemed the Church should have the office of administering salvation to it. And the excellencies of Christ, his tenderness, love, faithfulness, and amiableness, seem to add a relish to the salvation which he imparts. Salvation tastes the sweeter for coming from him.

Sabbath morning, March 4th. This forenoon expect to explain the true character of Israel's God. I wish to do it with a sincere desire to lead the people to a true knowledge of themselves and of God. And I wish to be affected myself with a sense of the beauty of the divine perfections. In the afternoon expect to administer a pointed reproof for some growing evils in the place. May I speak with humility, with tenderness, and with effect.

Noon. I have attended to my mind, and think I can say that the reproof which I have prepared to administer this afternoon, has not

proceeded from any other principle, (chiefly,) than a wish to do good. I wish to administer it with humble firmness, and leave the event with God. If it gives offence, I think I can appeal to my conscience that I meant well. God give abundant effect to the reproof, and prevent any from taking offence.

Night. If ever I spoke with humble firmness, with a desire to do good, without the fear of man, and with tenderness, I have done so this afternoon; though the reproof was the most pointed of any which I ever administered. Upon a view of the whole, I think that I have (with as much right feeling as I ever attain to,) done my duty, both in writing and delivering this sermon. And if offence is taken and disturbances are excited, I trust I shall not be accountable for them. With God I leave the event; beseeching him to carry the truth to the consciences of all, and cause it to produce permanent and general good. Felt serious and happy in all the public exercises of the day.

Sabbath evening, March 11th. I did not greatly feel my sermons today; yet I had some freedom and ardor in prayer, especially in the first prayer this afternoon. Col. Gardiner's zeal, whose life I am now reading, shows me my own deadness and barrenness. O that I might follow him, and other saints, and the Son of God, with less unequal steps. O for a fresh anointing from God, that would make me more, much more of a living man.

I have this day been showing that Christ and his disciples are one in affection. And is it the case with me that I in very deed love the Redeemer? I think I am pleased to think that Christ came into the world to support the principle of supreme love to God, tenderness towards the poor, forgiveness of enemies, mutual affection and kindness between relatives, and general benevolence to mankind and all beings. He did this in taking measures that the law should not be set aside while sinners were saved. He sanctified by his death every just and excellent principle; and he appears excellent in this view. I hope I feel in some degree unworthy of any favor from God, and feel it to be inconsistent with inflexible purity, (which must always be

armed against sin,) to overlook my sins and bestow on me any favor but out of respect to the atonement and perfect righteousness of Christ. Though my duties, so far as they are good, are worthy of divine approbation, yet my character, viewing it at large, is unworthy of God's acceptance. My best duties cannot make amends for my sins. And therefore I consent to have my own righteousness disclaimed as filthy rags, and to have nothing which I have done the ground of any favor from God. In this view I think I approve of Christ as my atonement, righteousness, and Advocate. I think I approve of him as my Prophet, to instruct me in the grand and excellent things of God; as my Lawgiver and Protector, as the Disposer of my life, as my Physician and Shepherd, as my Captain to fight my battles and deliver me from the world, the flesh, and the devil, as the Head of influence, as my Strength and Comforter, as a hiding place from the wind, &c.; as one appointed to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to deliver the captives, and to give joy to such as mourn in Zion; as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, and as my all in all. Such a Saviour I hope, I cordially love, and cast myself upon him as my Saviour from sin and death.

January 7th, 1799. Yesterday I was twenty-nine years old; and this day I set apart, (though my senses seem to be locked up by a cold,) to commemorate my birth day and the commencement of a new year. The Lord has once more visited this town. The sermon which I delivered in the afternoon of November 4th, I believe had more effect, through God's blessing, than any sermon I ever delivered in my life, especially on elderly people, who lay most on my mind. Last night I conversed with two men for whom I had felt very special interest. They both appear to be lately born again. My soul was overjoyed. It seemed almost enough; and I was well nigh ready to say, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart," &c. Glory be to God that he has thus so soon and so wonderfully visited this place again, when hope was just giving up the ghost. I here leave it on record, that he is a prayer-hearing and wonder-working God. My soul has lately been desirous of seeing the kingdom of God come throughout the world,



and has had hopes that such a day would draw nigh. I think the good appearances here have afforded me more solid satisfying comfort than I ever enjoyed in an awakening before. Among other peculiar circumstances calculated to produce joy, God has fastened on a number of heads of families, the least probable and the most important members of the society. Things are just as I could wish, and every thing looks wonderful. Began inspector of the schools under the new law. I have lately felt much interested in forming a system of education for the rising generation in this town, which promises with a blessing, to make them a generation to God's praise. I have desired, hoped, and prayed that God would carry it through. Some murmur, but I leave the affair with God. I know not that I ever set about any business with more pleasure than this. It promises much. Every thing has the appearance of being ordered in mercy.

Of the revival alluded to in the preceding paragraph, the following detailed account was given in two letters from Mr. GRIFFIN, to the Editors of the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, and published in the numbers of that work for December, 1800, and January, 1801.

#### LETTER I

Not having expected that an account of the late work of God among us would be called for, I have not been careful to charge my mind with particulars. Many impressive circumstances, which, had they stood alone, would not have been soon forgotten, have given place to others, which in their turn arrested and engrossed the attention. A succinct and general account shall however be attempted.

The work of divine grace among us, three years ago, by which nearly fifty persons were hopefully added to the Lord, had not wholly ceased to produce effects on the people generally, when the late scene of mercy and wonder commenced. In the interval, several were, in the judgment of charity, "created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works." It is not known, however, that any thing took place in the summer of 1798, which had immediate connection with the

present work, unless it were some trying conflicts in a number of praying minds, which appeared to humble and prepare them for the blessings and the duties of the ensuing winter.

Late in October, 1798, the people frequently hearing of the display of divine grace in West Simsbury, were increasingly impressed with the information. Our conferences soon became more crowded and evinced deeper feeling. Serious people began to break their minds to each other; and it was discovered (so far were present impressions from being the effect of mere sympathy) that there had been, for a considerable time, in their minds, special desires for the revival of religion; while each one, unapprized of his neighbor's feelings, had supposed his exercises peculiar to himself. It was soon agreed to institute a secret meeting for the express purpose of praying for effusions of the Spirit; which was the scene of such wrestlings as are not, it is apprehended, commonly experienced. Several circumstances conspired to increase our anxiety. The glorious work had already begun in Torrington, and the cloud appeared to be going all around us. It seemed as though Providence, by avoiding us, designed to bring to remembrance our past abuses of his grace. Besides, having been so recently visited with distinguishing favors, we dared not allow ourselves to expect a repetition of them so soon; and we began to apprehend it was the purpose of Him whom we had lately grieved from among us, that we should, for penalty, stand alone parched up in sight of surrounding showers. We considered what must be the probable fate of the risen generation, if we were to see no more of "the days that were past" for a number of years, and the apprehension that we might not caused sensations more easily felt than described.

This was the state of the people when, on a Sabbath in the month of November, it was the sovereign pleasure of a most merciful God, very sensibly to manifest himself in the public assembly. Many abiding impressions were made on minds seemingly the least susceptible, and on several grown old in unbelief. From that memorable day the flame which had been kindling in secret, broke out. By desire of the

people, religious conferences were set up in different parts of the town, which continued to be attended by deeply affected crowds; and in which divine presence and power were manifested to a degree which we had never before witnessed. It is not meant that they were marked with out-cries, distortions of body, or any symptoms of intemperate zeal; but only that the power of divine truth made deep impression on the assemblies. You might often see a congregation sit with deep solemnity depicted in their countenances, without observing a tear or sob during the service. This last observation is not made with design to cast odium on such natural expressions of a wounded spirit. But the case was so with us that most of those who were exercised, were often too deeply impressed to weep. Addresses to the passions, now no longer necessary since the attention was engaged, were avoided; and the aim was to come at the conscience. Little terror was preached, except what is implied in the doctrines of the entire depravity of the carnal heart—its enmity against God—its deceitful doublings and attempts to avoid the soul-humbling terms of the gospel, the radical defects of the doings of the unregenerate, and the sovereignty of God in the dispensations of his grace. The more clearly these and other kindred doctrines were displayed and understood, the more were convictions promoted. By convictions is meant those views and feelings which are caused by uncovered truth, and the influences of the Spirit, antecedently to conversion.

The order and progress of these convictions were pretty much as follows: The subjects of them were brought to feel that they were transgressors, yet not that they were totally sinful. As their convictions increased, they were constrained to acknowledge their destitution of love to God; but yet they thought they had no enmity against him. At length they would come to see that enmity filled their hearts. This was particularly exemplified in a certain house, in which were two persons exercised in mind. One appeared to have a clear sense of this enmity, and wondered how she could have been ignorant of it so long. The other was sensible that she possessed none of that love to God which the law required, but could not believe that she entertained such enmity as filled the other with so much remorse

and anguish. A few days afterwards, seeing a friend to whom she had expressed this sentiment, she was anxious to let him know her mistake, and informed him that she had discovered that she "hated God with all her heart."

In the first stages of conviction, it was not easy for the subjects to realize their desert of eternal death. But afterwards, even while they gave decisive evidence of being still as devoid of a right temper as those wretches whose mouths will be stopped by the light of the last day, their conviction of this desert was, in many instances, very clear. Nevertheless, even to the last, their hearts would recoil at the thought of being in God's hands, and would rise against him for having reserved it to himself to decide whether to sanctify and pardon them or not. Though the display of this doctrine had the most powerful tendency to strip them of all hopes from themselves, and to bring them to the feet of sovereign grace; yet as it thus sapped the foundation on which they rested, their feelings were excited against it. There was a man who, having been well indoctrinated, had for many years advocated this truth; who notwithstanding, when he came to be concerned about his salvation and to apply this truth to his own case, was much displeased with it. He was at times quite agitated by a warfare between his understanding and heart; the former assenting to the truth, the latter resisting it. He said it depended on God and not on himself, whether he ever should comply with the gospel; and for God to withhold his influences, and then punish him for not possessing the temper which these influences alone could produce, appeared to him hard. Before conviction had become deep and powerful, many attempted to exculpate themselves with this plea of inability, and like their ancestor, to cast the blame upon God, by pleading, "The nature which he gave me, beguiled me." This was the enemy's strong hold. All who were a little more thoughtful than common, but not thoroughly convicted, would, upon the first attack, flee to this refuge: "They would be glad to repent, but could not, their nature and heart were so bad;" as though their nature and heart were not they themselves. But the progress of conviction in general soon removed

this "refuge of lies," and filled them with a sense of utter inexcusableness; and in every case, as soon as their enmity was slain, this plea wholly vanished, and their language immediately became, "I wonder I ever should ask the question. How can I repent? My only wonder now is that I could hold out so long."

It was not uncommon for the hearts of the convicted, as they rose against God, to rise also against his ministers. Several who had not betrayed their feelings in the season of them, afterwards confessed that such resentments had arisen. In some instances, the emotions were plainly discoverable, and in one, particularly, the subject was so incensed as to break out in bitter expressions, but a few hours before being relieved from the anguish of a deeply troubled spirit. Such things seemed to be satisfying evidence that mere conviction no more meliorates the heart in this, than in the other world; but serves rather to draw out its corruptions into still stronger exercise. It may be suitable to add, that these sallies of resentment were occasioned by the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, closely and affectionately applied to the conscience.

As soon as the heart of stone was removed and a heart of flesh given, the subjects of this happy change exhibited sentiments and feelings widely different from those above described. They were now wrapt up in admiration of the laws and absolute government of God, which had before been the object of so much cavil and disgust. Notwithstanding the extreme delicacy and danger which attend the detail of individual cases, it may on the whole, it is hoped, be more useful than injurious to confirm and illustrate the observation just now advanced by some particular relations.

There was a man, who, for a number of years, had entertained hope of his personal interest in the covenant; and being of inoffensive behavior, had given people no other special ground to distrust him than his opposition to divine sovereignty, and disgust (which he now believes arose from a self-righteous temper,) at the doctrine that God has no regard for the doings of the unregenerate. He thought the

impenitent were thus too much discouraged from making their own exertions. Emboldened by a favorable opinion of his state, he offered himself some time ago for communion with the church. And because he could not assent to their confession of faith, he petitioned to have several articles struck out, particularly the one which asserts the doctrine of election. The church did not consent, and he withdrew. But so exquisitely was his sensibility touched, that he had it in serious consideration to dispose of his property, and remove to some place "where he might enjoy gospel ordinances." It pleased God the last winter, to convince him that his "feet stood on slippery places;" and after a scene of distressing conviction, his mind was composed in view of those very truths which had been the objects of his opposition. Since then, he has publicly manifested his belief in the articles adopted by the church, and has been received by them, to the "furtherance" of their "joy of faith" and "comfort of love."

Another might be mentioned who was equally opposed to the essential truths of revelation. Having the care of a school in town, last winter, he was required by the inspectors to subscribe to the belief, "that the general system of doctrines taught in the assembly's catechism, is agreeable to the word of God." He could not comply, on the ground that the catechism asserts, "God hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." The inspectors, loth to lose him, endeavored to convince him. But this clause appeared to him so exceptionable that he persisted in declining, and would have left his school rather than comply, had he not at last discovered that the phrase "general system" would leave him room after subscribing, to withhold his assent to the offensive article. Soon after this, his conscience was seized by the convincing power of truth, a great revolution was produced in his views and feelings, and he has since professed to be filled with admiration of a government planned by eternal wisdom, and administered by unerring rectitude.

It might perhaps not be unsuitable to mention the case of a man upwards of 70 years of age; who, belonging to the lowest class of society, and living in a very retired place, was extremely illiterate,

and had little intercourse with the world, yet was possessed of a strong mind and malignant passions. Having conceived a strong disgust at some of the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, he had given his word that he would hear them no more. Because his wife had united with the church, and attended public worship, he rendered her life very uncomfortable. On which subject I went to converse with him last summer, and am certain I never saw a case in which so much deliberate rancor and deadly hatred were expressed against every thing sacred, against the essential truths of revelation, and against the ministers and church of Christ in general. In the expression both of his countenance and lips he approximated the nearest to my ideas of "the spirits in prison" of any person I ever beheld. His enmity was not awakened to sudden rage, (for my treatment aimed at being conciliatory,) but seemed deep-rooted and implacable. His resolution of keeping from public worship he pertinaciously adhered to: nor had he any connection with the conferences during the first period of the awakening. Yet, disconnected as he was from all religious society and the means of grace, it pleased God late in the winter, to take strong hold of his mind. He continued for a while trembling in retirement; but when he could contain no longer, he came out to find the conferences, and to seek some experienced christians to whom he might lay open his distress. Being called out of town about this time, I did not see him in this condition; and when I saw him next, he was, in appearance, "clothed and in his right mind." Inquiry being made respecting his apprehensions of those doctrines which had been so offensive, he replied, "they are the foundation of the world." Every air seemed changed. Softness and gentleness had taken the place of native ferocity, and the man appeared tamed. I could not help reflecting that a religion which will make such changes in the tempers and manners of men is a religion worth possessing. An awakening which produces such effects will not be censured by the friends of human happiness.

It would not consist with the designed brevity of this narrative, nor yet perhaps with propriety, to detail all the interesting circumstances

in the experiences of more than a hundred persons, who appear to have been the subjects of this work. It may, however, be not unuseful to go so far into particulars as to exhibit some of the distinguishing fruits of it. The subjects of it have generally expressed a choice that God should pursue the "determinate counsel" of his own will, and without consulting them, decide respecting their salvation. To the question, whether they expected to alter the divine mind by prayer? it has been answered "I sometimes think, if this were possible, I should not dare to pray." When asked what was the first thing which composed their anxious minds? they have sometimes answered, "the thought that I was in the hands of God. It seems to me that whatever becomes of me, whether I live or die, I cannot bear to be out of his hands." Many have expressed a willingness to put their names to a blank, and leave it with God to fill it up; and that, because his having the government would secure the termination of all things in his own glory.

They do not found their hopes on the suggestion of scripture passages to their minds, on dreams, or seeing sights, or hearing voices, or on blind unaccountable impulses; but on the persuasion that they have discovered in themselves the exercises of love to God and man, originating not in selfishness. When asked what they had discovered in God to engage their affections? they have sometimes answered, "I think I love him because he hates sin, because he hates my sins." They frequently have declared that God appeared altogether more glorious to them for being sin-hating and sin-avenging; that they were willing he should abide by his determination not to have mercy on them or their friends, if they would not repent and believe the gospel. One observed in confidence to a friend, and without the appearance of ostentation, that she had been so taken up all day in rejoicing in God's perfections and the certain accomplishment of his glory, that she had scarcely thought of what would be her own destiny; that she must believe she reckoned more of his glory and the public good than of her own happiness. Some declared that if they could have their choice, either to live a life of religion and poverty, or revel in the pleasures of the world,



unmolested by conscience or fear, and at last be converted on a dying bed, and be as happy hereafter as if they had made the other choice, they should prefer the former; and that, for the glory of God, and not merely for the happiness which the prospects of future glory would daily afford; for they believed their choice would be the same, though in certain expectation that fears and conflicts would render a religious life less happy than a life of sensuality. Their predominant desire still appears to be that God may be glorified, and that they may render him voluntary glory in a life of obedience, and may enjoy him in a life of communion with him. A prospect of the full attainment of these ends is what appears to render the heavenly state the object of their eager desire. Their admiration of Jesus Christ seems most excited by his zeal to support his Father's law—a law, the glories of which they appear distinctly though imperfectly to apprehend. The Bible is to them a new book. Prayer seems their delight. Their hearts are peculiarly united to the people of God. But the most observable part of their character is a lovely appearance of meekness and humility. Little of that presumptuous confidence, too much of which has sometimes appeared in young professors, is observable in them. Accordingly they have not that uninterrupted elevation of spirits which in the inexperienced is generally bottomed on comparative ignorance of remaining corruption, and overrating their attainments. Accustomed to discriminate between true and false affections, they appear not to set to their account so much of the "wood, hay and stubble," as perhaps some have done. By reason of the views they have had of the deceitfulness of their hearts, and the comparison and examination they have made to discover how near in appearance false religion lies to the true, they have great diffidence and distrust of themselves. A sense of their ill desert abides and increases upon them after apparent renovation; a considerable time posterior to which, some have been heard to say, "I never had an idea what a heart I had till this week." Each one seems to apprehend his own depravity to be the greatest. They appear not to be calculating to bring God into debt by their new obedience. A person not greatly indoctrinated, but lovely in the charms of child-like simplicity, was heard to say, "I will tell you, sir, what appears to me would be exactly

right. It would be exactly right for me to live thirty or forty years in the world without ever sinning again, and be serving God all the time; and then it would be just right for me to be sent to hell for what I have already done." The hopeful subjects of the work as yet exhibit "fruits meet for repentance." Some we have had opportunity to see under the pressure of heavy afflictions; who have seemed calmly to acquiesce in the dispensations of providence.

In giving the foregoing description, special care has been taken not to paint an ideal image of what they ought to be, but scrupulously to delineate the views and exercises which they have really expressed. In these views and exercises they have, however, circumstantially differed; some having been first and chiefly affected with the beauty of the divine law; others, with the glories and all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ; others, with the divine perfections generally; others, and perhaps the greatest number, with the fitness of divine sovereignty. Some have been for a great while, others, a much shorter time, under trouble of mind. One man in advanced life, who had lately been only a little more thoughtful than common, in this state retired to rest, and was suddenly seized with powerful and very distinct convictions of truth, and in the judgment of charity, almost immediately passed to uncommonly clear exercises of love to God and his kingdom.

With the gift of grace, some have received an uncommon gift of prayer. A man who formerly had not been disposed to give much credit to religion, falling into a conference of young people one evening, and hearing a prayer made by an illiterate youth, was much surprised and even convinced; and afterwards observed, that he was satisfied such a prayer could not, a few months before, have possibly dropt from those lips.

It is believed that the outlines of this narrative, equally describe the features and fruits of this extensive, (and may we not add, genuine and remarkably pure) work, in at least fifty or sixty adjacent congregations. It is proposed shortly to give you a more entire picture of it, as it relates to this place; till then, I am, &c.

E. D. GRIFFIN.

New-Hartford, Aug. 1800.

## LETTER II

In pursuance of the design suggested in the close of my last, the narrative, which was then left unfinished, will now be resumed.

The late attention of our state legislature to schools, has led the way to important benefits to children, as well in this as in many other towns. In consequence of the new arrangements, school-masters of serious minds have been employed, who have entered in earnest upon instructing the children in the principles of religion, and praying with them. The effect has been, that many schools have been awakened, and as we have good reason to conclude, have received lasting benefits. Three of the schools in this town were last winter under the care of men professedly pious, and very faithful in imparting these instructions. Out of these nearly twenty children, in the course of the winter, it is hoped, were introduced into "marvellous light." The knowledge possessed by such as we hope have been savingly enlightened by the Divine Spirit, is worthy of particular observation. Important ideas and distinctions, which it has been attempted in vain to give to others of their age, appear familiar to them. One lad in particular, in a certain interview which was had with him, discriminated between true and false affections, and stated the grounds of his hopes and fears in a manner very surprising and affecting. It was the more so, because the evening before an attempt had been made with children of the same age and neighborhood, and of equal abilities and opportunity; and it had seemed like "ploughing on a rock;" insomuch that the hope was almost relinquished of ever being able to introduce discriminating ideas into minds so young. It would be ungrateful not to acknowledge that in a remarkable manner it hath pleased the Most High, "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings to perfect praise."

It is hoped that about fifty heads of families have been the subjects of this work; a considerable part of whom rank among the most respectable and influential characters in the town. This, however, gives the young no just encouragement to hazard their salvation on the chance of being called in at "the eleventh hour." Had they seen the anguish of some of these for neglecting so long the great business of life, it might discourage such neglect in them. Penetrated with remorse for the waste of life, and for the lax examples by which they supposed they had corrupted others, they seemed to conclude it was probably too late for them to find mercy; yet were anxious to disburden their conscience of one torment, by solemnly warning the youth not to follow their steps. "We are soon going," said they, "to receive the reward of wasted life; and we warn you to proceed no further in search of a more convenient time to prepare for death. We have been over the ground between you and us, and this 'more convenient season' does not lie before you. O that we could be placed back to your age, for then we might have hope. If you did but know and feel as we do the value of youth, you would surely better improve it." In language of this import have they been frequently heard to vent themselves, while despair and anguish seemed settled on every feature; all which, united, produced sensations in the affected hearers not easily described.

The power of the Almighty Spirit has prostrated the stoutness of a considerable number, who were the last that human expectation would have fixed on to be the subjects of such a change. One man who lives at a distance from the sanctuary, and who perhaps seldom, if ever, visited it in his life; and who, as might be expected, was extremely ignorant and stupid; has been visited in his own house, and in the view of charity, brought into the kingdom. His heart seems now for the first time to be towards the sanctuary, though ill health prevents him from enjoying the blessings and privileges of it. Another old man in the same neighborhood, who had not been into our house of worship, and probably not into any other, for more than twenty years, has been arrested, in his retirement, by the Divine Spirit, and still remains "like the troubled sea when it cannot rest."

It has been a remarkable season for the destruction of false hopes. Nearly twenty of those who have lately appeared to build "on the rock," have been plucked off from the sandy foundation. As a caution to others, it may perhaps not be improper briefly to state the previous situation of some of these. One had supposed that she loved the God of Providence because she had some sense of his daily kindness to her and her family. She was the one mentioned in my former letter, who was brought to see and acknowledge that she hated the real character of God with all her heart. Another, having been brought up in gay life, was also very ignorant of the essential nature of true religion, insensible of the deceitfulness of her heart, and in full confidence of her good estate. Another, accustomed to contemplate moral truth, in the light of a clear and penetrating intellect, had mistaken the assent of the understanding for affections of the heart. Another had been the subject of some exercises in early life, which had induced the hope that he was within the embraces of the gracious covenant. But he had become a worldling, and lived in the omission of family prayer. Still, while under his late conflicts, he would reach back, and fasten anew on his former hope, (which he had made little account of in the days of his carelessness,) until the power of the Divine Spirit broke his hold. Another had formerly rested her hope on some suggestion to her mind, (somewhat like a voice,) assuring her in time of sickness and anxiety, that her sins were forgiven. Another had been introduced into a hoping state in a season of awakening several years ago; since which, nothing special had occurred as a ground of self distrust, except that she had sometimes, for a considerable season, neglected prayer and spiritual contemplations for worldly objects. Another was first put upon suspecting and searching himself by finding in his heart an undue appetite for the gaities and vanities of youth. He had just returned from a party of pleasure when his conflict began. Another was the man mentioned "in my former letter, as having been so opposed to the sovereignty of God, in the dispensation of his grace. The rest, for aught that appeared, were as hopeful candidates for heaven as many professors. From observing the effects which the light of God's presence had upon false hopes, a trembling reflection arose, "How

many such hopes will probably be chased away by the opening light of eternity!" The Lord seemed come to "search Jerusalem with candles," and to find out those who were "settled on their lees." The church felt the shock. No less than three conversed with me in one week on the expediency of withdrawing from the sacrament. That same presence which at Sinai made all the church and even Moses, "exceedingly fear and quake," rendered it now a time of trembling with professors in general. Nevertheless it was, in respect to most of them, a season of great quickening and a remarkable day of prayer. Two persons have been for several months under deep dejection, which at times bordered on despair; one being extremely weakened by ill health; the other having experienced such dreadful heart-risings against God, as to be terrified into the apprehension that her condemnation is sealed. Some, after having had, so far as we can judge, a saving change passed upon their hearts, have had seasons of thick darkness. One person, after the dawn of a joyful morning, was for two or three months overshadowed with a cloud, and by turns appeared in almost total despair, and notwithstanding he had such apprehensions of guilt and danger that sleepless and "wearisome nights" were "appointed" to him, yet he verily thought, (to use his own frequent expression,) that he was as stupid as the beasts, and that his stupidity was daily increasing; though to others it was evident that what he considered the increase of his stupidity, was only the increase of his anxiety about it. In other instances, the enemy has attempted to divert people from their anxiety with premature hopes.

We have met with little or no open opposition to the work; the corruptions of those who were not drawn into it having been held in awe by a present God. It is apprehended there has scarcely been a person in town of sufficient age for serious thought who has not felt an unusual solemnity on his mind. A general reformation of morals and sobriety of conduct are observable through the town. Family prayer has been remarkably revived. On the day of the general election of state officers, (a day usually devoted to festivity,) the young people of their own accord assembled in the sanctuary; where,

by their particular desire, a sermon was delivered to them: and they went home generally agreed that one day spent in the courts of the Lord was better than a thousand wasted in vanity. Upon the whole, it is a given point among the candid that much good and no hurt has been produced by this religious revival, and that it would be a matter of exceeding joy and gratitude, if such a revival should be extended through the world.

In this work the Divine Spirit seems to have borne strong testimony to the truth of those doctrines which are generally embraced by our churches, and which are often distinguished by the appellation of Calvinism. These doctrines appear to have been "the sword of the spirit," by which sinners have been "pricked in their hearts," and to have been "like as a fire and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." It is under the weekly display of these that the work has been carried on in all our towns. These have been the truths which the awakened have deeply felt, and these the prominent objects in view of which the young converts have been transported. The scenes which have been opened before us have brought into view what to many is convincing evidence that there is such a thing as experimental religion; and that mere outward morality is not the qualification which fits the soul for the enjoyment of God. People who before were of inoffensive conduct and of engaging social affections, have been brought to see that their hearts were full of enmity to God; and now give charitable evidence of possessing tempers, to which before they were utter strangers. It may be added, that some of the subjects of the work now acknowledge that they lived many years in dependance on a moral life, (and one of them, driven from this ground, tried to rest on the scheme of Universalism;) but they are now brought to see that they were "leaning on a broken reed," and no longer rest on supposed innocence or good works, but on Him who came to save the chief of sinners.

I am, &c.

E. D. GRIFFIN.

In the course of the year 1800 Mrs. GRIFFIN'S health became so much impaired that her physicians advised that she should be removed to a milder climate. In consequence of this, Mr. G. presented to his congregation the alternative of either withdrawing from his labors and relinquishing his salary till there should be time to make the necessary experiment on Mrs. G's health, or of immediately resigning his pastoral charge. The congregation chose the former side of the alternative; and accordingly, in the early part of October, he left New-Hartford with Mrs. G. and travelled as far south as New-Jersey. Having received an invitation from his friend, the Rev. Mr. (now Doctor) HILLYER, who at that time resided in Morris county, to come and pass as much time with him as he might find convenient, he availed himself of the obliging invitation and remained with Mr. H. several weeks. During this period he preached frequently in the neighboring congregations, and was every where listened to with the deepest interest. About this time the church in Orange became vacant by the removal of the Rev. Mr. CHAPMAN, and Mr. GRIFFIN was engaged to occupy the pulpit for the winter. His preaching here was attended by manifest tokens of the divine favor, and about fifty were added to the church as the fruit of his labors. The following letter to the Rev. JEREMIAH HALLOCK, dated "New-Jersey, Newark, (Orangedale) March 3, 1801," describes the interesting state of things which existed during his residence there:

DEAR BROTHER—

I have been hoping for a private opportunity to transmit a letter to you; but not finding it, and being unable to wait any longer, I sit down to write by mail. And I hope you will be kind enough to do the same by me. I have been waiting very impatiently for a letter from Mr. Mills, in answer to the one which, at his request, I wrote him. I will thank you to show him this letter, and give my love to him, and let him know I am anxious to hear from him, as I shall be from you. Give my love also to Mr. Miller, and all the rest of our dear circle of



ministers; and let them know I shall consider it a favor if they will write. I want to hear all about you—the state of your monthly meetings—of religion—of all dear friends—and particularly every thing about my church and people, which you can possibly think of. Brother Washburn 'writes that your circle love yet to pray, and that Jesus sometimes comes in the midst. I long to be with you. The sweet days of other years, especially the beloved seasons on the well known mountain, sometimes come on my mind, and almost overwhelm me.

Those days are past, alas, to return again no more. You know not how much I miss that precious and united brotherhood of ministers. The ministers here are agreeable, friendly and pious, but I have not prayed, and wept, and triumphed with them. I shall never see such another circle. They were my first love. Alas! can they be mine no more? Let God ultimately decide this question; and let us submit. I hope, one day, we shall all meet to part no more forever. How transporting—how soothing will be that meeting after the tedious lonely years of separation! Oh when will it once be!

"March 4th. I had written thus far last evening, when I was interrupted by some people who came in to converse about religion. Oh my brother, with what words shall I acknowledge the most wonderful goodness of God to a poor unworthy sinner, who has trembled for fear that God was about to thrust him out of the ministry, and employ him no more in his glorious service. Contrary to all expectations, God has given me the desire of my heart, and suffered me once more to see his power and glory, so as we have together seen them in the sanctuary. The God who appeared in the little school house when it was proclaimed that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by,—God of all our former revivals—hath in boundless mercy appeared in this place. In some neighboring places he has been, for the winter and year past, displaying his glory. Latterly he hath revived our hopes even here.

"The first encouraging appearance was a crowded and solemn house on the Sabbath—next, we began to hear praying people express their

hopes and desires that God would appear in his glory here. For two months the waters of the sanctuary have been silently rising. The prayers and tears of God's people have evinced the struggles and the longings of their souls. Lately the secret and enkindling fire has broke out into a glorious flame. People who formerly used the language of the Red Sea, and who have since for years, been buried up in the world, now come forward to accuse themselves, and to lament with tears over their neglects. Others, who have had an indistinguishable hope for many years, are emerging into clear and joyous light. The more confirmed and experienced christians, who have waited long for the salvation of Israel, are triumphing and praising, and some of the aged, crying with Simeon, 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart,' &c. In other cases all hopes are shaken. Generally, the dry bones tremble and quake; and some few, we hope, begin to live. A very great and increasing impression seems to rest on the whole society. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Some people who have not been to meeting for ten or twenty years, are out,—attend with tears, and are among the number of those that tremble. People come in from abroad to behold the wonders of God, and go away seemingly impressed. May this glorious work spread from town to town, and from land to land, until the world shall be deluged in a flood of glory, as the waters cover the sea.

Some alarming providences of God have greatly tended to promote this work. And indeed, every feature of it proves it to be a work of God, and not of man. And let God, and not man, have all the glory. Accursed be the wretch who could have the heart to pilfer it from him. I have not written half enough, but my paper fails. We have two crowded conferences in a week, one lecture, one private prayer meeting, and I am about to appoint a private conference for only the awakened. I have only room to add, that I am your ever affectionate brother,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

The congregation were desirous of giving him a call, but he discouraged it on the ground that, if the health of Mrs. G. would permit him to remain at New-Hartford, he was unwilling to leave it for any other place. The people of Newark, however, without having previously communicated to him their intention, actually made out a call for him to settle as colleague with the venerable Doctor MCWHORTER. In June they returned to New-Hartford, carrying with them an infant daughter, Frances Louisa, who had been born during the period of their sojourn at Orange. They returned, however, only to make arrangements for an ultimate removal; for Mrs. G. had become so confirmed in the opinion that a more southern climate was essential to her health, that her husband could not doubt that the providence of God pointed him to another field of labor. Accordingly his pastoral relation to the church at New-Hartford was dissolved by mutual consent in August, though not without many severe struggles on his part and the deepest regrets on the part of his people.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **HIS FIRST RESIDENCE AT NEWARK**

Immediately after resigning his pastoral charge at New-Hartford, Mr. GRIFFIN returned with his family to Newark, accepted the call which had previously been given him, and on the 20th of October, 1801, was installed Colleague Pastor with the Rev. Dr. MCWHORTER. The congregation over which he was placed was one of the largest and most respectable in the United States; qualified in every respect to estimate the labors of a most eloquent, gifted and devoted minister.

For nearly three years from April 1799, Mr. G. seems to have kept no record of his private religious exercises, owing probably, in a great measure to his having been, during a part of the time, in an unsettled state, and for some time after he went to Newark, greatly burdened with care. He resumes his journal under date of January 30th, 1803, as follows:

Spent the last week on a preaching tour, in the neighboring congregations, where a glorious work of God's grace appears to be beginning. Have been deeply impressed of late, with a conviction of a great mistake which I made in some former revivals. My mother's children made me the keeper of their vineyard, but ray own I did not keep. Being often engaged in public prayers, I thought it was neither necessary nor practicable to attend so much at large to the duties of the closet. And when I preached or heard preaching, I was so concerned for others, that I did not sufficiently apply the truth to myself, and my prayers were so much upon others, that I did not enough pray for the promotion of religion in my own heart. The consequence was twofold: I got away from God, and the duties of the closet have never been so faithfully attended since; and further, I was lifted up by divine favors, and had need to be left to fall into sin to humble me. But lately I have resolved more to seek the advancement of religion in myself, while I endeavor to promote it in others, and have desired to be converted, and to catch the shower which is falling around me. Lord, while thou art converting sinners and infidels, and giving thy people a fresh unction, I pray that I may be the subject of these renewing influences, whether I have ever felt them before or not. I desire to consider myself only as a needy sinner, and to put myself in the way of these influences which are shed down upon others. O why may I not be converted by them, as well as those around me?

February 5. I have just been reading a most admirable piece, recommending the dispersion of religious tracts. The writer possesses precisely those views of the superior importance of laboring for the soul, which I have generally had. It has inflamed my

desire to add the dispersion of such tracts to my other attempts to promote (what I now hope I can say is my favorite object) the salvation of men, the advancement of that beloved cause which it cost the Saviour so much to establish. O to employ every faculty during life, and to seize every new measure to promote this object. To have pious tracts to carry out with me when I walk or ride abroad, or when I take a journey,—how would it tend to keep my heart, to keep my eye, on the great end of life, and to increase my usefulness. My soul swells at the prospect. O this is such a life as I desire. I thank God for the new impression. I pray that it may lead to great good. I pray that it may never subside, but be increased, until it fixes me in the unalterable habit of striving for usefulness in this way. It is now in my heart to endeavor to engage others in this measure. Lord, if this impression is from thee, and is designed to lead to the promotion of a religious tract society, O give me wisdom, smile on the design, and open a way for its accomplishment, and may this impression lead to the salvation of thousands.

February 14th. I have been set upon conversing more with my family. I find it is the best, yes the very best, remedy against my greatest dangers. If my soul were set on the salvation of my house, probably salvation would come to them, and we should have a little heaven below the skies. I most earnestly desire thee, O God, whilst thou art making me the instrument of good to others, to indulge me with the happiness of seeing thy power rest upon my poor family. O why may not we be sharers in thy salvation which is so profusely bestowed on others? I feel a strong desire, and see the necessity, to support unremitted watchfulness, prayer and dependance on the strength of Christ, and to commit my salvation more into his hands. I think I feel more humble and dependant, and more of a christian temper than for years past. I clearly see that Christ can enable me to overcome temptation. The keeping of the saints amidst their dangers and fears, is by him who supports the mountains, and whose faithfulness changes not. To him I commit myself, rejoicing. I see by what wondrous measures he is now delivering me from my enemies which were too strong for me. He will deliver and make me a monument of

his heaven-astonishing grace. I have been lately wishing to be taken up by some mighty power, and get forward at once very far in my journey, so as to have little to do afterwards to arrive at perfect sanctification. But this is a fruitless hope. I am enlisted in a warfare, and every inch of ground must be taken sword in hand. Those corruptions which are constitutional will live with me, and die only with me. They will trouble me through life. The only remedy is to live near to God. This alone is the water which will quench the fire. The moment I get away from him, they will always stand ready to harrass me and drive me back. Divine enjoyment,—spiritual pride,—falls, humiliation, prayer,—elevation,—enjoyment,—pride,—falls,—humiliation, &c. &c. must be my round through life. I have lately found that I ought to turn my heart and soul more immediately to Christ, and like others, (of whom I have lately read,) mourn for the feebleness of my love to Christ. Could I rest more on him, I might support habitual pleasant contemplations, which render the mind more like God. I should then look less on perplexities, and fix my eye less on my miserable depravity, although I should not see it less. I have given up my worldly matters into the hands of Christ, and while I am caring for his interest, I see he is caring for mine. By some merciful interpositions, I see he may be fully trusted for my daily bread, end I think I can leave the rest with him. they will always stand ready to harrass me and drive me back. Divine enjoyment,—spiritual pride,—falls, humiliation, prayer,—elevation,—enjoyment,—pride,—falls,—humiliation, &c. &c. must be my round through life. I have lately found that I ought to turn my heart and soul more immediately to Christ, and like others, (of whom I have lately read,) mourn for the feebleness of my love to Christ. Could I rest more on him, I might support habitual pleasant contemplations, which render the mind more like God. I should then look less on perplexities, and fix my eye less on my miserable depravity, although I should not see it less. I have given up my worldly matters into the hands of Christ, and while I am caring for his interest, I see he is caring for mine. By some merciful interpositions, I see he may be fully trusted for my daily bread, end I think I can leave the rest with him.

If I know any thing of my heart, I am sure that I care more for the success of my ministry than for any worldly interest. And upon a review of my life, I must be confident that the three strongest desires which have habitually influenced me for years, are (1.) To be delivered from sin. O if this could be, I could bear any thing, and be happy in poverty and disgrace. (2.) To enjoy God. I think I surely long more for this than riches or honors, and would give up every thing for it. (3.) That God's kingdom may come. When I hear of any appearance favorable to Zion, my heart is glad. I would rather be an instrument in promoting this interest than to wear laurels for learning, eloquence, &c. I think I have had and daily have, fair opportunities to make the experiment. Since I have been in this place, I am more than ever convinced that I am spoiled for the world, that I cannot live on popular breath or the estimation of the gay. I cannot live confined to their society. The company of the pious, though poor, is far sweeter. I must have the conscience of good people on the side of my preaching, or all the applauses of the world are irksome and terrifying to me. I must have christians for my companions, and cannot live in the world. I know I have a dreadful body of sin struggling within me. I know that pride has much influence in my best public duties, and has more influence on my deliberate and habitual conduct than any other wrong affection; but I think it does not govern. Still I ought to be cautious. My zeal to propagate the truth may be a proud and wilful desire to support my own sentiments. From the zeal which appears in politics, and among the most corrupt sects in the christian church, it is evident that this is one of the most powerful principles of the natural heart. And when I see the worshippers of Moloch flaming with zeal for their god, and sacrificing their very children to him, my heart says,—What zeal, what sacrifices, what willingness to resign up a child to God, can I depend on as evidence of true religion?

February 26th. Yesterday I sensibly felt for a moment what boldness and fortitude in preaching would result from disinterested humility, that should be perfectly indifferent to the good opinions of others as a personal honor; and saw how different was the assurance of a self-

confident spirit; and had a glimpse of the principle which rendered the meek and humble Jesus so intrepid.

Monday, February 28th. Yesterday I went to the house of God under a great sense of my own unworthiness, and fearful of making attempts at eloquence, lest I should be influenced by pride. I endeavored to speak with all the simplicity and sincerity of one who had no regard to the opinions of men, any farther than not to injure the cause of religion, and I found myself much assisted, although I depended much on extemporaneous exertion. I found a solemn sense of divine things more beneficial, even to render my services acceptable, than all the flourish of affected zeal and eloquence. Let this remove the objection, that if I should become unstudious to please, I should lose my influence and degrade the gospel.

I have lately been so fearful of selfishness and pride that I have scarcely dared to move. I now see that their motions have been as constant as the palpitations of my heart, and have exerted an uninterrupted influence on my external conduct,—sometimes to spur me forward to zeal in the line of duty, sometimes to hold me back and to weaken my exertions, and sometimes to turn my feet aside from the right path. Let me never again be blind to their motions, or be at a loss when to find them in my heart. O how can I bear to live with these filthy vipers in my bosom until I am fifty or sixty years old? But it must be, if I live at all. What can I do but resist them with all the strength that God shall give me, and take care that they are not suffered to shape or influence my outward conduct? But of this I am sure, that I must not omit or relax in a single duty, for fear of being influenced by improper feelings. I must pursue my course and strive to purify my motives.

When I see those of whom I have formed the best opinion, complaining and mourning for sin, saying that they view themselves the greatest of sinners; professing more readily than any other grace, a deep sense that they deserve nothing at the hands of God, that they have not the least dependance on anything they have ever done, that



they are willing to be saved by mere mercy, and that God should take the credit of their salvation to himself; when I see them afraid of deception and jealous of themselves; I am conscious that all this is exactly my own habitual experience; but then I apprehend that my consciousness of being unworthy arises, (not like theirs, from a superior acquaintance with my own heart, but) from the obviousness of my sins. When I hear a dying saint say of her bodily pains, "These are nothing to the pains of sin;" my whole heart says Amen. With Mrs. Rowe I think I can certainly and habitually say, If God should bid me form a wish, and take whatever in heaven or earth I had to ask, it should not be the wealth of this world, nor the crowns of princes: no, nor yet the wreaths of martyrs nor thrones of archangels: my first request is to be made holy: this is my highest concern. When I hear the most humble christians declare that they have not the least hope of advancing one foot in their course, any farther than they are carried by God,—that they have no strength against one temptation—that they shall do every thing that they are left to do,—that their only hope for pardon, strength, and life, is in God; I know that I habitually feel the same: Yet I fear that conscience may do all this. When I heard an eminent saint to-day declare that the days of her affliction had been the sweetest days of her life, I knew that I could say the same; and then my soul replied, What is it that can have made my afflictions so happy, if I had not true religion? My soul trusted in God that he would do right, and would protect me as far as it was best, and make the trials work for my good; and I felt a delight in committing the case to him, leaning on, and communing with him. Could all this arise from the mistaken supposition that he was my friend? But yet, if I love him, why do I not keep his commandments?

How impudent is sin! It would lead one on to commit the most daring crimes when conscience testifies that God is looking on, and would deliberately rush upon the thick bosses of his buckler. When it acts in an Atheist, it does not appear so impudent, as when it shows all its airs by the very side of an awakened conscience. In christians its awful impudence appears to the greatest advantage; which

probably was one reason that such a body of sin was left to abide and work in sanctified hearts. Here it discovers its true nature, and shows itself to be as impudent as hell.

March 12th. A great sinner I am, and I have a great sense of it; but is it anything more than conscience? Could I so conduct myself if I had religion? And without it conscience would not sleep in a man in my station, and studies, and living in an awakening. But if I have a sanctified part within me, I have amazingly strong corruptions too. Yet if I have not a sanctified part, what mean these exercises? The other day, under an exquisite sense of sin, I clearly felt that all that I could do could, in the nature of things, have no tendency to atone for the least sin. I believe the feeling is habitual, and that I am not erecting a superstructure of self-righteousness. To-day the feeling returned, and while I was thinking what sacrifice I would be willing to make to escape the dominion of sin, I forgot myself, and turned in my mind what I would be willing to suffer to atone for what is past. But I was awakened out of my reverie by the disgust which arose from such a thought; a disgust which I did not artificially raise; for my reasoning powers were so absent, (I not being in self-examination, but borne down under a sense of sin,) that I pursued the thought as though I expected to find pleasure in it. I felt that all the atonement that I could make (accepted or not accepted) was insipid, and had no relish with my soul. It was free grace that I wanted. If I know my heart, I am willing to receive mercy, and on God's own terms. My heart is submissive and pliable. I would come to any terms which God should appoint. I think I certainly desire, above all things of a personal nature, pardon by the mercy of God in Christ,—strength, and assurance of strength to carry me through my warfare, (the thought of being strengthened and loved by a lovely, all-sufficient Saviour, how sweet!) and a complete deliverance from sin; or if I must still sin, that it may be the means of humbling me, making me more circumspect, and exalting the riches of free, astonishing grace. I have, in a lecture, been studying to discriminate between true and false repentance; and have inquired, (1.) Is your sense of sin connected with a sense of the purity, holiness, and

justice of God? My heart replied, Yes, as I wish not to make any alteration in Him. I wish him not to be less an enemy to my sins; but O for pardon and strength. (2.) Have you much anxiety for the sins of your heart, as well as conduct; setting a guard over small sins which are invisible to the world? Certainly, I have lately, as is evident from my late journal. (3.) Does your repentance produce actual renunciation of sin; making you resolute not to spare any sin, even those which may conduce most to present advantage? Does it render you meek, gentle, and humble, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits? Here I pause.—I cannot answer in the affirmative to all this. I think there is no favorite sin that I would wish to retain, whatever the renunciation of it would cost me; and that there is no duty which I would willingly neglect, whatever be the sacrifice or labor, or immediate consequence to me. I feel gentle, submissive, and broken—But ah! my strong corruptions. When I would do good, evil is present with me: and what I would not that do I. O wretched man that I am!

Have been reading my journal. How solemn the review of past years! What an awful examination shall I sustain when all the sins of my life shall be collected together, and an account taken of them. Black has been my life; I need seas of blood to wash me clean. Egypt never was darker. Awful! awful! God be merciful to me a sinner! By my journal I was much struck with the distresses which sin has caused me through so many years. O let it not be suffered so to disturb my peace again, and turn my years into years of hell. If I have any wisdom I shall be taught with the briers and thorns of former days. In reading this moment the 88th Psalm, I perceived that good men have gone through dreadful scenes; and I could say with Heman, "I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up; while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted." A momentary sweetness passed through my mind, while in his language I plead, "Shall thy loving kindred be declared in the grave, or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark," &c. In the darkness and distress which I felt about leaving New-Hartford, and amidst the apprehension, (like that of Jonah, whose sins I imitated,) "I am cast out of thy sight," the Lord

was at work beyond the bounds of my sight to prepare this station of usefulness and happiness for me. This is fact. I see, therefore, that it may be the case, that amidst my present darkness, he is preparing for me joys for following years, and a pleasant habitation forever.

[Written January 9th, 1830.] A scene which took place in the forenoon of March 14th, 1803, I have never forgotten. As I was walking the streets of Newark, pondering upon my sins, a flash of light came across my mind, sending home a conviction of sin, which instantly deprived me of hope. I do not know that I could be more sure of being in an unregenerated state if I were in hell. The following dialogue then took place with myself: "Well, go to Christ, as you direct other sinners to do." "But he is away beyond the hills, and I cannot get to him." "Well, ask God to bring you to him." "But the prayers of the unregenerate cannot ascend above the clouds. I have nothing to stand upon to begin." I felt then totally undone,—helpless and hopeless. I died then, as Paul did on the plains of Damascus. Instantly the scene changed. "Well, if that God who, self-moved, let down a hand to pluck Abraham and David from a state of unregeneracy, self-moved shall let down a hand to pluck me from destruction. I live; otherwise I die." I was composed in a moment, and seemed to lie down at his feet, and rest every issue on his will, without a struggle. And had the words of the leper been in my mind, (Mat. 8:2,) "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," they would have exactly expressed my feelings; they would have expressed precisely all the hope I had. Was not this a casting of myself entirely on the sovereign mercy of God? Was not this resting every hope, tranquilly, upon his sovereign will? This I have learnt from the reflections of near seven and twenty years, to call the dernier resort.

In that spot, at God's feet, without asking him what he would do with me, I chose to lie, contented to have his will done, and fearing to know the result, lest, if it should prove favorable, (which betrayed a secret hope,) I should be proud. Thus I continued through Monday and Tuesday. But out of that death and submission arose the life and

light that followed; just as in the case of the first death and resurrection of the sinner, his death to all hope, (Romans, 8:9,) and his resurrection to hope in Christ.

The week that followed changed the whole character of my experiences and preaching, and made them permanently more full of Christ.

Monday, March 14th. I set out on a preaching tour among the neighboring congregations; and the Lord, both on this and former tours, has bestowed the greatest personal blessings on me, while I have been laboring for him. On Monday and Tuesday I allowed not myself to hope that I was a Christian, put myself in the attitude of an awakened sinner, applying the sermons which I heard addressed to sinners to myself; pleaded for an interest in Christ; felt a tender conscience; was very fearful of pride and every movement of animal affection, which should lessen a sense of my ruined condition and total dependance on sovereign mercy; felt most happy in this state of mind; felt uncomfortable, when for a moment I lost a sense of my straits and necessities, and coveted the pleasure of lying, all my life, at the feet of God, trembling in uncertainty, that I might enjoy a sense of dependance, and feel after a precious Saviour. I had for some weeks been much in the same frame, and had fully felt that I was utterly in the hands of a sovereign God; that if he should not renew me, I should perish; that if he should not be disposed to give me an interest in Christ, all exertion could not move him to it, and that my eternal life hung suspended on his mere pleasure. I longed after deliverance from sin; longed to be made holy by the influences which are descending around me; but dreaded flights of joy, lest they should raise me from my proper place. All these exercises had been very distinct. Monday I was at Springfield, and Tuesday at Bottlehill; accompanied on the tour by Mr. Thompson. Mr. Richards met me at Bottlehill, and staid all night with me. In the evening we discoursed largely on the subject of christian experience; I proposing questions for him to solve respecting the decisiveness or indecisiveness of sundry marks of piety. I expressed to him my doubts of my own

religion. I complained that I had always found it difficult realizingly to feel that I deserved eternal punishment. He said that christians obtained this sense by seeing that God is so unspeakably lovely, that no conceivable punishment is great enough for sinning against him; that he had seen God's holiness, purity and justice to be so glorious, that it appeared if men should never commit an outward sin, they would deserve to be eternally damned for not loving him. While he was conversing, I thought I had some glimpse of the excellent purity, grandeur, awfulness, and sweetness of divine holiness; and saw that I had been searching for the door of deliverance, on the wrong side of the room, in seeking a sense of the evil of sin from examining what I had done rather than what God is. I was convinced that a view of the purity of God would best discover the awful nature of sin, and would be most effectual to produce true and deep repentance, self-loathing and actual renunciation of sin; and my heart said, "O for such views of God forever!" I mentioned another prime difficulty that I had always felt, viz. to apprehend Christ as bearing my sins, and being a proper substitute for me. I stated what efforts my reason had made to examine the nature and end of the atonement, and to obtain this apprehension. He observed that common christians could not go into this critical examination of the atonement,—that with them all was a matter of mere faith and reliance on the promise and oath of God to accept the sacrifice of Christ as a substitute for them; and that from a sense of the value of Christ's personal character, and consequently of his blood, they felt it proper that his death should be accepted as a full atonement for them. I was convinced that I had been substituting reason for faith, that I ought to yield more implicit belief to the testimony which God had given of his Son, to look with a believing eye on those precise aspects which his priesthood assumes in the first Epistle to the Hebrews, rather than on my own systematical reasonings, and that a failure here had been my great mistake, by means of which I had been so long destitute of an adequate sense of Christ as my substitute. O for more faith and less of the pride of reason! O for the meekness, and if I may so say, the passiveness of faith, to submit to the righteousness of God! He disclosed to me a distressing conflict which he formerly had had on this point; which

subsided in consequence of a transporting contemplation of Heb. 7:26: "For such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." As soon as these words were mentioned, they appeared transparent, and to contain within them all that I wanted, if I could only break the glass, and get at the treasure. With these feelings I retired to sleep.

When I awoke, that glorious High Priest was before me, just as he is expressed in Heb. 7:26.

Wednesday morning, 16th. Having noted down the particulars of last evening, coloring them no doubt with the views I had this morning, I then proceeded in my diary thus. Read the context to the verse which was repeated last evening. O what emphasis does Paul, throughout this Epistle, lay upon the priesthood of Christ:—Much more than I have done in my experiences, which have been more concerned with the divine government, law, &c. This morning I have felt that there is a ponderous reality in the priesthood of Christ, and that it is a great honor to the holiness of God that no sinner can be admitted to him, but by the sacrifice of our High Priest. My heart has been moved and delighted with a sense of his priesthood. There is much more reality in it than I have hitherto discovered;—a reality which I am now convinced that neither flesh and blood, nor any reasonings can reveal. I begin to think that when saints get to Heaven much of their happiness and astonishment will arise from views which they will wonder that they had not possessed before, as they will be views of that glorious scheme of salvation which had been revealed. I now perceive why many evangelical ministers have in their preaching drawn the greatest motives to love and obedience from the cross of Christ. My soul has some melting sense of the blessed High Priest, the way of access to the awful majesty of divine purity,—or rather, the way into the holy of holies; for I feel that the expressions made by the Holy Ghost, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, are best adapted to convey the idea to our weak apprehension. O for clearer views of the priesthood of Christ! O for more faith, and less dependance on

reason! These new views, were they clear enough, would, I perceive, be ravishing, and would be the best preservatives from sin. Let me not seek darkness, (under the notion that ravishing discoveries would raise me up to cast me down) as a guard against sin. This light is the only thing that will purify the heart. It is the cross of Christ, seen and felt, that must crucify sin. O for these views! Let this be my search and prayer this day and forever. I am resolved to attend more to the Epistle to the Hebrews, and will try to drink from the fountain, —to take in the precise representations of the Holy Ghost, and not confine myself to artificial and systematic views of my own. This has been my great mistake. The Scriptures are admirably adapted to the weakness of our apprehensions. I am convinced that christians generally have much more sense of the priesthood of Christ than I have had; and hence this subject, (which ought to have been so conspicuous and frequently urged,) has been so awfully overlooked in my preaching. It has been a just complaint that there was not enough of Christ in my sermons. And when I have spoken of the atonement it has been in a clumsy, systematic way, in which the most charming views of it have been passed by. What I have said on this subject has been the stiff and frigid statement of one devoid (in a great measure at least,) of spiritual discernment. Before the majesty of this spiritual truth, how do the little arts of seizing the passions by loosely, lightly, and I had almost said profanely, talking of Christ's scars and sighs, bow and flee away. In how unhallowed a manner have I treated this infinitely dignified, this holy and heavenly theme! I now perceive that self-righteousness may be chiefly if not wholly renounced, without any proper faith in the priesthood of Christ, (for I believe I had mostly renounced it before,) and for aught I know, without any true religion. There will be no self-righteousness in hell. And I know not but a sinner may be so enlightened on earth as to renounce it. He may undoubtedly like the damned be convinced that he deserves misery and no favor; and what is this but a renunciation of self-righteousness? If it be asked, what then keeps him from despair? I answer a hope that mercy may yet be extended to him by a sovereign God. If it be asked, why does he pray and use means? I answer, because he rightly believes, that in this way he is more likely



to receive saving light, though he is too much enlightened to suppose his duties will purchase any favor. I am convinced at least, that all these secondary signs of religion fail of satisfying the enlightened and jealous mind; that nothing can satisfy but a direct and clear view of God and Christ. O let my mind be filled, be purified, be happy in these views! This will be the peace which passeth understanding. This, compared to a confinement of views to my sinful self, will be what manhood is to infancy. I would leave the first principles and go on to perfection. By my sins I have been kept a babe, if I be any thing. If I have any, I have but very little religion.

During my journey to Turkey, the same day, I could think of nothing with pleasure but this sweet and glorious text; and when the sense of it was a little abated, I was enabled repeatedly to renew it, by thinking for a moment of the holiness of God, and my own impurity; and then I could again sweetly say, "Such a High Priest became us," &c. During Mr. Thompson's sermon from the words, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," my mind was solemnly fixed in a view of the reality of all he said, in a view, clearer than ever before of the holiness of God,—the evil and ingratitude of sin as against the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and the need of this blessed High Priest, and his love in undertaking and dying for men. And when I came to speak after his sermon, I was affected, spoke with simplicity and feeling on these points; informed the people that I could not convey the sense I had of the holiness of God and the glorious mystery of this High Priest; that flesh and blood, I was sure, could not reveal it to them. I could not bear that any should lose so much as to lose this precious Saviour, and affectionately invited, and urged all to come to him. Although I took no pains to speak, and was only struggling in vain to get out the sense of these things which was in my mind, the people were melted under the discourse. My exercises this day will be more discovered in what I wrote next morning.

Thursday morning, March 17th. "Lord I believe; help thou my unbelief." I find that my sense of the atonement which depended on former reasonings, was not the true sense: this flesh and blood

cannot reveal; and the only way in which God reveals it is by exciting faith. We may reason on the fitness of the atonement; and after all, the true sense of it comes only by implicit belief of the heart, in the word and oath by which Jesus was constituted and declared the High Priest of the world. God has declared, (and the victim was so precious that it was proper for him so to do,) that he will accept this sacrifice for men, and we must believe him, and must expect to discover the reality and glory of the atonement by faith, and not by speculation.

Yesterday was a great day with my soul. I had very distinct views of the purity and holiness of God, of the way of access to him by Christ, and of the preciousness of our great High Priest; insomuch that in my public exhortation I could dwell on no other subject. I longed to recommend this holy God and this blessed Saviour to the people, who seemed affected by the representation, as being a representation of great things. After divine service I told brother Thompson that if these views, so new, of those great truths which are the essence and pith of all divine truth, and on which my mind had always labored with so much darkness, should continue, and my mind should remain so different from what it had ever been, and if I should, under the power of these truths, lead a new life, I should almost conclude that I never experienced the new birth before. When Mr. Thompson was preaching and praying, and making so much account of an opportunity afforded us to escape from ruin, I thought he was, (and saw that I had been, in my preaching and praying,) too selfish. I wanted he should make more account of the opportunity afforded us to worship, adore, and honor God and Christ, and my heart refused to follow him in prayer, and turned off to these subjects; feeling that an opportunity to worship God was the chief consideration which should excite gratitude. During the day I could think of Christ, and rejoice in him without sensible exaltation and pride; a thing perhaps unknown to me before. I felt that it was reasonable I should devote my life wholly to him, and that I was not my own but bought with a price. Sin appeared exceeding sinful, as being against God and Christ, and derived all its evil from this circumstance. I perceived

that I had been mistaken in supposing that a direct view of myself and my sins would be the most effectual guard against sin. From the effect which a present sense of the love and priesthood of Christ had upon my mind, I was certain that these views would prove the surest death of sin; that it was the cross of Christ that must crucify it. Now I resolved to seek for these views of him in order to conquer. Formerly I felt that God and Christ were set in opposition to each other, and was in danger of conceiving of Christ as taking our part, and of God as being against us. But now they appeared to be wonderfully united. It seemed that in all that the Son had done to introduce sinners to God, he was cheerfully honoring the divine holiness; which seemed to be greatly honored, in that sinners are not suffered to approach God but through the blood of the High Priest; that the Father in his readiness to send his Son into the world, and then to receive sinners through him, had as much love for men as had the Son; that Christ was not taking the part of man against holiness, and that the Father was ready to take the part of man in a way consistent with holiness, being as willing to receive sinners through his Son, as his Son was to be the medium and intercessor; and that it was out of regard to the holiness of God that the Son is the High Priest to bring sinners near to him. There appeared a perfect harmony, and no difference, between them. I adored, delighted in, and was humbled before, this plan of salvation. I saw it; I saw it wonderful and glorious,—just as I wished to have it. I wished to approach God and be saved only in this way. I wished not to have my part taken, only as the part of holiness was taken by the same means. This discovery of the holiness of God, and the blessed High Priest, was like a sun to cast light all around. Every part of truth opened to view,—such as the common mercies of God,—the love of God and Christ,—obligations to universal holiness,—ingratitude, sin, &c. I could not bear ever to sin again. I felt humble, meek, gentle, kindly affectioned towards men, indifferent to the opinions of the world, to honors, distinctions, riches, and desired nothing but clearer views of God and Christ, and to serve, glorify, and enjoy him. These feelings were not wrought up by pains: I seemed only to lie still and receive them. They were not excited by calling in aid the animal affections; these lay uncommonly still. The

view was spiritual, still, humbling, purifying, abstracting from the world, and silencing to selfishness, pride, and every evil passion. All was silent wonder and complacency. Yet all the time, though happy, affected, and wondering, I was sensible that I had only a faint glimpse of the glories of God and Christ, and felt guilty that I saw no more. That blessed verse run in my mind, and burst forth in every prayer, exhortation, and private discourse. When I, for a moment, lost a sense of the beauty of the plan of grace, I would reflect, "For such a High Priest became us who was holy." The holiness of the High Priest (which was the thing most sweetly affecting to my soul, as it showed me that there was one, polluted as I am, which a holy God could accept for me,) would revive a deep sense of my own impurity, the purity of God, and the consistency of the plan of grace. I feared to lose these views,—views of the very thing which I had long desired to see. I wanted more of them. I feared hypocritical worship, and every thing but meekness, sincerity, love, adoration, faith, and gratitude. In the evening, at my lodgings, I could not but recommend this blessed Saviour to the youth of the family. I clearly saw, what I never so saw before, that he was a perfect medium of access to God for a whole world,—that all might come to God by him. In my bed-chamber, in secret prayer, all these views were perhaps more clear than ever. I felt that I might be saved,—that I was brought near to a pure God by this High Priest, and saw how I could approach God and be saved by him. It was easier to realize this great truth, (which had always been the most difficult of apprehension,) than any thing else. I felt that I could not pay any thing in return. It was all free, rich, astonishing grace. I was an eternal bankrupt, overwhelmed with obligation. In the light of these discoveries, all the common mercies of my life swelled to an amazing size. I wanted and longed that my wife, child, sister, father, and all my friends, and all the world, should see, adore, and enjoy this Saviour. I felt like one who had found a great treasure, and wished to have all know of it, and share it. I felt that I certainly did take firm hold of the great High Priest,—that it was clearly a right hold,—that there was not a phantom in my embrace, but the very High Priest whom Paul recommended to the Hebrews. He appeared a solid rock on which I certainly stood firm. I

had even then no excitement of animal affections. All was still, solid and real; and for the first time I lay down quietly on my bed in the full assurance of hope; not a single doubt of my salvation remaining. Oh what a blessed change in twenty-four hours! This is a blessed morning. How trifling is learning, fame, every thing, to these discoveries of Christ! I feel willing to suffer labor, fatigue, shame, contempt, and even death for this glorious Redeemer. O give me this life of communion with him, and I desire no more! Never did I before make this aspiration with half so much solid reality of desire. Every thing appears like filthy trash to this. All the Bible, all truth opens, and appears solid, weighty, and glorious. Turn which way I will, light shines around me,—on every contemplation—every truth. O Lord give me faith and keep me humble! To think that after so many and so great sins and abuses of privileges, he should reveal himself to me! To think that he should from eternity ordain me to everlasting life! Why me? Why me? I am astonished. I am sweetly overwhelmed and swallowed up.

The state of my mind, the rest of the day and evening, will appear from the short record which I made next morning.

Friday morning, 18th, Baskingridge. Was affected yesterday when I entered the house of God at Baskingridge, and saw the crowded seats, and solemn countenances. The place was awful, for God was there. I was much affected in prayer with a sense of Christ, and wept;—was enabled to plead with him. Mr. Thompson having read a most precious hymn of praise to Christ, I could not help speaking a word to the people before they sung it, praying them not to trifle with such precious words and lose such a heavenly treasure. In every prayer through the day and evening, and almost in every individual petition, I had a distinct sense that God was too holy to suffer such polluted creatures to approach him but through the blessed High Priest. In proportion as I could apprehend this medium I was delighted. I did not wish to go to God in my own name. I durst not for my life approach directly to immaculate holiness. How can it be deemed a privilege to be excused from using this medium, and to go naked to

him who is a consuming fire? While a hymn was sung, expressive of God's hatred of sin, discovered in casting the angels out of heaven, Adam out of Eden, turning this world into a vale of tears, myriads into hell, and (what appeared more expressive) laying his wrath on his beloved Son, I had an awful sense of his majesty and holiness, and sin appeared, as being against such a God, more dreadful than ever. I never felt such a calm, solid, strong opposition to sin: an opposition which I could trace to its source, being able to tell and to know why I was opposed to sin, viz. because it was against such a holy God.

In the evening, while hearing divine truth preached and sung, I saw these truths (which I had felt through the day) to be real and certain. I saw that it was one thing to talk, and another to feel—saw that certain truths which I had often expressed, were far different from what I had conceived them to be, and other great truths that were uttered by others I perceived would be greater than either they or I then conceived, if fully realized. I saw that it was a different thing to approach God from what I had formerly imagined. When joining in prayer with Mr. Armstrong, my mind was more deeply fixed throughout than perhaps ever before when joining in prayer with another. In exhortation I was enabled to give such a description of the great and dreadful, the holy and just Majesty of heaven, as induced one minister to call in question his religion, another man to doubt, who had not had a doubt in seven years, and another minister to say, "O 'tis too much. These things were designed only for angels." I was enabled also to give such a view of the great High Priest as was said to be refreshing to christians. I mention this only as an evidence of the state of my mind. I feel this morning that this sense of God and Christ would always keep down pride, passion, selfishness, and is the most powerful principle against all sin. If this is faith, let me never again complain that faith will not fortify the heart against sin. It has been because faith was too weak that it has not more prevailed. If it is this to be united to Christ, then life flows from such union, and he is indeed the vine to the branches. While opposing a general meeting of the congregations, my heart wept with love to Christ, when the

question arose whether I was opposing his beloved interest; and I clearly saw that I would sacrifice character, and every thing to serve him. While on my way to Lamington I had some sweet meditations on these delightful subjects; and one idea appeared so real and important that I stopped on the road to note it down with my pencil. It was this,—that we can have no view of the priesthood of Christ, without an accompanying view of the holiness of God.

Lamington, two o'clock P. M. These views which I have had are certainly opposed to pride and every sin, and are the only means of conquering sin. For two days past I have scarcely had a single thought for my own character, or any private interest. Formerly, when with my brethren, I used to study the character which I should support. But scarcely a single thought of the kind has intruded for two days. My mind has been employed in thinking, not what I am, or am to be in the eyes of men, but what Christ is. How different is religion from nature! How different is the sanctified from the unsanctified heart in every feeling, view, motive, and motion! May I this day speak for God,—with proper views of Christ,—and with great success! O for a day of glory!

Nine o'clock P. M. In a certain part of the public service Satan or my own wicked heart suggested that one of my brethren would be more acceptable to the people than myself. At once the feeling prevailed, "And is it not enough for you to share the love of the Redeemer without the applause of men? Could such a one as you expect more?" It is, it is enough. I am satisfied: let others take the applause. Have felt to-day that I might indeed be easily saved, and that Christ is sufficient for the whole world. In reviewing my late humiliations and distresses, and glooms and doubts, and cries for mercy, and the consequent relief and joy, I am more sensible that to humble ourselves before the Lord is the only way to be lifted up. And when in future days I shall find my heart broken at God's feet, let me remember this, and patiently wait his time of deliverance.

Sabbath morning, Connecticut Farms. The past week I have thought with myself—How much calmer, sweeter, brighter, happier, to live thus, to enjoy the blessed High Priest, a clear conscience, and the assurance of a happy immortality, than to sink into sin, pride, self-seeking, worldly-mindedness, and be filled with darkness and shaken with tempests. Why should I then return to folly? O let it not be. My desires for a new life are calm, solid, and strong. I desire to be made, through every future day, very different from what I ever have been; and to be enabled to look back upon this era as the period when, (if I did not begin to see,) I was, by a second touch of Christ, like the men of Bethsaida, (Mark, 8:22, 25,) brought to more distinct vision. I am not my own but his who brought me from the pit, and I have a desire to do something for this divine friend, something to please and honor a holy God,—and to be wholly devoted. I now see that God could easily bring me to be willing to suffer reproach and misery, and even death, from a direct and mere love of him and his Son. I think I certainly feel something of this temper. O how much better to renounce the idea of being great, and respected as a man of learning or influence, and become an humble christian, let it cost pride as many grinding pains as it may, and retain a clear conscience, an humble confident hope, the bright shinings of a Father's countenance, and be a tender, meek, modest, affectionate, humble saint, dead to the world, dead to the opinions of men, (any further than duty binds us to respect their opinions,) and thus avoid the conflicts of pride, and the darkness, falls and guilt which pride occasions. I certainly would rather be thus, retired from the world, unknowing and unknown, possessing only the excellency of modest and solid worth, and enjoying God and Christ and heaven in the house of my pilgrimage, than to be the most celebrated divine on earth. Let me in my dress, house, studies, preaching, company, address, intercourse with men, journies,—and every thing, take and hold this ground so crossing to pride, but so congenial with a spiritual mind. I can now contemplate God and Christ with tearful tenderness, and can draw from them all my arguments for repentance, for active service, for suffering, and for holy living. I can contemplate them and their love without pride. To enjoy them and



hope for salvation, does not lift me up as once it did. My heart is afraid of pride and presumption, and is jealous and cautious lest something should awake, and grieve away my Beloved, and trembles at the presumption of speaking one word to God, but sensibly in the name of Jesus, or even of thinking of him, but as being brought near by the blood of his Son. Yet perhaps it is impossible to have a full and immediate sense of this in every petition and thought of God. Perhaps, preserving a general sense that he is reconciled by his Son, I may acceptably present petitions to him, as a reconciled Father, without always having a direct view of the priesthood of Christ.

My present views have marshalled before me such an immensity of objects to pray for and to thank for, that in prayer this morning, I rapidly passed through a great variety of matter, not knowing which to take first, nor when to stop.

Formerly I had much exertion to make to brace myself with resolution against the fear of man. But during a considerable part of the last week, I had no more thought of guarding against this than against murder; the consideration of human opinions being wholly out of mind, and swallowed up in view of God and Christ.

O what wonders are these! And has God indeed chosen me from eternity? Has he redeemed me by the blood of Christ,—called and sanctified me by the Holy Ghost,—put me into the ministry,—and so wonderfully blessed me therein? O his affecting faithfulness, that without any seeking, contrivance, or wisdom of my own, he should take care of my salvation, during all my forgetfulness of myself and him! And is the creature, who, under all this mercy, has so much sinned,—is he pardoned? Are my crimson stains become white as snow? Am I indeed as a child? May I be assured of being delivered from those devices of Satan and my own heart which I feared would prove my ruin? Am I to conquer, and to live near to God? To live a serene life after all my distress and fears? After all my guilt, to die a happy death? and to reign on an eternal throne? O, grace, grace, grace! O, the ocean without a bottom or a shore! Now Lord I am

wholly thine! Riches, character, the world, are dead. This is no passion, but a solid reality of feeling. No tender tumult,—all is calm,—more like clear vision, than an elevation of animal affections. I see it all in a holy God, and a holy all-sufficient High Priest. I pant after more knowledge of them; and if I know any thing about humility, I am deeply humble while I view these things,—while I view them with scarce a doubt of my adoption. In former times, when my hope was strong, it would arise from tender meltings of soul; now from a direct view of a holy God, and the blessed High Priest, who brings me near to him, and it is now therefore a much more solid thing. Formerly my hope made me think myself more than others; this makes me forget all such comparisons,—makes me appear a bare naked nothing before God, and to wonder why he should set his love on me. And when I think of others, it is only with desire that they may share with me in these views and blessings. These views bring me to abhor and dread the least secret movement of sin,—to watch against it, and long for more views of God, and of the great mystery of redemption,—to be tremblingly fearful of God's withdrawment. They render more affecting all the common mercies of my life, and bring me to see that the government is, and ought to be, the Lord's. The question of having another to govern or decide, is dead; and the revival of it would seem strange. The more guilty I feel, the happier I am; for without a sense of guilt, I cannot relish the precious High Priest. And I can easily conceive that a sense of guilt will be felt through eternity among the redeemed. When I ask, Do I possess a right idea of the holiness of God and Christ? I can decide the question thus: By holiness it is evident I mean what is opposite to my sin; for when I lose a sweet sense of the propriety of a holy High Priest, I revive it by looking at my pollution, and seeing the necessity of a High Priest of an opposite character; and then the sense of his holiness becomes sweet, and at the same time, I approve and reverence the holiness of God the Father. I have had an awful sense of this holiness, and tremble at the thought of approaching him, except through the mediation of Jesus. When following others in prayer, or when looking forward to public worship, I have trembled at the thought of making one petition, or doing any thing, but in the name of a

mediator. My present views produce gratitude, whichever way I look, wonder, astonishment,—a sense of bankruptcy,—of obligation to live and to die for Christ,—joy, trust, confidence in his veracity and all sufficiency for a whole world. They bring my lost time before me,—show me that there is abundance to do and to think of,—and the importance of being up and doing. They produce a tender desire that all my friends may see and enjoy this glory and honor, this God and Christ. They produce a living principle, strongly counteracting pride and every sin; and I clearly perceive that if this principle should become strong enough, it would drive all sin from my heart, and make me holy as God is holy. I have not enough preached Jesus; and when I have preached him, it was not enough in the simplicity of the gospel. I have had too much the awkward formality of system, and have not presented him precisely in the right aspects. Were I now to preach any sermon that I possess, I should drop many of the expressions, and should speak of Christ in words more resembling the life. I ought to have taken the phrases and aspects of this great mystery more directly from the Bible, and made less use of systematic phrases. Nothing will crucify the world but the cross of Christ. During the past week I felt no agony of desire for the success of my ministrations, being more engrossed with the thought of pleasing God than even of converting sinners. Feeling that the cause was God's,—that he had power with a word to bring the prosperity of Zion at any time, I calmly left it with him. So my mind was moulded.

I am not without hope that the past week will form a new era in my life. Perhaps I have explored the mazes of sin, and the depths of Satan, long enough to fit me for the ministry; (for it is with reference to the people as much as to themselves, that God regulates the experience of his ministers,) and now he may design to lead me to an exquisite relish and a deep understanding of the great Redeemer, and to display more fully his cross for the crucifixion of sinners, and the relief of the broken hearted. He is now bringing me out of long perplexity in regard to temporals; and perhaps I may be now passing from the state of B, which (as described by John Newton) is marked with conflict, into the state of C. which is distinguished for happy

contemplation. But let me not put off my armor as though the warfare were accomplished.

Am now going to the house of God, desirous to pray, to sing, to preach aright, and with success, and to enjoy the presence of God. All depends on him. I have dwelt particularly on these several petitions, not content with asking generally for the divine assistance. May divine influences descend this day all around and through the christian world. No blessing would be so sweet to me as this.

Noon. A calm, sweet, humble frame through all the exercises,—melting now and then when speaking of Jesus,—accompanied with a still but strong desire that success might attend the word. In the last prayer, I owned to the Lord that the cause was his, not mine; that he loved it better than I did; that the souls of men were his; that the whole case was known to him; that he saw what was to be done; that all depended on him: and while I said, O that a blessing might attend the word, I adored his sovereignty, and left the matter with him, saying, "Not my will but thine be done." In pronouncing the blessing, I wished the rich blessings of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, might come upon the people.

Night. Felt some effects of exhaustion: less sensible enjoyment, and less fixedness of thought,—but an increasing desire to do good, as I proceeded in the sermon. Before the blessing I again addressed the people.

Wednesday, March 23d. Monday and Tuesday I visited my people; took much pleasure in recommending a holy God, and a blessed High Priest. Felt the effects of last week's views. Have seen that there is such a thing as being moved to duty by the fear of God and the love of Christ. Received a letter from a christian brother, admonishing me, with great plainness, to beware of the dangers arising from my new situation. At another time, I might have felt my pride wounded; but my heart was affected with gratitude for his faithful friendship.

I am deeply sensible that during all my ministry I have been under the strong power of unbelief. I have not seen the danger, and no wonder that I have not feared it nor prayed against it.

In my late attempts to gain more full views of the mystery of redemption, I have been convinced that the Jewish types were designed, not only to instruct that nation, but to teach christians also; being well adapted to the weakness of our apprehensions now. As for instance the entrance of the High Priest into the presence of the Shekinah by blood and sacrifice, and with so much awe and caution, helps our conceptions of the manner in which our great High Priest brings us near to God by the sacrifice of himself. The same of the intercession of the High Priest for the people,—the scape goat, &c.

How long the peculiar state of mind described in several preceding paragraphs continued, does not appear, as the record of his exercises is interrupted from March till September; though it is evident that, at the latter period, he had lost in some degree that deep and overwhelming sense of divine things by which his spirit had sometimes seemed well nigh entranced. Under date of March 3, 1804, he writes thus:

Was struck this morning in reading Phil. 2:14, 15. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." In christian meekness and wisdom, what a dignity! Here is no carrying things by loud and pertinacious disputings,—no pert and loquacious attempts to correct every word that shall drop from others, not agreeing precisely with one's own mind. Among the crooked and perverse we must prevail and make our influence felt by the meekness of wisdom,—by a prudent deportment and temperate counsels, rather than attempt to storm, and carry the fortress with the strength of words. Here is a dignity and prudence, in opposition to rendering one's self common; a dignity which I have too much

reputed hypocrisy, and selfish temporizing. But this wisdom I much want. Murmurings too are to be avoided in all cases: murmurings at want of success in my ministry, murmurings at general wickedness,—murmurings at unreasonable men,—murmurings at want of support,—murmurings at the trials of life,—murmurings of every kind.

March 5th. How comes it to pass that some worldly men preserve a character with fewer blots, are more generous, more socially sweet, &c. than many christians? Without considering the difference in natural tempers, I give this reason: in some cases, pride being the strongest passion, and more easily influencing the other corruptions than grace, as being more congenial with them, can command the field with less conflict than grace can in other men; and being always in exercise, (whereas grace is not) preserves the man from indecent things more steadily than grace. And this principle when it has taken the government, is much more powerful than in the christian, who, being habitually engaged to weaken it, feels less its aid when grace is absent. Add to this, that Satan does not make such violent onsets upon one who is not resisting his dominion. A predominant corruption controls the whole man without opposition; whereas grace never controls the whole heart and is opposed. Some predominant passion which is congenial to the whole soul, and which controls the whole man, and that uniformly, may produce greater and more uniform visible effects than grace commonly does. Thus the unbelieving Jews have shown more unconquerable fortitude under persecution and contempt, and more unvaried adherence to their religion, than most christians. But this sentiment does not weaken the necessity of sanctification and good works.

April 5th, Sabbath morning. Yes, I now am convinced and assuredly know that the only way to be happy is to keep the mind independent of all worldly things, and to derive our happiness from setting the Lord always before us, receiving him for our portion, trusting in his fatherly love and protection, and looking on all the dreams of this life as about to dissolve in the light of eternity, when we awake in his

likeness. The moment we come down upon earth to take our comfort here, we find our hearts the mark of all those shafts that are flying thick in this region of care, disappointment, sin, and sorrow. Then we are restless and pant after retirement. But why? Because the groves are stiller than our breasts, and we dream that our hearts would be as still if we were there. But alas, whether in grove or city, while turbulent passions disturb the breast, there is equal restlessness. And in grove or city there is equal rest while passion sleeps. Nothing can still and subdue the passions but the keeping of the heart in heaven. This is the great secret of happiness. "Their sorrows are multiplied who seek another God." Ah, here is the cause of all my misery! I have forsaken the fountain of living waters, for broken cisterns. When I can be more independent of the opinions of men,—can have my pride, envy, anger, and avarice subdued by heavenly mindedness,—can again soothe the sorrows of life, as I once used to do, by looking on the near approach of eternity,—then, and not till then, I shall be at rest. Return unto thy rest, O my soul! Unbelief and guilt have prevented me from returning. I have got disused to view God with filial and delightful confidence, nourished by intimate communion with him, and therefore it is that I have become in so great a degree a stranger to peace. Vain world be gone! Thou art the enemy of my peace. Passion, be still. Let me again fly to the bosom of my God! "There would I fix my last abode, and drown the sorrows of my soul."

June 25th. A day for special devotion. I am now convinced that the occasion of my being unable to realize divine things, of the loss of the serenity and self-enjoyment which I formerly possessed, of the restlessness that cannot find a home,—of an incapacity to resist the distracting influence of the world, and to bear up calmly against its frowns,—is the neglect of my closet, and the discontinuance of days of special devotion. It is impossible for the soul to retain a realizing and soothing sense of eternal things, unless that sense is renewed and deeply impressed in secret meditation and devotion. The mind, unless settled in this way, will be too much distracted in public devotion, and in religious conversation, to obtain this sense, to such

a degree as will fortify and support it. All my restlessness and irregular feelings are imputable, in a great measure, to this cause. The only cure must be sought in the renewal of secret devotion, and in days of special prayer and meditation. What contentment, submission, composure, and peace, would this enable me to carry into all the scenes of duty and care. I have now got a home. Last evening, (being the first Sabbath evening that we have been alone since we moved into this house,) in walking in my garden, I desired to consecrate the alley in which I walked to divine meditation, and prayed and hoped that it might prove more delightful than my former walks at New-Hartford, the loss of which I have so much regretted. O God, may this new habitation be the scene of peace and of heavenly communion for years to come! Here, in retirement from the world, may we cultivate the sweets of domestic enjoyment, and the calm delights of religion, while we enjoy the innocent amusements of the garden, and contemplate the beauty of thy works! May we now begin to see good days in proportion to the days in which we have been afflicted! A more retired state of reflection I am convinced is necessary, not only to devotion, to domestic and self enjoyment, but to furnish me with such views and impressions of divine truth as will give interest to my public ministrations, sanctity to my character, and savoriness to my conversation among my people.

In further reviewing my memoirs, (in which I was again interrupted by company,) I perceived that I formerly had a more exquisite sense of sin than I now possess, though I have now equal, and even increased cause of mourning and abasement.

At night.—I find the effects of the exercises of this day are a more tender frame of mind towards my fellow men, more feeling, freedom, and sweetness in prayer, and more complacency, confidence, and readiness in contemplating God. And art thou returning to my soul and restoring my peace, thou God of faithfulness and abounding mercy? When forsaken by every other lover, when driven from every other refuge, when unable to find rest for the sole of my foot in the



wide creation, thou art my last resort: thy faithful bosom still offers me sweet repose. Let the world be gone. Let me but possess thee, my faithful Redeemer; let me but hear thy lips invite me home, and tell me I am thine, and I have enough.

Sabbath morning, July 1st. I have been this week writing upon the atonement. Regardless of ornaments of style, I have been feasting upon the richest truth. The effect is, not only more ease and force in my composition, and more rapidity in the execution, but a sweet and easy state of mind, that I have not enjoyed for a considerable period. Cares sit light upon me, the world goes easy with me, I can receive my friends, and perform parochial duty, without anxiety. I can take my own natural course without constraint, a circumstance essential to my peace and usefulness, and acceptableness. I am deeply convinced, that would I find my life and ministrations pleasant to myself, and most useful and acceptable to the people, especially if I would live upon God and divine truth, I must take my own natural course in preaching, and keep my mind fixed on truth rather than style, and support a more grave and dignified independence of the opinions of men.

July 24th. I have been thinking lately that there must be some essential defect in my prayers, or they would procure for me more strength against sin. It has occurred to me that I have not called on the name of Jesus. Always making application to the invisible God, I have too much left a Mediator out of my account, as the Jews did. Had I gone directly to Jesus, as those did whom he healed in the days of his flesh, I might at least have touched the hem of his garment, and been made whole. For a week past I have made the experiment, and have almost entirely prayed to the Mediatorial King; and by some means or other my temptations and corruptions have been more restrained than for a long time previous.

In walking my garden this evening, I had one of those impressions which seem to be made by a sight of demonstrable truth. The truth discovered was this: In examining my state, I ought not so much to

have dwelt on a review of collateral circumstances, as a careful review of the motives which influenced me in different scenes of my life; and my anxiety for the present ought to be, not so much whether I am newborn,—or if not, how I shall become new-born, as to take care that in all my conduct I do right from right motives, restraining every sinful passion, and conscientiously performing every known duty. I have been setting up a change as a sort of abstract object of inquiry and pursuit, rather than taking care for the present to preserve, in small as well as in great matters, purity of heart and life. I must be more watchful and conscientious in innumerable small matters, and be, in all my feelings and conduct, under the influence of right motives. This is the only anxiety I ought to have for my personal character or prospects. If I can attain to right motives in all my feelings and behavior, I need be anxious about no other change. Let this then be the simple and direct object of my care.

January 6th, 1805. This day I have attained to one-half of three score years and ten. To this hour I have always been considering my life before me, and have been looking forward to happiness and usefulness, little of which I have hitherto found. But now I have awoke from my dream, and find, to my surprise, that before I was aware, the greatest part of my life has probably passed; certainly the greatest part of the enjoyment of life. Fifteen years more, (if I live to see them,) and I am fifty, and must probably begin to feel the decays and infirmities of age. If I would find my life, I must look back rather than forward. I have been often warned that I should be striving to overtake life until I should suddenly wake up, and find I had got past it. But I never believed it till I now find it true. What a vapor is our present existence! Vanity of vanities, all is vanity! It is high time for me to gird up my loins and begin to live to some good purpose. It is too late for me to spend my time in preparing accommodations to live here; it is time for me to be preparing to depart to the eternal world.

In February of this year, Mr. GRIFFIN received a call to the pastoral charge of the first Reformed Dutch church in Albany. He seems to

have been not a little embarrassed in respect to the manner in which he should dispose of it, and not only earnestly sought divine guidance, but asked the advice of several of his most judicious brethren in the ministry. The result was, that after a short time he determined to decline the call; a circumstance which seems to have been gratefully appreciated by his people, and to have entrenched him more strongly than ever in their affections.

April 7th. Another monument to the divine faithfulness I have to erect. Some weeks ago I was desired to visit a wretched man who was declining in a consumption, and who after having for several years persecuted his wife and daughter for their religion, was now bitterly opposed to serious conversation, and to the very sight of a christian. I went to see him. He treated me with greater outrage and spite than I ever received in the discharge of my ministerial duty. Though I approached him with all possible tenderness, he spurned me from him, absolutely refused to receive instruction from one whom he did not love or respect; and reproached me with being an injury to the town. I left him with a full conviction that he had committed the unpardonable sin by knowingly persecuting Christ in the person of his wife and daughter; and viewing him as a person given over of God, I determined to visit him no more. I mentioned this determination to one of my brethren in the ministry, who disapproved of it, and advised me to persevere in labors with him. I accordingly have visited him from time to time; and this morning I found him in a frame of mind which induced a comfortable hope that he had obtained mercy of the Lord. He expressed regret for his former treatment of me, and seems desirous to have me near him. The town which was filled with his outrage against me, and recognized him as conspicuous among the party opposed to the gospel which I preached, now sees the regard he has for me, and for the truth I delivered to him, as the acknowledged means of his salvation. I feel myself greatly honored and supported in view of the whole town, while I am reprov'd for meditating an abandonment of a poor dying sinner. Let me be encouraged to put my life in my hands, and look to God for all needful support in his blessed work.

During the session of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in May of this year, Mr. GRIFFIN preached the annual Missionary sermon. His subject, which was "the kingdom of Christ," he illustrated and enforced with great beauty and power. The discourse has passed through several editions, and may justly claim a place among the highest specimens of pulpit eloquence which this country has produced.

August 8th. We have had a distressing drought. The clouds would sometimes gather, as though they made an effort to rain, but could not. They would rain a little and stop, as though it was hard for them to perform their wonted office. We have had also a most alarming and distressing spiritual drought. Vice has prevailed to a dreadful degree. Murders have been; suicides, to the number, I believe, of six or eight, have happened in town in the course of a few months,—three within the last week. Yesterday the people of this and some neighboring congregations kept a day of fasting and prayer, on account of the double drought. It was with us a solemn day. And lo! this morning the clouds pour down the rain plentifully, and as easily as April showers. The obstruction seems removed, as when the prophets of Baal were slain. (1 Kings, 18.) The thunder this morning and the appearance of the clouds denote a rainy day. O the marvellous condescension and tenderness of God towards his poor infant creatures! What pains he takes to persuade them, and prevail with them to look to him and trust in him! O that the drought which rests on the hill of Zion might be as speedily removed! Wilt thou care for the earth, O God, and not care for thy parched vineyard?

On the 20th July, 1807, died Dr. MCWHORTER, the senior pastor of the church, and on the 22d Mr. GRIFFIN preached his funeral sermon, in which he rendered a faithful and beautiful tribute to the memory of his venerable colleague. The sermon was published, and is valuable, not only as a fine specimen of eloquence, but as an important historical document.

The year 1807 was signalized by one of the most powerful revivals that occurred during his ministry. The only manuscript record that he has left of it is the following.—"Sept. 1807. Began a great revival of Religion in the town. Ninety-seven joined the church in one day, and about two hundred in all." A more full account of this revival, however, has been preserved in a letter which he addressed to the Rev. Dr. GREEN of Philadelphia, and which was published in the Panoplist of July, 1808. It is as follows:—

DEAR SIR—

I am very willing to give you a general and succinct relation of the wonders of divine grace, which we have witnessed.

About the first of December, 1806, we were encouraged with some symptoms of a revival of religion in this village; but they quickly disappeared. In March, 1807, they were renewed, by means of several instances of sudden death; but again passed off leaving no effects at that time apparent, except on three or four persons, who have since made a profession of religion. The death of Dr. McWhorter in July, made a great impression on the congregation, which was sensibly deepened, in the month of August through the instrumentality of the Rev. Gideon Blackburn, who preached several times here with great zeal and energy. Though nothing extraordinary at that time appeared, yet we have since been able to trace first impressions to each of the four seasons above mentioned. The leaven was secretly and increasingly working for nine months, before it became evident. We have since discovered also that during the summer God was preparing some for the scene which was about to open, by impressive and often repeated dreams. Days of dissipation were separated by nights, in which fancy would bear the sinner to the bar of God, and fill him with the terrors of the final judgment; terrors, which, though dissipated by the morning, would return with returning sleep. These nightly alarms gradually fixed the waking thoughts. Thus, at a time when every thing appeared to be still around us, secret anxieties were preying upon a number of persons,

which, so far from being the effect of sympathy, were known only to God and themselves. In the latter weeks of August, I knew of nothing special in the congregation, except two or three persons, who began to be awakened, and four christians whose desires for a revival of religion were too earnest to be concealed from their minister. In this precise posture things remained for about a fortnight. To a few it was an hour of awful suspense. But in some of the last days in August it became apparent that the desire for a revival was rapidly spreading among the communicants.

As our sacramental sabbath was approaching, this church, in connexion with two neighboring churches, agreed to set apart the preceding Friday, (Sept. 4th,) for fasting and prayer; partly as a preparatory service, but chiefly to make supplication for effusions of the Holy Spirit. The day, which was spent in prayer, singing, and short addresses to the people, was marked with unusual stillness, accompanied with very pleasing appearances of humility, earnest desire, and a sense of entire dependance. On the following sabbath, a number of persons assembled at nine o'clock in the morning, to spend an hour in praying for their minister, and for the blessing of God on the exercises of the day; and this has since become the stated practice of almost all the praying people of the congregation; a practice which has been accompanied with effects very refreshing to themselves, and materially beneficial to the cause of evangelical piety. Those who attended at this first season, unexpectedly found themselves animated with desires unfelt before, that God would, that very day, bring out his perfections to the view of the communicants: And this he did, to a degree that many had seldom or never seen before. On the evening of the following Monday, at a lecture preached in a private house, the first feelings which denoted the extraordinary presence of God, and the actual commencement of a revival of religion, were awakened, perhaps in every person that was present. It was no longer doubtful whether a work of divine grace was begun. During that and the following week, increasing symptoms of a most powerful influence were discovered. The appearance was as if a collection of waters, long suspended over the

town, had fallen at once, and deluged the whole place. For several weeks, the people would stay at the close of every evening service, to hear some new exhortation; and it seemed impossible to persuade them to depart, until those on whose lips they hung had retired. At those seasons you might see a multitude weeping and trembling around their minister, and many others standing as astonished spectators of the scene, and beginning to tremble themselves. One sabbath, after the second service, when I had catechised and dismissed the little children, they gathered around me, weeping, and inquired what they should do. I presume not less than a hundred were in tears at once. The scene was as affecting, as it was unexpected. Having prayed with them again, and spent some time in exhortation, I attempted to send them away; but with all my entreaties, I could not prevail on them to depart, until night came on, and then I was obliged to go out with them, and literally force them from me. But this excitement of animal feelings, incident to the commencement of revivals of religion, soon subsided, and the work has ever since proceeded in profound silence.

Early in September, there were formed many private associations for prayer,—some male, and some female,—the happy influence of which has been manifestly and largely felt. I never before witnessed the communication of a spirit of prayer so earnest and so general, nor observed such evident and remarkable answers to prayer. The agonies of parents have been such as to drive sleep from their eyes, and for weeks together, have been seemingly as great as their nature could well sustain. And these parents, in every case that has come within my knowledge, have each several children, who are already numbered among the hopeful converts.

Many professors have been severely tried, and not a few have for a time, given themselves over for lost. The Lord has indeed come to search our Jerusalem with candles, and to discover the men that were settled on their lees. Awed by the majesty of a present God, many could say, with Moses, "I exceedingly fear and quake." I could

not help saying, if this glimpse of light dissipated so many hopes, what effect will attend the final judgment?

This work, in point of power and stillness, exceeds all that I have ever seen. While it bears down every thing with irresistible force, and seems almost to dispense with human instrumentality, it moves with so much silence that, unless we attentively observe its effects, we are tempted, at times, to doubt whether any thing uncommon is taking place. The converts are strongly marked with humility and self distrust: instead of being elated with confident hopes, they are inclined to tremble. Many of them possess deep and discriminating views; and all, or almost all, are born into the distinguishing doctrines of grace.

I suppose there are from two hundred and thirty to two hundred and fifty, who hope that they have become the subjects of Divine grace; and many remain still under solemn impressions, whose number, I hope, is almost daily increasing. The subjects of this work are of all ages, from nine years old, to more than three score years and ten; and of all characters, including drunkards, apostates, infidels, and those who were lately malignant opposers; and of all conditions, including poor negroes, and some of them hoary with age. I cannot refrain from mentioning, among the hopeful converts, three young gentlemen of the first talents and education, and of excellent families, who have abandoned the study of the law, in which they have been employed for years, to devote themselves to the gospel ministry.

We have had but one sacrament since the work commenced, at which time we received ninety-seven new members, out of one hundred and two persons, who had been propounded a fortnight before.

While we gaze with wonder and delight at these glorious triumphs of the Prince of peace, and weep for joy to hear our babes and sucklings sing hosannas to the Son of David, we cannot but join in a general



response, and cry, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest"!

I am, dear sir, most affectionately yours,

EDWARD D. GRIFFIN.

During his first residence at Newark, Mr. GRIFFIN frequently travelled two or three weeks at a time in company with some brother in the ministry, in those parts of New-Jersey which were comparatively destitute of the means of grace, preaching the gospel with great power and sometimes with great success. "It was on one of these preaching tours," says the Rev. Doctor HILLYER, "that the following interesting circumstance occurred to him. One night when we were not together, he lodged at a house near a hill called the Sugar-loaf. In the morning he ascended the hill to take a view of the surrounding country. While he was enjoying a delightful prospect, a maniac at the foot of the hill was meditating his death. With a loaded fowling-piece, he secreted himself behind a fence near a foot-path in which the Doctor was expected to descend. Providentially a neighbor passing by discovered him, and went to him and inquired what he was about to do with his gun. The maniac replied, 'Look up yonder, dont you see that man? He is a British spy sent over by the king of England to spy out our land, and as he comes down I intend to shoot him.' 'No,' said the neighbor, 'he is the minister who preached for us the last evening.' Upon this the unhappy man gave up his arms and retired; but it was fully believed by those who knew the state of his mind, that he would have shot our friend dead, if he had not been thus providentially prevented. The Doctor often mentioned this singular escape from sudden death with great sensibility."

In August, 1808, Mr. GRIFFIN was honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Union College.

The Theological Seminary at Andover having just been established, Doctor GRIFFIN was appointed, in the course of this year, to the

Bartlett Professorship of Pulpit Eloquence in that institution; and shortly after this appointment, he was elected by the infant church in Park-street, Boston, their stated preacher. For both these places he was considered as pre-eminently qualified; though it was not without much deliberation, and as it would seem many severe struggles, that he finally came to the determination of resigning his pastoral charge. Before the meeting of Presbytery in April, 1809, he requested the congregation to consent to his dismissal; and having obtained their consent, he was dismissed at that meeting, though he continued his ministrations among them till the last of May. On the 28th of May he preached his Farewell sermon. It was a noble effort, full of sublimity and pathos, worthy of the occasion and worthy of the man. It has had an extensive circulation, and been admired on both sides of the Atlantic. The following paragraph from the sermon, exhibits the wonderful success which had attended his ministry.

"Eight years ago, this church consisted of two hundred and two members, of whom one hundred and forty-six still remain. We have since admitted four hundred and thirty-four to our communion, of whom three hundred and seventy-six still remain. Of those whom we have admitted, sixty-two were received from other churches, and three hundred and seventy-two from the world. Of the latter we admitted a hundred and thirteen in one year, and at another time a hundred and seventy-four in six months. All the members which have belonged to this church, within that period, amount to six hundred and thirty-six; of whom a hundred and fourteen have, in various ways, been removed, and five hundred and twenty-two still remain."

Of the various testimonies of respect and affection which he received from his people on leaving them, the following letter, from the Hon. ELISHA BOUDINOT, dated "Baltimore, 18th May, 1809," may suffice as a specimen.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

My feelings were too much alive at the idea of those connections being rent asunder which I had fondly hoped would have continued until they had placed my remains in the house appointed for all living—to call upon you before I left home. I knew my feelings had too much the mastery of me to trust them where they were so much aroused. Nothing but the conviction that it is the duty of every servant of Christ to sacrifice his own friendship, feelings and connexions, whenever there is a probability of their interfering with the general and superior good of Zion, could have made me submit to this separation with any degree of composure. But viewing this to be the case, I rejoice in the idea that our great Master will make you instrumental in pulling down the high pillars of Satan's kingdom, and destroying his strong hold, and cause you to witness for the truth, as the apostle of old, even at Rome.

When I reflect on the many interesting scenes I have witnessed since you was our pastor—the many hours of sweet intercourse we have had together; when I consider your zeal, your ardor, your faithfulness in our Master's cause, and the blessing that has attended them, the thought that I must witness them no more, I must confess, is too much for my feeble nature to bear with composure, and I must weep in silence. May a compassionate Saviour forgive the falling tear, if wrong! Suffer me to entreat still an interest in your prayers, and that you will never cease wrestling at the throne of grace for me and those who are dearer to me than life, till I have a comfortable hope that we shall all meet with joy at the final appearing of our glorious Immanuel, when my children shall be of the gems that shall constitute your crown of rejoicing. Now go in peace, cloathed with the whole armor of God, prepared to fight the battles of our Master; and the God of Peace be with you, and make you abundantly successful in all things, and continue you his faithful witness to the end.

My dearest Mrs. B. bears the idea of parting worse than I do. She joins me with our children here, in our best affection to your dear

Mrs. Griffin and Louisa, wishing you may long be continued a blessing to each other in health and happiness.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend,

ELISHA BOUDINOT.

## CHAPTER IV

### HIS RESIDENCE AT ANDOVER AND BOSTON

On the morning after he preached his farewell sermon, Doctor GRIFFIN left Newark with his family for Massachusetts, and on the 21st of June was inducted with appropriate ceremonies into the professorship at Andover, to which he had been appointed. His inaugural oration, which was one of his most chaste and beautiful productions, fully justified the high opinion that had been formed of his qualifications for that important station.

There was, as has been already intimated, another enterprise with which Doctor GRIFFIN about this time became identified, scarcely less important in its bearing upon the interests of truth and piety, than the opening of the Theological Seminary,—viz. the establishment of Park-street church. For nearly seventy years previous to this period, that great system of religious doctrine which had been held by the Pilgrim fathers had been gradually declining in the capital of New-England, till it seemed to have well nigh reached the point of utter extinction. It would be a most important service to the cause of Ecclesiastical History to trace minutely the progress of this decline, and the causes in which it originated; and it is to be hoped that before this generation shall have passed away, and while the materials for such a chapter in our religious history are easily accessible, some qualified person may be found to address himself to the work. If a remark or two on the subject is not out of place in this connexion, perhaps it is safe to say, that this lamentable defection is to be traced, more than to any other cause, to the irregularities and extravagances that prevailed so extensively in New-England during the revival of 1741 and 1742, in which DAVENPORT and others of the same stamp had so prominent an agency. No doubt that many—perhaps most of these, were truly devoted men, who fully believed that in all their wild and fanatical movements they were doing God

service; and several of those who had been most conspicuous, especially DAVENPORT himself, not only became convinced of their errors, but retracted them in an honest and christian-like manner; but still it admits of no question that their influence upon the church was both disastrous and enduring. It was quite natural that some of those churches which took a stand against them from the beginning and kept it to the end, should have come out of the conflict with fanaticism with an undue prejudice against religious excitement; and from this there was but a step to a state of chilling formality; and this was the appropriate field for the propagation of a lax theology. And it was quite as natural on the other hand, that those churches over which the tempest of fanaticism had swept unresisted, should gradually sink into a state of indifference under the influence of a withering re-action: and here again was the legitimate preparation, though effected in a different way, for sowing the seeds of error. About this time arose Doctor MAYHEW and Doctor CHAUNCEY, the former an Arian and the latter a Universalist of the Restoration school, and both thorough going Arminians, and men of great power and commanding influence. The evangelical ministers of Boston, though entertaining a cordial dislike for their theological peculiarities, were yet unwilling to renounce fellowship with them, especially as it was understood that their peculiar views were rather for the study than the pulpit. For thirty or forty years the influence of these distinguished men was operating, silently indeed, but with great power, over most of the churches in Boston and its vicinity; and the secret of their influence no doubt to a great extent was, that though they never preached heterodoxy, at least in orthodox pulpits, yet their views were generally understood, and the interchange of labors with them by evangelical ministers was considered as a virtual acknowledgment on the part of such ministers, that if their views were not absolutely correct, yet they were not deeply erroneous. And the consequence of all this was, that when Doctor MAYHEW and Doctor CHAUNCEY left the stage, there was not only a leaven of Arminianism extensively diffused through nearly all the churches to which their influence had extended, but it was well understood that several clergymen of distinction had secretly embraced their more

startling peculiarities. During the last thirty or forty years preceding the commencement of the present century, the theology of Boston was Arminianism gradually declining into Arianism; and when this century opened, though there had been no direct avowal of any dereliction of evangelical principles, except perhaps on the part of a single church, there were probably not more than one or two pulpits in Boston in which was taught the primitive orthodoxy of New-England. There had been no decree of banishment formally and openly issued against this system of doctrine; and there were not wanting those who maintained that it was the system still in vogue, except perhaps being a little pruned of some of its more offensive forms of phraseology; but the truth was, it had been silently, and by almost common consent, driven into exile; and it came to pass at length that it was as much as a man's reputation was worth to appear openly as its advocate.\* There were individuals in most of the churches who had long watched the progress of this apostacy with deep concern, and who came at last to feel that a new standard in favor of evangelical religion must be raised in the metropolis, though they foresaw it would be at the expense of breaking many of their most cherished associations, and of accumulating upon themselves a mighty amount of obloquy. Having thoroughly counted the cost of the enterprise, they resolved upon the formation of a new church, and on the 27th of February, 1809, agreed to adopt the following articles of Faith.

We the subscribers, having agreed to unite in the establishment of a new Congregational Church in Boston, by the name of Park-street Church, think it proper to make a declaration of that faith which is the bond of our ecclesiastical union, and which we shall expect to find in all those who shall hereafter participate in our religious privileges and communion.

1. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, and the only perfect rule of christian faith and practice.

2. We profess our decided attachment to that system of the christian religion which is distinguishingly denominated evangelical; more particularly to those doctrines which in a proper sense, are styled the Doctrines of Grace, viz. "That there is one, and but one living and true God, subsisting in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these Three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; that God from all eternity, according to the counsel of His own will, and for his own glory, fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass; that God in his most holy, wise and powerful providence, preserves and governs all his creatures and all their actions; that by the Fall, all mankind lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever; that God, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity elected some to everlasting life, entered into a covenant of grace, to deliver them from a state of sin and misery, and introduce them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer; that this Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who became man, and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever; that the effectual calling of sinners is the work of God's Spirit; that their justification is only for the sake of Christ's righteousness by faith." And though we deem no man or body of men infallible, yet we believe that those divines that were eminently distinguished in the time of the Reformation, possessed the spirit, and maintained in great purity, the peculiar doctrines of our holy religion: and that these doctrines are in general clearly and happily expressed in the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism, and in the Confession of Faith owned and consented unto by the Elders and Messengers of the Churches, assembled at Boston, (N. E.) May 12th, A. D. 1680.

3. In regard to our ecclesiastical government and discipline, with our sister churches in this Commonwealth, we adopt the congregational form, as contained in the Platform of Church Discipline, gathered out of the word of God, and agreed upon by the Elders and Messengers of the Churches, assembled in the Synod at Cambridge, (N. E.) A. D. 1648.



4. In order to admission to membership in this Church, it is understood that every candidate shall be previously examined, and give credible evidence of a ground of the comfortable hope of a personal condition of grace, through the renovation of the soul, by the special influences of the Holy Spirit, implying repentance for sin and faith in Jesus Christ the Redeemer.

5. We hereby covenant and engage, as fellow christians of one faith, and partakers of the same hope and joy, to give up ourselves unto the Lord, for the observing the ordinances of Christ together in the same society, and to unite together into one body for the public worship of God, and the mutual edification one of another in the fellowship of the Lord Jesus; exhorting, reprovng, comforting, and watching over each other, for mutual edification;—looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.

The following is the Form of admission to the church, written by Doctor GRIFFIN.

You have presented yourselves in this public manner before God, to dedicate yourselves to His service, and to incorporate yourselves with His visible people. You are about to profess supreme love to Him, sincere contrition for all your sins, and faith unfeigned in the Lord Jesus Christ; to enter into a solemn covenant to receive the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as they are offered in the Gospel, and to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. We trust you have well considered the nature of these professions and engagements. The transaction is solemn, and will be attended with eternal consequences. God and holy angels are witnesses. Your vows will be recorded in heaven, to be exhibited on your trial at the last day. Yet be not overwhelmed. In the name of Christ you may come boldly to the God of grace, and provided only you have sincere desires to be His, may venture thus unalterably to

commit yourselves, and trust in him for strength to perform your vows. Attend now to the

### COVENANT.

In the presence of God, his holy angels, and this assembly, you do now solemnly dedicate yourselves to God the Father as your chief good: to the Son of God as your Mediator and Head, humbly relying on Him, as your Prophet, Priest, and King: and to the Holy Spirit as your Sanctifier, Comforter, and Guide. To this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, you do heartily give up yourselves in an everlasting covenant, to love and obey Him.

Having subscribed the Articles of Faith and Government adopted by this church, you promise to walk with us in conformity to them, in submission to all the orders of the Gospel, and in attendance on all its ordinances, and that by the aid of the Divine Spirit, you will adorn your profession by a holy and blameless life.

This you severally profess and engage.

In consequence of these professions and promises, we affectionately receive you as members of this Church, and in the name of Christ declare you entitled to all its visible privileges. We welcome you to this fellowship with us in the blessings of the Gospel, and on our part engage to watch over you, and seek your edification, as long as you shall continue among us. Should you have occasion to remove, it will be your duty to seek and ours to grant a recommendation to another Church: for hereafter you can never withdraw from the watch and communion of the saints, without a breach of covenant.

And now, beloved in the Lord, let it be impressed on your minds, that you have entered into solemn circumstances from which you can never escape. Wherever you go, these vows will be upon you. They will follow you to the bar of God, and in whatever world you may be fixed, will abide upon you to eternity. You can never again be as you have been. You have unalterably committed yourselves, and,

henceforth, you must be the servants of God. Hereafter the eyes of the world will be upon you: and as you demean yourselves, so religion will be honored or disgraced. If you walk worthy of your profession, you will be a credit and a comfort to us; but if it be otherwise, you will be to us a grief of heart and a vexation. And if there is a wo pronounced on him who offends one of Christ's little ones, wo, wo, to the person who offends a whole Church! "But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." May the Lord guide and preserve you till death, and at last receive you and us to that blessed world where our love and joy shall be forever perfect. Amen.

TO THE REV. JAMES RICHARDS.

Andover, (Mass.) July, 29th, 1809.

MY DEAR BROTHER—

So long a time has elapsed before I have had a moment of leisure to acknowledge your favors of June 24th and July 14th. They gave me the sincerest pleasure, mingled with many other emotions which I need not describe. I am rejoiced to hear repeatedly of the growing attachment of my former charge to you, and the strength which it has already acquired. May you be happy in them; and may they know how to prize the blessing which God has given them. You judge right when you suppose that I think of you and them, when I have not leisure to write. I have suffered from my separation more than I even expected. But you know what the feelings are. I rejoice greatly that your place is filled at Morristown by our dear brother Fisher. Give my love to him, and tell him that I thank him, and thank God. Give my love to all my dear friends in Newark. They are so many, that I ought not to particularize. I love them all, and hope one day to meet many of them again to part no more.

I know that you and they wish to hear from us of our affairs. Dr. Morse and Mr. Thurston, whom you will have seen before the arrival

of this, will tell you how the new church prospers in Boston. The house is to be opened by the first of December. A great majority of the male communicants are staunch Edwardeans.

As to the Seminary, we have 35 students, and new applications almost every week.

Tuesday, August 1st. You will judge, my dear brother, of my avocations, when you are informed that, since the last date, I have not had time to add one line; and now I cannot but a few. A spirit of increasing seriousness begins to be apparent among the students. They have a number of prayer meetings. Mr. French, the minister of this parish, was suddenly removed on Friday last, which has made an important opening for a man of evangelical sentiments. One of the last things he did was to settle with the professors a plan of union between the students and parishioners, in regard to prayer meetings. We can now say to the people that their aged minister left it as his dying request, that his people would join the students in these meetings. Such meetings have not been known on this ground before. We cannot but hope that God has some glorious work to accomplish in this region. Pray for us.

The young gentlemen from New-Jersey are all well—entirely well—and contented—and are doing very well. They are highly useful to the other students and to the Institution. Tell Mr. Crane this, and that I intend to answer his very acceptable letter as soon as I have a little leisure.

Since last spring there has been a pretty large and increasing association for fasting and prayer for the effusions of the Spirit among the ministers of this neighborhood. This augurs well.

I never consented till to-day to give up my inaugural oration for the press. You will probably one day see the thing. Mrs. Griffin joins in most affectionate remembrance of Mrs. Richards, and yourself, with, yours, inviolably, and, I hope, forever.

E. D. GRIFFIN.

Dr. GRIFFIN had scarcely reached Andover and entered upon the duties of his professorship, before his character was most injuriously assailed, and scandalous reports were put in circulation concerning him, which were triumphantly repeated on every side by the enemies of truth and piety, and which, from the confidence with which they were trumpeted, temporarily gave no small anxiety to many of his friends. As these reports had respect to alleged improprieties in Newark, the Trustees and Session of his former church, as soon as they heard of the slanderous allegations from which he was suffering, addressed to him the following letter, which contains not only a complete vindication of his character, but a strong expression of their affectionate regard.

Newark, 22d August, 1809.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:

We have lately been informed that reports are circulating in Boston and its vicinity, unfavorable to your character, such as your being obliged to leave this congregation—that you was immoral, &c. As far as those slanders affect yourself personally, we should not have interfered; being convinced that they would be but temporary, and that as soon as you was known, and wherever known, the tongue of slander would be silenced. But as we believe that the enmity which is the foundation of these reports, arises from a hatred and opposition to the truths of the gospel, which you so faithfully preach, more than from a disrespect to yourself, and may for a short time (which is the utmost they can do) injure the glorious cause in which you are engaged, with some minds; we take the liberty to address you on the subject, and to declare—That if the ardent respect, love and affection of your congregation could have detained you, we should still have had the happiness of calling you our pastor. Nothing but a conviction and belief that you was called to a scene of more extensive usefulness in the church of God, induced us, from a sense of duty, to submit to

your removal. If any thing was wanting to convince the world of the attachment this congregation had towards you, the circumstance of your being unanimously requested to continue with us as long as you could, consistently with your engagements, after you had been, at your own request, regularly dismissed by the Presbytery, and another pastor had been chosen,—your salary and emoluments continued to the day of your departure,—the crowded church that attended your farewell sermon,—the tears that flowed on your leaving the town,—abundantly furnished this evidence. And be assured, Sir, that although absent, you still live in the affections of the people of your late charge: your exemplary life,—your ardent zeal for the good of the souls committed to your charge, and your faithful labors amongst us, will not be forgotten, while memory holds a place in our breasts.

We beseech you not to suffer the calumnies of the enemies of your Master to dispirit you. Remember that you have not attained to the sufferings of your Lord, his apostles, and faithful servants who have gone before you. The crown of your rejoicing is sure and certain. Set your face as a flint, and hold out to the end.

Your affectionate friends,

D. D. CRANE,

Elders.

ELEAZAR BRUEN,

JAMES TICHENOR,

JOSEPH CONGAR,

ISAAC NICHOLS,

MOSES ROBERTS,

JOSEPH L. KEEN,

STEPHEN BALDWIN,

Deacons.

ISAAC ALLING,

JABEZ BALDWIN,

ELISHA BOUDINOT, Pres't.

Trustees.

J. N. CUMMING,

JOSEPH T. BALDWIN,

MOSES BALDWIN,

STEPHEN HAYS,

ROBERT B. CAMPFIELD,

NEHEMIAH S. BALDWIN,

I do hereby certify that the gentlemen who have subscribed their names to the within letter, are every member of the Session and Trustees of this church, except one of the Elders, who is absent from town; and I have no doubt, if it should be thought necessary, that the whole church, comprehending more than five hundred persons, would subscribe the same, with very few or no exceptions.

JAMES RICHARDS,

Pastor of the first Presbyterian Congregation of Newark.

On leaving New-Jersey, Doctor G. was accompanied by five young men who became students in the new theological seminary. One of these, Mr. LEWIS LE COUNT CONGAR, sickened and died, while yet in the early part of his theological course. An interesting sketch of his character was published in the Panoplist for September, 1810. The following letters were written by Dr. G. to the parents of Mr. CONGAR on the occasion of his illness and death.

Boston, January 2, 1810.

MY DEAR SIR,—

How often have you and your dear family said, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." What a blessed thing it is that he has the appointment of all our changes and trials. He has appointed the bounds of our habitation, and the time of our continuing on the earth. He has no need of any of us. He can raise up children to himself of the stones of the streets, and ministers from the Pagan world. Or he can carry on his work without ministers. You have given a son to Christ, and if he has work for him on the earth, he will preserve him and make him a blessing to the church; but if he has other designs, he will I doubt not, take him to himself. Whether our dear Lewis is to be made a minister, or an angel, is with God to decide. You will conjecture by this time, that your son is sick. He is not well. Be not alarmed; God can make him well. At any rate, his will will be done. I have been for several days confined to my room with a dreadful cold; and have the distress of being still confined, so that I cannot go to see him. But sick as I am I cannot refrain from writing to you. Lewis has the typhus fever. The best physicians have been procured for him, and the best attendance. His mind is weak; but he loves to hear of the name of Christ, and will listen with deep interest and tender affection to every thing that is said about that blessed Saviour. I long to go and see the dear boy. I never before longed so much to do a thing that I could not do. But I must submit. All that I can do I have done. I have sent a request to C. and C. to let me hear every day from him. And as often as I hear, God willing, you



shall hear. I beseech you, my dear friends, to summon all your fortitude and all your religion to your aid. Prepare for every thing which God has in store for you. That I have some apprehensions you will suppose, when I inform you that this letter is written, not without tears. The footsteps of God are in the mighty deep; and his way is not known. Clouds and darkness are round about him; but justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. May God Almighty support you, my dear friends, under this trial, is my prayer, and the prayer of Mrs. Griffin who sits by me and weeps.

Affectionately yours,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

Boston, Jan. 3, 1810.

Last night, at 11 o'clock, I sent off a basket of the best things which Boston could afford, by a man who promised to stop at no place, (though the distance is 20 miles,) until he had lodged them in the sick room of the dear boy. They were such things as Dr. Pearson represented to be necessary, viz. oranges, lemons, tamarinds, figs, guaver-jam, sago, and a few bottles of old Madeira wine. We do little else but pray for him; and the whole college is crying with tears, "Spare him, spare him!" Mrs. Griffin, having wept out all her tears, says "He will live." I cannot but humbly and earnestly hope that God will spare him for your sakes, and for ours, and for the church of Christ. Let no one leave home on his account. He will either recover, or the messenger would arrive too late. With deep affection and sympathy, I am,

Yours,

E. D. G.

Boston, January 6th, 1810.

The Almighty God support you, my dear friends, under the trials which you must feel. I wish with all my heart that I had any thing agreeable to communicate. And I have—Jesus of Nazareth reigns. The infinite God is happy. And our dear Lewis is happy. Ah my heart, why this aching and trembling? The will of God is done. Lewis himself wished that the will of God might be done. And I am confident that he does not wish to oppose it now. It is with the deepest sympathy, my dear friends, that I announce to you an event which has filled our college with tears, and spread a gloom over us all. Lewis left these abodes of pain this morning at 10 o'clock.

My heart aches and bleeds for you. By my own sorrows I know that yours must be extreme. I never knew how to love him till since he left Newark; and since his sickness I have almost felt that my earthly comfort was at an end. No young man was ever more beloved. For myself I can say of him, what I cannot of many others, that I never saw any thing in him that had the appearance of sin since he has been under my care; no not the least word or turn of thought.

He has not lived in vain. He did not come to Andover in vain. He has been the means of good to some souls; and by his influence on the college, has probably been indirectly the means of some good to thousands. His parents have reason to bless God that they were the means of bringing a son into the world to do so much good as he has done at Andover.

I know your trial in not being able to see him. I have felt it myself. During all the time that he has been considered dangerous, I have been confined to my house. I am still confined, and cannot attend his funeral to-morrow. His dust will lie in a strange land; but mind not that. It will not be lost or overlooked. It will be gathered and restored to him and to you. I have much to say. I pity you with all my heart. I know not that I was ever so tenderly tried before. May God support you and comfort you all.

Affectionately yours,

E. D. G.

Boston, Jan. 7, Sabbath, 5 o'clock P. M.

This hour they are burying our dear child! And as I can think of nothing else, I sit myself down to commune with his afflicted parents and sisters. No creature so dear to me ever left this earth. I am thinking of his pleasant manners, by which he comforted us by the way, when we left at Newark almost all that was dear to us; and how he helped Mrs. Griffin and Louisa over the hills. I am thinking of his sprightly gambols in our fields and our summer house, and how delighted he was with every scene, which he served to render more delightful. I am thinking of his attentions to me in sickness; his affectionate sympathy, and mature judgment, by which he soothed and strengthened me during all my troubles since I left you. Verily he has not died in my debt. He has more than compensated me for all my attentions to him. In following summers, every object in our fields will bring the dear youth fresh to my thoughts. And if his body is permitted to remain there, I shall often visit his grave, and bathe it with my tears. It will be a spot ever sacred and dear to me. I and my family shall yet be with him, and rise with him at the last day. He has been a great comfort to me. Surely he did not come to Andover in vain. I have had some distressing thoughts about being the means of taking him from Newark; and I suppose that you may be tempted to say, "If he had not left Newark, he would not have died." But, my friends, it is all the appointment of heaven. Eternal wisdom fixed it that he should die at that time and place; and perhaps more good will result to the college, and through that to the churches, from his death, than he would have done had he lived. He was to come, and was to die in a strange land; and you and I were to weep under the great loss. And great it is. Few parents ever lost more in a single son. But consider, my dear friends, how many comforts you have left. You have two dear children; and they have two dear parents. May you live long to be a mutual comfort to each other. We had just licensed him to preach, when God translated him to the church triumphant. I can

give no other reason for it than that he was too refined by divine grace to live in this gross and polluted world.

Think not, my dear friends, that you have lost your pains in giving him an education. No, you have been fitting him for more than a pulpit,—for a higher throne in heaven. The expansion of mind which his education has given him, will probably render him a more illustrious instrument of God's glory, and make him a more capacious vessel to contain happiness, while the kingdom endures. You have not lost any of your pains, nor any of your prayers for him. Few parents have been so much honored, as to raise up and send such a son to assist the praises of the assembly of the first born. There he is! Think not of him on a bed of sickness,—in a land of strangers,—away from his parents and sisters. Think of him on Mount Zion. There is all that is Lewis. The rest is mere dust. We have not lost him. He is only gone a little before us. Ten thousand worlds would not tempt him to return. There we shall soon find him and enjoy him again, and forever—and far better than we ever did in this world. Ah, my heart! why this bleeding and breaking? Did we not know a year ago that Lewis must remove? If the church might not go to heaven, in vain would be a gospel ministry, and revivals of religion. It was indeed desirable to keep him with us a little longer. But I now perceive that our past revivals were not so much intended to raise up comforts for us in this world, or to fit men to preach the gospel, as to fit souls for that eternal society to which our dear Lewis has gone. Oh may my thoughts be more loosed from earth, and fix on that glorious assembly of our fathers and brethren, which has been increasing since the days of Adam. There is Lewis! There will soon be his parents and sisters. And there I hope soon to meet you all, to part no more forever. Blessed world! No death, no parting, no sorrow, no sin! Stay there, dear child! No longer a child—my superior! my angel! stay there! I would not entice thee if I could, from those regions of bliss and glory.

Mrs. Griffin weeps almost all the time. I join with her in the tenderest sympathy, and in prayers that God may abundantly

support you.

Your afflicted and affectionate friend,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

TO THE REV. JAMES RICHARDS.

Boston, Jan. 15th, 1810.

MY DEAR BROTHER:

If you knew all the reasons which have kept me so long silent, you would excuse me, if you did not feel something approaching nearer to compassion. I have had no leisure, and no heart to write. Lately we have been greatly afflicted by the death of our ever dear young friend Mr. Congar. He left the world as we all should wish to leave it, and has left a name behind like the fragrance of precious ointment. I hope that you will do all in your power to comfort the dear afflicted family. Some of the young men at Andover intend to send to the parents a minute account of all he said during his sickness.

Our college (for so it is called) contains about 50 students. The serious attention in that town continues, and, I hope, increases. But where ignorance of evangelical truth so much abounds, much is to be done in the way of instruction, before many fruits can be expected to appear.

On Tuesday last, Mrs. G. made me happy by the present of another daughter. She and the child are doing well. On Wednesday we dedicated our new church. The house was crowded, as it was three times yesterday. The dedication sermon was preached on an occasion extremely interesting, delicate, and hazardous. The church had been from the beginning viewed as a monster, which was erecting its head, and opening its mouth, to swallow up men, women and children, and which by its terrifying roar was about to drive sleep from every family in the town, and to scare people of weak nerves out of their

wits. It was ascertained that most of the ministers in the town and its vicinity would be present on the occasion. It was a primary object to remove prejudice, without losing the grand opportunity to call the public mind to the difference between our religion and the religion of Boston. How I succeeded, you will presently see. I shall have to give up the sermon, which I expect will be the beginning of the campaign. You will judge of the spirit with which the war is about to be begun, when I tell you that within a few hours after the sermon was delivered, a subscription paper was printed, unknown to me, and more than 1000 copies subscribed for. I intend to send the sermon and the inaugural oration (not yet printed) to you in a few weeks.

You can form no adequate idea of the strength of Satan's kingdom in this town and its vicinity. The injury which Chauncey, and a few other men, have done to the church in this region, is incalculable. Our church has been overwhelmed with contempt. The Catholicism of Boston is the most intolerant bigotry that I ever witnessed, when directed towards the religion of Christ. It is a fiend which never wears a smile but when its eye is directed towards the most abominable errors. But I must not rail at this rate. I am drawing towards the end of my sheet. Give my kindest regards to your dear family, and to all your dear people who inquire after me, and to our brethren in the ministry, brothers Hillyer, McDowell, Thompson, &c. I love them all, and never knew how well I loved them till since I feel their loss. I have much to say, but have no more time nor room. Write me soon, and tell me all the news.

Affectionately yours,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

TO THE SAME.

Boston, March 6th, 1810.

I was much gratified by your approbation of my sermon and oration. The former does not give so much satisfaction to some folks here. A

little periodical work entitled "Something," has been nibbling at it for several weeks; and the last number of the Anthology opened its mouth, as wide as a shark's, and devoured it at once. They have proved that the style is horrid, that the doctrines are worse, and that I have made at least four or five persons in the Trinity. They have offered a fair occasion for the friends of truth to give them some edifying lessons. The campaign is fairly begun. How it will end, the Lord knows. Let not those who put on the armor, boast as those who put it off. Some of your southern goose-quills must be drawn in the combat, lest they should drive us out of the land.

Our house continues to be filled much in the same manner as when I wrote you last. We have sold or rented nearly a hundred pews. You have no conception of the falsehoods which are propagated, and the pains which are taken, to prevent people from coming to our church. But the more they try to prevent, the more the people will not mind them. Prejudice is fast wearing away.

We have given Dr. Nott a unanimous call; and expect to hear from him this week. Mr. Stuart, late of New-Haven, was inaugurated, as professor of sacred literature, last week. The stories about Dr. Pearson's abusing me, or quarrelling with me, or being unfriendly to me, are all false. He resigned on account of age and infirmity. He is a good man, and is still an active and very useful friend of our college.

There is a very considerable revival of religion at Salem, Marblehead, and several other towns in the vicinity. O that the sacred influence might reach Boston! I preach on Thursday evenings in our vestry. People attend well, and appear solemn. There are also many prayers put up for the divine influence. This is all we can say.

Last sabbath we had our first sacrament. It was an interesting day. In the afternoon I baptized our infant, by the name of Ellen Maria. It was the first child baptized in the house. We have now between fifty and sixty students in our college. We talk of building another college and chapel, as the first college is nearly filled.

I am happy to hear of the increasing affection of your parish for their pastor. I hope you may enjoy many happy days with that dear people. Mrs. G. joins me in the kindest love to you and Mrs. Richards.

Ever yours,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

TO THE SAME.

Boston, Nov. 24th, 1810.

After a scene of ceaseless distraction for a year and a half, which has been principally owing, as I now perceive, to my own pride and idolatry, I am quietly housed for the winter, with my family, in the family of one of our congregation, as boarders; having obtained from Andover a dispensation to enable me to devote my whole time to the congregation for four months. Having now but one world upon me, and being exempt from family cares, I am enabled, without distraction, to devote my whole time and heart to my favorite employment, the labors of the parish. Last winter was spent in preparing the way for this, rather than in doing any thing. I think there is a change for the better in our church. They seem to be getting the better of their two great sins, pride and dependance upon man. A succession of disappointments and trials has, I think, been the means of humbling them. A number are earnestly praying for a revival of religion, and are even strongly expecting it. Our meetings are becoming more solemn. What is before us I don't know; but unless God speedily interpose, it does seem as though the cause must be given up. My dear brother, pray for us, and engage our dear friends in Newark, and our brethren in the neighborhood, (to all whom I send my love,) to pray for us. It is a momentous crisis in our affairs. God only can deliver us.

No answer yet from Dr. Nott. But persons who have lately seen him say, as I have always believed, that he will not come. He is himself confident that his health will not admit of it. What then is to be



done? I have at length made up my mind that I cannot, after this winter, be connected with two worlds. This is the firm conviction of myself, of Mrs. G. and of all my friends both at Andover and Boston. The thing then is settled, and understood, and is what all sides will agree to. If then a young man is settled in Park-street, he must stand alone and unsupported. Will this do? Who of you all will come to Park-street? If no body else will, must I come? Pray converse with some of our friends in Newark, and our brethren around about, and give me your best advice. As soon as I get time, I intend to write to Mr. Boudinot, Mr. Crane, &c. to whom, and to all other special friends give my love as though they were named. Mrs. G. joins in kindest love to you and Mrs. Richards; with, dear brother,

Yours, most affectionately,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

The clergyman to whom Park-street church gave 'their first call was Doctor HENRY KOLLOCK of Savannah, well known as having been one of the most eloquent preachers which this country has produced. He, however, after having had it for a considerable time under consideration, declined it in September, 1809; and immediately after Doctor G. was unanimously chosen to the same place, with the assurance of as large a salary as was paid to any congregational minister in Boston. As he happened to be present when the call was made out, he stated on the spot that there were many reasons why his acceptance of it was quite out of the question; the most important one of which no doubt was, that he felt himself at that time bound to the Theological Seminary. Subsequently, however, as appears from the preceding letter, his views of duty on this subject gradually underwent a change; and after he had temporarily intermitted his labors at the seminary that he might devote himself solely to the interests of the congregation, and after they had extended their call to several distinguished individuals, and in each case had received a negative answer, they unanimously renewed their call to him, Feb. 1, 1811, under circumstances which led him to think that possibly the

indications of Providence were in favor of his acceptance of it. Almost immediately after this became known to the students of the institution, they addressed him the following letter, expressive of their warm attachment, and of their strong desire that he might retain his connexion with the seminary.

Divinity College, March 28th, 1811.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:

We have been informed that you find it impracticable to discharge the duties of your professorship in this institution, and those which result from your connexion with the church and congregation in Boston. We have also been informed, that they have recently given you a unanimous and pressing call, to become their pastor. And apprehending that, from these conflicting claims, there is a possibility of your dissolving the connexion which you sustain with this institution; we take the liberty, Dear Sir, to express to you our feelings and wishes on this subject. Although we feel deeply concerned in the interests of that congregation, and view its prosperity of great importance, still, in our estimation, the religious interests connected with this seminary, are of such an extent, as to furnish a superior claim to your attention and services. We are impressed, Sir, with the belief that, should you leave us, our loss would be great, if not irreparable. Under the influence of these considerations, we earnestly request you, for our personal benefit, for the general good of this sacred institution, and for the momentous interests of the church, to continue the relation which you sustain to us. Be assured, Sir, that we shall feel it a great privation, to lose the privilege of looking to you, in connexion with your colleagues, as our father and our friend.

Presuming that you will take into due consideration these our unanimous suggestions, and wishing you the best consolations which religion affords, we subscribe ourselves in behalf of our brethren, your obedient servants

T. WOODBRIDGE,

A. NASH,

D. SMITH,

College Committee.

To which Doctor GRIFFIN returned the following answer.

Divinity College, March 29, 1811.

GENTLEMEN,

Your affectionate letter gave me all the pleasure which you intended. I am gratified to find that my official services are regarded with so much kindness by the members of the college; and am affected with the obliging expression of their wishes for my happiness. I thank you, Gentlemen, for the delicate manner in which these sentiments have been conveyed to me; and, through you, I present my acknowledgments to all the young gentlemen of the Institution. The confidence and the wishes which they have expressed are certainly entitled to much attention, and will be duly considered in the estimate of reasons which are to influence my decision. Under the pressing and contending claims of the two objects, I feel it my duty to ask them to carry the subject to the throne of grace, and to be earnest in their supplications that I may know the will of God. If the result should not be such as they desire, it will be owing to the necessities of an important church, and not to any indifference to their improvement and happiness. I am, gentlemen,

Very affectionately yours,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

In a letter to Doctor RICHARDS, dated April 16, 1811, Dr. G. writes thus:—"Since I wrote last I have learned that the young men in the

college have unanimously, as they state, made an address to Mr. BARTLETT, praying him to press me still further to continue here. The feelings of the young men, and the friendship of Mr. BARTLETT, have produced some conflict in my mind; but I still believe that the providence of God points me to Boston." Accordingly, in a communication dated May 1, he signified his acceptance of the call, and was installed pastor of the church, July 31, 1811, by an ecclesiastical council of Congregational ministers and delegates from the vicinity of Boston; having previously received a dismissal from the Presbytery to which he belonged, and a recommendation to the Union Association of Boston and vicinity. The sermon on the occasion was preached by the Rev. Dr. WORCESTER, of Salem.

The following letter to his brother, GEORGE GRIFFIN, Esq. shows what were the prevailing considerations that influenced him in his ultimate removal from Andover to Boston.

Boston, April 29th, 1811.

DEAR BROTHER,

After being tossed for two years, and kept in a state of restlessness, without a home, and crushed with the cares of Andover and Boston united, I have at last found a home, a place of rest, as far as this world can afford one. I have resigned my office at Andover, and am here with my family. On the first day of May I expect to move into a pleasant house, in a delightful part of the town.

Such were the perishing necessities of this congregation, which presents a stand the most important, as has repeatedly been said, of any in Christendom, that the friends of the college are not displeased with the step I have taken. The young gentlemen in the college, of which there are about 50, made a strong effort to retain me. They presented to me an affectionate and "unanimous" address, requesting me to stay: and not content with this, they wrote to Mr. Bartlett, requesting him to use further exertions for the purpose. But

they submit without any hard thoughts since they know my determination. I left Andover last week.

This congregation were pressed with a debt of about \$30,000, which they had contracted for their house. They could not sell their pews, for want of a minister; and they could not much longer bear up under the debt. They were discouraged by repeated disappointments in their attempts to obtain a pastor, and were determined to look no further. If I did not come, they declared that they must sell their house, and disband: and the fall of this congregation would have spread destruction far and wide. But if I would come, individuals stood ready to assume the debt, and secure the meeting-house, which was mortgaged, from hazard of being sold to Socinians. This has been done. The debt is discharged; and the congregation is in a fair way to live and increase. The house is thronged on Sabbath evening. If God be for us, who can be against us?

Last fall and winter the enemy did all in their power to destroy the congregation and me. But, blessed be God! we yet live, and live uninjured. The storm is past, and the tide seems now to be strongly turning in our favor. We feel no alarm. What trials may await us we leave to God, who, as he has done, can carry us safely through; and he can bring us to his heavenly kingdom. Fanny and the children are well, and join me in love to you and yours.

Your affectionate brother,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

TO THE REV. JAMES RICHARDS.

Boston, Sept. 14th, 1811.

God is appearing for brother Huntington's support. There is evidently a work of grace beginning among his people. His old praying women, who belonged to Whitefield's day, say that so good appearances have not been seen in Boston since 1771. But our church

is still dead, and still looking to an arm of flesh. We have not got enough yet. We shall have to receive more scourging before we shall be fit for any work. Of all creatures, some of us seemed the most unlikely to be selected to make such a stand in Boston. Whether the selection was of God or man, time must determine.

Pray for us.

E. D. G.

TO THE SAME.

Boston, April 22d, 1812.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Your favor of Feb. 3d has lain by me a long time, for reasons that every minister can guess, when he looks at his parish. But, my beloved brother, my heart is often with you. You are among the few friends on earth whom I love without any ifs or buts. I am rejoiced to hear by Mr. Sanford, who called upon me this morning, that appearances are more favorable among you. I rejoice for your sake, as well as for more general reasons. You went to Newark at the close of a great revival. The thing was done, and could not be continued. I had the privilege of being there in harvest time; and you came in the fall of the year; a winter followed of course; but a spring you will see, and then a harvest. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." May the Lord make you the father of many spiritual children in that dear section of the great family!

I find it not in my power to visit Newark this spring; but, God willing, I firmly intend to bring Mrs. G. next spring. I cannot leave my people so long at present. There are some appearances which I must stay at home to watch. The latter part of February I was so much encouraged that I instituted a conference exclusively for persons

under serious impressions. Precisely thirty have attended; four or five of whom, I trust, have become real christians. I have conversed with some others out of doors whose minds are tender. Our meetings generally are certainly more solemn than they were. But the church, with a few exceptions, are still asleep. We expect to admit twelve new members, (with, and without certificates,) at our next sacrament. We admitted twenty-seven the last year, from the first of March to the first of March. Brother, pray for us.

I have had very affecting news lately from my brother in New-York. He and his friends believe him to have become a subject of grace. I know you will rejoice with me, and help me praise the Lord for his great goodness. I hope my brother may be of some little service to the common cause in this day of agitation in that city. What are they doing? What aileth them? Who has stirred up all this strife? Do write me all about it. The whole camp appears to be alarmed. There certainly is fear, combined with some rancor. Is the land of Jersey shaken with the earthquake? Do the steeples of Newark totter? Is your head upon your shoulders? How is dear brother Hillyer? I long to have a long brotherly letter from him, and to see him in Boston. Give my very particular love to him, and tell him all this. Mrs. G. joins in most affectionate remembrance to Mrs. Richards and yourself, with your friend and brother,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

TO THE SAME.

Boston, May 2d, 1812.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Having written to you so lately, I have nothing new to write. But I cannot let so favorable an opportunity pass without dropping you a line—perhaps a sheet full.

I rejoice exceedingly to hear of the favorable symptoms in some of your towns, and in New-York. I hope strongly that the God of 1802 and 1807 will make 1812 (the space of five years in both cases) a day of his power in those twenty congregations. Is it not just the time, my dear brother, to revive your preaching tours? God has blessed them twice; may he not bless them the third time?

In regard to us, things remain much as when I wrote last. Thirty-four have attended our Tuesday evening conference, under serious impressions; but the church, with few exceptions, are still asleep. Our congregation, gathered from all parts, with habits formed under cold preaching, present a cold spectacle, much unlike the congregation of Newark. They must be melted down into one mass by an electric shock from heaven. God send the shock in his own time!

I thank you for the notice you take of my dear brother's case. It has affected me most deeply, as you may well suppose. I wish you could see him some time when you are in New-York. He needs help from you. I wish he may be thoroughly grounded and settled in the truth, and lend his aid to support orthodoxy in this day of agitation. I have lately become one of the overseers of Cambridge College. About the time of my coming here the Socinians got a law passed by our Assembly to exclude the Senate from the board, except the President, (under pretence of keeping out democracy,) to disfranchise the six towns, whose ministers were ex officio members of the board, and to give power to the board to fill up its own vacancies. The chief object probably was to keep out those orthodox ministers who might, in this turn of times, be settled in said towns. Last winter the democratic Assembly repealed the law, in their own vindication, and Mr. Thacher and I rode in upon their shoulders. I hope I never may have a worse horse!

Mrs. G. joins in most affectionate regards to Mrs. Richards and yourself, with, dear Sir,



Your cordial friend and brother,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

TO THE SAME.

Written immediately after hearing the melancholy tidings of the death of Mrs. Cumming, wife of Rev. Hooper Cumming, who was instantly killed by being precipitated down the falls of the Pasaick.

Boston, July 1st, 1812.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I received your letter of last week and read it with such sensations as you can easily imagine. The dreadful account had reached us before. I immediately wrote what I could to our poor afflicted friend. The mysterious dispensation has produced a strong impression here. Your letter has been read to numbers; it has been borrowed and carried out of the house; a copy of it is now taking by an aunt of Mrs. Cumming. Many tears have flowed, and many prayers have ascended for the bereaved husband. How mysterious are the dispensations of providence! We must bow ourselves to the earth, and say, His ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. What a comfort it is, amidst the confusions of this trying life, to know that infinite wisdom keeps the throne, and well knows what he is doing! The sea may rage, our shattered bark, amidst the darkness of night, may rise to the clouds, and plunge to the centre, but our Pilot is at helm. Were it not for that, we should never hope to see morning more. But with that protection we shall ride safely through the rage of elements, and the confusions of a disjointed world, and enter a haven secluded from the storms. It was never a matter of more joy than at the present moment that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

I pray, and even hope, that this distressing event will be the means of a glorious revival of religion in Newark. Tell the people that they must not let it pass without such an issue. It is a call to every man,

woman and child in the town, right from the mouth of God, as loud as any that will ever be heard, perhaps, before the last trumpet. They must listen, or, (I had almost said,) they are all dead men. This is the moment too, for christians to lie on their faces before the God who is passing by—the very moment to cry to him with groanings that cannot be resisted—to carry out all their children from their houses, and lay them in the street before the awful Majesty that is passing by. O may the whole town stand and bow before him, and hear not his voice in vain! Mrs. G. and myself have just returned from a journey to Connecticut. God is pouring out his Spirit in sundry places in that state and in this. I hope to hear good tidings from Newark. Nothing very different here. Mrs. G. joins in every sentiment of love and kindness to Mrs. R. and yourself, with your affectionate brother.

E. D. GRIFFIN.

In the winter of 1812–1813, Doctor GRIFFIN delivered his Park-street lectures, on successive sabbath evenings, to a crowded audience collected from all classes of society. These lectures awakened the deepest attention both of friends and foes; and it is hardly necessary to say that they have passed through several editions, and have long since taken a prominent place among the standard theological works of our country.

TO THE REV. JAMES RICHARDS.

Boston, August 23d, 1813.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I owe you many apologies for my long silence; but either I have more to do than ever I had before, or else I become slower in my motions as age increases. I do not get time to write to my friends. I have scarcely written a letter for nine months till very lately.

I have rejoiced, my brother, in all the mercy and truth with which God has visited you, and the dear people of your charge. I cannot be

indifferent to any thing that is calculated to make either you or them happy, and least of all to so glorious a scene as this. May the work increase, and extend, and never cease.

I rejoice to hear of the strong and increasing attachment of your congregation to their pastor. I hope you and dear Mrs. Richards by this time feel yourselves at home, and that you both and your children will continue to enjoy all the happiness which this poor world can give, and all the happiness which can be found in a covenant God. Our affairs here go on pretty much in the old way. The small degree of divine influence with which we have been favored, has brought ninety-one persons to our inquiring meeting, within a year and a half; thirty-nine of whom have come in since the first of December. About that time a new momentum was given to the thing which is not yet altogether spent. Sabbath after next I expect to admit to the church eleven persons from the world. Still there are trials and discouragements which sometimes almost tempt me to give out. Boston folks will be Boston folks still. They will not retrench a habit, nor lose a nap at church, to save their lives. Had I known as much as I now do, I never would have left the Presbyterian world; and if my conscience would suffer me, I would enter it again as soon as I could. We are in peace, but a peace attended with more stupidity than comfort. I am afraid to say any more.

Excuse my haste. I have many letters to write. Mrs. G. joins in most affectionate regards to Mrs. Richards, and yourself, and the children, with, dear Sir,

Your friend and brother,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

TO THE SAME.

Boston, April 12th, 1814.

I have no good news to communicate respecting our affairs in Boston. It does not please the Head of the Church to refresh us with his influence, and we all remain as cold and hard as rocks. I am afraid to come among you in such a day as this, lest I should serve, with what little influence I have, to chill you. But I need to be warmed, though it be at your expense.

I am, my dear brother,

Most affectionately yours,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

TO HIS DAUGHTER FRANCES LOUISA.

Boston, July 25th, 1814.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

Before this time you have received "The Memoirs of Mrs. Newell," which your mother sent you. It is my earnest desire, and parental injunction, that you read that book through at least twice in the course of the summer and autumn, that you draw the example there set clearly before your eyes, and give the most earnest diligence and care to copy it in your heart and life. I wish you, in short, to set up that blessed woman for your model, both in respect to her early, ardent, self-denying piety, and to the modesty, sweetness, delicacy, affection, and attention to the feelings of others, which marked her social character. Providence has raised her up at your own door, in the midst of the circle in which your father moves, and given our family, as connected with the mission in which she displayed her brightest lustre, a sort of property in her character. The whole of that property I bequeath to you. Take her for your own, and ingraft all her excellencies upon your own character. How often have I said, with all the tender commotion of a parent's heart, "Oh, let that character be my Louisa's!"

Mrs. Newell was younger than you are, my daughter, when she first gave herself to Christ. She could place her heart at rest on the centre of her soul, her Saviour's bosom, at the age of thirteen; and where are your affections roving? Are you not under as great obligations as she was? I wish you also to look at the womanly sentiments and style of her letters and diary at the age of thirteen, and often compare your own progress with hers. Do you keep a diary?

Your main attention ought to be paid to the government of your temper. That is an enemy which you must bring under early and learn to keep in steady subjection, or it will gather strength as you advance, till it becomes too strong to be controlled. And when it has once established an ascendancy, farewell to peace, farewell to the good will of others, and, without almost a miracle, farewell to salvation. You must get it completely in your power while you are young, and accustom it to obey, or calculate on a wretched old age. Establish, then, the rule of bringing its motions each day to a rigid examination at night; and never sleep till you have mourned before God for its irregularities that day, and implored strength to curb it for time to come. But you must go deeper still. The root of the evil lies in a selfish spirit, which nothing can cure but that love to God and man which constitutes the essence of all religion. In religion, then, you must seek the only effectual remedy. Oh, my daughter, look to Christ for this. Cry to him mightily; cry to him day and night.

Next to the government of your temper, you must cultivate an obliging disposition towards all. In things where you may, learn to subject your wishes to the wishes of others, to prefer their gratification to your own. This is the essence of true politeness; and if prompted by proper motives, is an essential part of true religion. I must remind you also to avoid two things utterly repugnant to female loveliness. I mean an independent carriage and too great forwardness. A benevolent regard to the feelings, and a modest deference to the characters of others, will cure both of these evils. But I would have you distinguish between modesty and bashfulness.

The former is the loveliest trait of female beauty; the latter turns every thing into awkward deformity.

My dear daughter, you are no longer a child, but of the age when Mrs. Newell was exhibiting a character to be the model of future generations.

We were sorry to hear that you are learning to play without using your voice. We must utterly protest against this. We believe you can sing; but if we are mistaken in this, we wish you to take no more lessons in music.

Let me hear, from time to time, what books you read at your leisure hours. Some, adapted to enlarge your stock of ideas, and to improve your taste, should make a part of the objects of your attention every week.

I wish you to pay all due attention to ——. It will be a sufficient argument, I hope, with you, that she is unfortunate. Let me be informed on this point.

Your affectionate father,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

The following record of the deaths of Doctor GRIFFIN'S parents, &c. was made by him in 1832.

While I was in Boston in March, 1814, I was summoned to the sick bed of my dear mother, who, for many years had had the consumption. She died in my arms at nine o'clock on sabbath evening, April 3, 1814, aged 81. My honored father died the 6th of August following, aged 80. Of my four grand-parents, and two parents, all surpassed the age of 80, except my grandfather Dorr, and he nearly reached that age. To this day, when I am more than 62 years old, I have never lost a brother nor sister, wife nor child, and

the youngest of eight children of my parents is now more than 54 years old. Thus has the mercy of God dealt with us.

TO HIS BROTHER GEORGE.

Boston, August 21st, 1814.

DEAR BROTHER,

Before this reaches you, you will have heard that our dear father is no more. We have no more a parent on earth; and soon we ourselves shall be numbered with the congregation of the dead. And what then if we are deceived! And is it not possible that we may be? "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?" There are a thousand ways to get wrong, and one only to get right. The two most conspicuous fruits and evidences of religion, are a placid, affectionate spirit, which sweetens and rules our native tempers, and that ethereal spirit which overcomes the world. 1 Cor. 13, James 1:27, 1 John 2:15. Would it not be well, my dear brother, for us both to try ourselves closely by these two tests, as exhibited in the texts referred to? Religion does not consist in a form, and a profession, nor in going to church on the sabbath, and uttering some of our opinions, and having certain frames; but in possessing and acting out the true spirit of the gospel, which is love,—in rising from under the supreme dominion of selfishness to the dominion of supreme love to God and his dear Son. Luke 14:26, Mat. 6:24. Men are judged by their general characters. 1 John 3:15. Unless then we are habitually governed by supreme love to God, we are nothing. But such a regent within us will habitually keep down those angry and idolatrous passions which spring from selfishness. If these prevail, we are the slaves of selfishness still. Without, therefore, a dominant spirit of love, which can keep our tempers habitually calm, and produce habitually a conscious deadness to the world, we are not christians. If my own hope will not bear this test, it must be given up.

Thus we cannot hope to live, without a frequent application of the means of grace. And if the world is put under our feet, it will certainly no longer keep us from those means which are necessary for the nourishment of our souls, any more than from those meals which are necessary for the nourishment of the body. Every christian ought to take time from the world to attend at least one meeting a week, besides on the sabbath. I wish, my dear brother, that you would adopt this rule, and inflexibly abide by it, let the world go where it will. I know what you can say on the subject, but I still believe that you ought to do it, and that it is your happiness as well as duty.

Affectionately your brother,

E. D. G.

Dr. GRIFFIN continued at Park-street till the spring of 1815, when, in consequence of the congregation having become embarrassed by means of the war, and withal somewhat divided among themselves, he accepted an invitation to return to Newark as pastor of the Second Presbyterian church then lately rendered vacant by the dismissal of Mr. CUMMING. He seems to have hesitated for some time as to the propriety of accepting this invitation, particularly from an apprehension that his return to Newark might be the occasion of some embarrassment to his successor in his former charge. The two following letters, which he addressed to Dr. RICHARDS in relation to this subject, evince a delicate regard to the circumstances in which he was called to act.

Boston, Feb. 21st, 1815.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I was delighted to hear to-day that you had been invited to preside at the meeting last Thursday. This augurs well for the future tranquillity of Newark. Immediately after receiving an application, about twelve weeks ago, I inquired whether it would give offence for



me to exchange with you, and to visit my old friends in your congregation; and was answered, that it would be acceptable for me to visit my old friends, and to exchange with you once in four or five sabbaths. To return to Newark on any other terms than to be in habits of unreserved intimacy and love with one of my earliest and truest friends, and with his beloved church, I could not consent. And if I thought my return would contribute any influence to restore harmony, and to obliterate all remembrance of the past, it would certainly be a powerful motive. On the other hand, if there is, as was hinted to me by some last spring, an incurable separation between the two congregations, and my friends down town would look upon me as one who had come to take part against them, I should find myself in a condition truly deplorable. On the various points connected with this subject, I want light, and, my dear brother, I want light from you.

When I resigned my charge into your hands, little did I expect to return and take part with you in your ministry. Nor do I yet know that this is the will of heaven. Newark has not ceased to be the dearest place to me on earth; but I am not my own. From some motions of divine providence I have been led to suppose that that might become my duty. And if it is my duty, I can freely say it will be no act of self-denial. The particular circumstances which have led to this way of thinking, you in part know, and will know more fully when I have the pleasure to see you. In the mean time I will thank you to open your whole heart to me, and to pour all the light you can upon the present state and future prospects of Newark, relative to the points referred to above. Pray let me hear from you soon. I expect to take a journey early in March; if you write soon I shall receive your letter before I set out.

Mrs. G. joins me in most affectionate salutations to Mrs. Richards, and yourself, and to the whole family.

Your friend and brother,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

REV. J. RICHARDS.

Boston, April 15th, 1815.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I received your fraternal letter of the 28th of February, on my return from Connecticut the 3rd of April, and thank you for your frank and candid remarks. I had written, before my journey, to Mr. Boudinot, and if I am not mistaken, requested him to show the letter to you. That letter will have convinced you that the providence of God, and no unreasonable fickleness, or despondency in me, has suggested the purpose of my return. I have felt unhappy in one view of my return. If from the attachment of some of my old friends, it should operate to render your condition any less pleasant, it would distress me, not only from my long continued friendship for you, but especially because I was instrumental in your removal to Newark. It will be, I hope, my aim, however, to render your situation no less pleasant than it was when you first came, and have no doubt of reciprocal friendship from you. And with such a union as has always subsisted between us, added to a sufficient degree of prudence, I hope we shall prevail to heal all the divisions which now exist. I believe we shall. There are really no rival interests. There are people and property enough for two congregations, and I hope in time to see a third. This was my hope before I concluded to leave the town. The idea of ministering to the whole town was oppressive and overwhelming:

Since my return from my journey to Connecticut, I have applied to the church and congregation for a dismissal. Both bodies have given their consent, and voted to continue my salary till the last of May, though the council for my dismissal should be sooner convened. After this consent I consider myself at liberty to announce my acceptance of the call. I will therefore thank you to inform the presbytery in my name, at their April meeting, that I consider it my

duty to accept the call, and do hereby accept it; and pray them to appoint a time for my installation, as soon as they, and the congregation choose, after the first sabbath in June. The first sabbath in June I hope to be in Newark. Mrs. G. joins in affectionate regards to Mrs. R. and yourself and family.

I am, my dear brother, your sincere friend,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

REV. J. RICHARDS.

Agreeably to the intimation contained in the preceding letter, Doctor GRIFFIN'S resignation of his pastoral charge received the sanction of a mutual council, April 27, 1815; though he continued to officiate as pastor till the last sabbath in May. He arrived in Newark with his family the first week in June.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **HIS SECOND RESIDENCE AT NEWARK**

Doctor GRIFFIN was installed pastor of the second Presbyterian church in Newark, June 20, 1815.

Toward the close of the year 1816, a general attention to religion commenced in both congregations in Newark, and extended to several of the neighboring towns. During this revival Dr. G. was abundant in his labors, and was privileged in due time to gather in a precious harvest.

Under date of March 27, 1817, he writes in his diary as follows:

A day of private fasting and prayer agreed upon by both churches in the town, to implore the continued influences of the Divine Spirit. Having of late years entered more largely into the public business of the church, I have spent too little time in my closet, and in consequence find that it is not so easy today to fix my thoughts in these private exercises as it formerly was. It is my desire from this time forth to return to the more full practice of private devotion, and to a renewal of my journal.

I have tried the world; I have been too much devoted to honor; but I found it all vain. Never was I so restless and unhappy as when most elevated in view of the world. I was tired of such public life, and longed to retire. I have retired, and during the year and nine months which I have spent here, have been the most tranquil that I ever was in any situation. Convinced by experience of the vanity and even torture of worldly distinction, I seem to have given up all desire for it. I am sure I would not exchange my present seclusion for any more public sphere that could be offered me. My trials, I trust, have not been in vain. For more than six years past, (the former part of which was the most trying period of my life,) I think I have been enabled to obtain an ascendancy over some of my constitutional sins. If I do not deceive myself, I have of late years become more conscientious in regulating my feelings towards my neighbors, in avoiding resentments when I am injured, and in studying the things which make for peace. I think I am more vigilant against the collisions of selfishness; less bigoted in favor of a party, and can more truly rejoice in the advancement of religion in other denominations around me. I have far less distressing conflicts than I had in former years. At the same time I have far less exalted ideas of my own sanctification. Some things are certainly improved within me, and yet I have a more steady sense of my general poverty and short coming.

Afternoon. I found a greater sweetness in secret prayer than I had felt for years, a tenderness and enlargement in praying for this people here, our sister congregation and its minister, my late church

in Park-street, my friends and my enemies generally in Massachusetts. I found a new state of mind, and discovered that some displeasure at the past treatment I had received, though it had not awakened resentment, had hardened my heart against old acquaintance and caused me to find little pleasure in thinking of them. But now I felt the cloud all removed, and wished to visit them, and longed for their prosperity, as though they had been my flesh and blood; and in regard to those who were near, my heart melted over them, and it was my earnest prayer that this day, when the christians of both congregations are in their respective closets, might break up forever whatever selfish jealousies and unkind feelings may exist between the two sister churches. I feared that the rough treatment I had met with from the world, had soured my mind towards mankind, and that my love of retirement arose partly from this cause. I clearly perceived and felt that love would do away all feelings like never wishing to have any more connexion with a particular place. Never, never let me feel this again towards any place or any individual. How will love unite us to all and every one, as to our dearest child. Scarcely ever had I a cloud taken off from the whole world so suddenly and so sensibly. I felt a tender wish to write to acquaintances in different places, with whom I had for a considerable time wished to have no further intercourse. I found that love would cure at once all past troubles, and sweep them from the world as though they had never been; and that if I could continue to feel so, I should at once be restored to the bright skies of former years, before the storms arose. I perceived that the most effectual way to get the better over every injury was to forgive. I learned to prize more than ever these days of private devotion, for I found that this season had removed wrong impressions which had rested on my mind for two or three years, which, till I felt the change, I had not perceived were wrong. LET ME NOT FAIL TO KEEP THESE DAYS OF PRIVATE DEVOTION.

I was enabled heartily to forgive and pray for all men, even those who had wronged me most, and then I felt that the middle wall of partition which had been long between Christ and me, was taken

away. I had forgiven all, and then he had, as it would seem, forgiven me. While I held them off, unwilling to have intercourse, he held me off, unwilling to have intercourse. I had not hated them as an enemy, and he had not hated me as an enemy. Just the measure which I meted to others, he meted to me. I never felt before the full amount, in this respect, of that petition, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." In the latter part of the afternoon my mind was unusually fixed and drawn out in prayer: and all my prayers were directed to Christ. The hymn, "Jesus, lover of my soul," was more precious to me than ever it was, when I was not pressed down under the burden of guilt. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for his restoring mercy,—for removing that partition wall which I have felt for more than six years. O may I walk humbly and live near to him, and be wholly devoted to him the rest of my life.

During this second period of Doctor GRIFFIN'S residence at Newark, besides attending with exemplary fidelity to all the duties more immediately connected with his pastoral charge, he devoted himself with great zeal to the establishment and support of several of the leading benevolent institutions of the day. He was one of the original founders of the American Bible Society; and it is said that when their address to the public, which had been prepared by Doctor MASON, was first read in his hearing, he turned to a gentleman sitting next to him, and said with great emphasis, "That, in my opinion is the finest specimen of English composition that has been produced since the days of Johnson." He was also particularly active in the establishment of the United Foreign Missionary Society, and in promoting the interests of the school established by the Synod of New-York and New-Jersey for the education of Africans. To this latter institution perhaps he devoted himself with more zeal than to any other; and his celebrated "Plea for Africa," distinguished alike for learning and eloquence, shows that this was a theme to wake up his finest powers and his strongest sensibilities.

It was also during this period of his ministry, (1817) that he published his work on the extent of the atonement. As this is almost

throughout a work of pure metaphysics, it were not to be expected that it should have gained so extensive a circulation as the more practical and popular of his productions; but it was evidently the result of great intellectual labor, and could never have been produced but by a mind trained to the highest efforts of abstraction.

In the spring of 1821, Dr. GRIFFIN received an invitation to the presidency of the college at Danville, Kentucky; and as his health at the time was somewhat enfeebled, he took a journey into that state, but ultimately declined the offer. On his return he visited Cincinnati in Ohio, and subsequently received an invitation to the same place in the college in that city, but this also he felt himself constrained to decline. About the same time he received a similar appointment at Williams College; and owing chiefly to some unpropitious circumstances which had prevented the growth of his congregation and their ability to continue to him a competent support, he determined to accept this appointment.

## CHAPTER VI

### HIS RESIDENCE AT WILLIAMSTOWN

Having accepted of the Presidency of Williams College, Doctor GRIFFIN left Newark with his family for Williamstown about the 25th October, 1821. Of the interesting events which occurred in connection with the journey and subsequent to it, he committed to writing the following minute account in 1830.

Before we left Newark, my eldest daughter, Louisa, was unwell. In her passage up the river she became worse. We reached Troy on Friday morning, October 26th, 1827, where I left her with her mother at a boarding-house, and the same night reached Williamstown with my other daughter, Ellen. On Monday, October 29th, having

obtained teams to bring out our furniture, I returned to Troy, and found an apprehension in the attending physicians that Louisa was exposed to the typhus fever. On my return to Williamstown on Wednesday, October 31st, I found Ellen quite sick. It proved that she had taken the measles; and before they could appear, a billious fever had taken possession of the system and kept the other down. And as the first yielded to medicine, the second, a hidden enemy that no one could understand, began to work. She was in a state of great fluctuation, but mostly of danger, till near the middle of December. On Monday, the 10th of December, my apprehensions rose the highest, but they were relieved before I went after my family the next morning. And so it was from the first to the last; she would be better, and I could inform her mother so; and no sooner had my letter gone than she would be taken worse. Her mother was mercifully saved from a knowledge of her danger till she reached Williamstown, and I sustained the burden alone. But to return.

On sabbath morning, November 4th, while I sat by Ellen's bed, more anxious for her than for Louisa, I received a letter from Mrs. Griffin, begging me to come down immediately ere my child died, and to bring Ellen with me, and leave her at Dr. Coe's. As I arose from my chair, I said, unconsciously, "The Lord reigneth;" but recollecting myself, and fearing to alarm Ellen, I for the first and last time deceived my child. I assumed a smile, and kissed her, and left the room. I determined to stay and ask the prayers of the church, and go the next day. The Rev. Mr. Gridley said he could not bear to have me go alone and offered to accompany me. At Wads-worth's, where we dined, while I was pacing alone before the door, reviewing all my feelings about my poor child before birth and at the time of her birth, and my manner of praying for her, and bringing her up, I said, "And after all is she to die in this state of insensibility? Is this our covenant God?" Something seemed to say, "No," in a manner which soothed my anguish. About eight miles this side of Troy, a messenger met us, to hasten us to see her die. I remember saying to Mr. Gridley at that moment, "I can bear all this and a great deal more; but O that poor mother, and that immortal soul!" I spent the eight miles in praying



for those two objects, and in language sometimes audible to my sympathizing friend. Mrs. Griffin had no knowledge that Ellen was sick, and I knew, was confidently expecting her. I had to bear those tidings to the afflicted mother. But God had mercifully ordered it so that I could, with entire sincerity, say, "I hope she is better." Mrs. G. met me on the stairs,— "Where is Ellen?" anxiously. "Why, my dear, she did not come"—carelessly. "Is she sick?"—alarmed. "Why, my dear, she hasn't been very well." "Is she dangerous?"—greatly agitated. "We have been somewhat concerned about her, but we hope she is better." Mrs. G. disappeared. I went into the room where my poor child lay. I found her insensible—deaf, dumb, and perhaps blind. By shaking her violently I could make her open her eyes; but they would fall together as soon. I wished to pray with her without delay; and when I sought for Mrs. G. I found her in a dark room, leaning on Mrs. E. crying, ready to break her heart, and saying, "God is going to take away both of my children." That night I did not shed a tear, though apt to weep. I got the friends assembled in the room, and then stretched out my hands over the bed and commended to God our dying child. When I opened my eyes, I found Mrs. G. bent down under her sorrows. I therefore lifted my voice aloud and said, "What does it signify for God to reign if he may not govern the world? What does it signify for us to proclaim our joy that he governs, if we will not allow him to take from us our Josephs and our Benjamins as he pleases?" The words, I saw, went through the poor mother's heart, and from that moment she lifted up her head. She went to bed that night (she told me afterwards) under a great weight, but she awoke in the night, and all her burden was gone.

A change had taken place in the sick child that morning, between break of day and sunrise, which indicated that a decisive change would probably take place the next morning at the same hour, and many chances to one it would be for death. But I found I could not set up the interest of my child against the will of God. I felt a strange composure, for which I reproached myself. I said to a friend repeatedly that I appeared to myself to be stupid. I said to myself, "Do you love your child as you love yourself? Would you feel so little

concern were there fifty chances to one that you would be beyond the reach of hope to-morrow?" And yet I could not feel that misery and tumult which the awful event, separated from the will of God, seemed calculated to produce. In the course of the evening Dr. B. told me that if she survived the next day she would be liable to be taken off every half hour for three weeks. "Well then," said I to myself, "it is in vain to hope. I might as well hope if she had to run the gauntlet between a hundred soldiers, with all their guns pointed at her heart." At that moment it was powerfully impressed on my mind, "If it is the will of the Lord Jesus that she shall die, she will die; and if it is his will that she shall live, she will live, though she were to run the gauntlet through the world." That thought composed me, and I went to bed and slept quietly till morning. But I was up with the day. And instead of the chill of death coming upon her, she lifted up her eyes and knew me. Though I could not weep that night, the next day I could weep profusely, under a sense of the goodness of God.

On the 14th of November I was inaugurated to the office of president of Williams College.

On Tuesday, Dec. 11th, I went after my family, and brought them home on Thursday, the 13th, seven weeks wanting a day or two from the time we landed at Troy. The same day, Ellen was brought home; and a joyful meeting it was. I had longed that the family, if ever permitted to meet again, might live only to Him who had preserved them. But alas how have we forgotten his mercies! I am utterly confounded when I think of this.

This great mercy as relates to Louisa, and especially the scene at Wadsworth's, never appeared to me so affecting as since her hopeful conversion.

TO HIS DAUGHTER FRANCES LOUISA, WHILE AT SCHOOL AT  
SANDWICH.

Williamstown, March 17th, 1823.

As the church here have set apart to-morrow as a day of fasting and prayer for the effusions of the Spirit, and I expect to be with them, I shall have no time to write after this evening. The revival in college is at an awful stand. No instance of hopeful conversion for near a fortnight. In that time there has been much labor, and not a few impressions made of a weaker sort, which seem to come and go, in a way to hold us between hope and fear, and I should be tempted to be discouraged were it not for the increasing earnestness, as I hope, of christians, both in the college and in the town. Amidst all my other anxieties, my poor children that have no God, lie daily upon my heart:—my poor children who have souls as valuable as they appeared to me when I was going to Troy in November, 1821, and when I bent over my insensible and apparently dying child, that evening. Oh Louisa, you have scenes yet to enter upon which no language can describe, and no mortal heart can conceive. My dear child, prepare, I beseech you, to meet your God. Oh let not your parents find you missing when they search for you among the redeemed host at the last day.

I am sorry that you said, or ever heard any thing about—; because I am unwilling that a grudge should lie in your heart, or in mine, against a human being. I hope you will neither hear nor communicate any thing more against a single person on earth.

Your affectionate father,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

TO HIS DAUGHTER ELLEN MARIA.

Williams College, June 12th, 1824.

I had, my dear child, a distressing dream about you last night. I dreamed that I was the presiding magistrate in a court which had condemned you to die for murder,—and to be executed the next day.

You besought for your life; but I told you that I could not help you, and entreated you to prepare to die. And when you appeared disposed to consume the few precious moments in prayer to me, I told you that you must not say another word about it. You obeyed, and was silent, and I awoke. And when I awoke, the thought of my poor suppliant child, condemned to death, and pleading with me for her life; and the thought that I might one day see you pleading for an eternal life, when I could not afford you relief; affected me so much that I could not help praying for you a considerable time, till I fell asleep again. Oh my dear child, remember that no modification of the social affections, and of the outward deportment, will answer without a radical change of heart; that no habits of respect for religion will avail without a deep conviction of sin and ruin; that without thus feeling yourself sick unto death, you never will apply to the great physician, but will rather become the more self-righteous for your outward regularity; and that your prayers will not be heard unless they proceed from the very heart, but may, by sinking into a cold unmeaning form, become mockery, and "an abomination to the Lord." I beseech you, my darling child, to read over this paragraph morning and evening before you offer your prayers, for the rest of the winter, when something special does not prevent.

I have only time to add that, with daily prayers for your sanctification, I am, your affectionate father,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

TO THE REV. M. TUCKER, OF NORTHAMPTON.

Williams College, July 11th, 1825.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Your favor of June 28th, with the accompanying sermon, was duly received; and I sincerely thank you for both. I read the sermon immediately and with much interest. My time is so occupied at present in various ways that I shall not be able to pay that attention

to the subjects of your letter which I could desire. You gratify me by your confidence, but you have laid out a hard piece of work for me; I mean difficult of accomplishment.

It does appear to me that the most important object of all, and which ought for the present to engross your whole attention, is to bring that immense congregation, by your preaching, prayers, and pastoral visits under the influence—the dissolving and transforming influence—of powerful and repeated revivals of religion. As to scholarship, if it has not been attained before one has reached the age of thirty, and has entered on such a prodigious field of labor, it cannot be attained to any very high degree in connexion with such a conscience as yours. Your Hebrew may be easily renewed without points, by the help of Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon; and without points will answer all the purposes of explaining the original text. In your case, I certainly would go no further than this in Hebrew. But I doubt much whether I would enter at present on any new plan of studies beyond those which are strictly theological. If you can prevail to imbue that great people with divine truth, and make the truth triumph where President Edwards fell, and bring them, by the side of Brainerd's grave, to pray as Brainerd prayed; you will have performed a work great enough for an angel's powers: you may then go to heaven, and the church will bless God that you ever had existence. Considering the history, and the magnitude, and the influence of your congregation, and the state in which you received it, few men have ever had such a work laid out for them;—it is enough to exhaust the powers of one mind. It is a charge ponderous enough "to make the shoulders of an angel tremble."

I would recommend it to you, my brother, to bathe your soul in Baxter's "Saint's Rest," and to be much in prayer, and make yourself deeply acquainted with the Scriptures. You are kind enough to ask after my course. I believe that an early commencement and pursuit of a systematic study of the Bible, in connexion with a long course of revivals of religion in which I was permitted to be engaged, and an habitual aim, in my ordinary sermons, to reach the conscience, and

the heart at every stroke, and the habit of striking out, as I correct my sermons for a new exhibition of them, every clause and word which is not subservient to this end; may be numbered among the most efficacious means of forming my present manner of preaching, such as it is. Perhaps the most powerful circumstance, not yet mentioned, was entering upon the large congregation of Newark, calling for constant and impassioned preaching, and for continual visiting. I made a bad improvement under these advantages; but I am far from thinking with you, my Dear Sir, that a man cannot be a good preacher and pastor with a great congregation. A great congregation, as rousing to great exertions, is the best field for the formation of such a character. You can never satisfy any people by visiting. The best way to approach it, is perhaps to show the people, by a systematic course, that you visit all you can. Besides your social visits and visits to the sick, I would set apart one day in a week to strictly parochial visits, to be short, and right to the point, and to be closed with prayer. Make the appointment before hand, and let all know the course.

As to the manner of preaching, the object of every stroke ought to be to do good rather than to gain popularity. That will make us the most divinely eloquent. The little prettinesses of thought and expression, which the love of popularity can produce, are nothing to the great and overwhelming thoughts which flow from a mind solemnly impressed with divine things, and earnestly desirous to impress them upon others. Here we may aim high. I doubt the lawfulness of any other high aim in a minister of Christ. Dr. Witherspoon used to advise his pupils to write out one good sermon a week, and let the rest take care of themselves. You cannot, in your situation, write but one. I would recommend it to you to extemporize in the week, to preach from a skeleton in the morning of the Sabbath, and from notes in the afternoon. From your account of your fondness for belles-lettres and poetry, and aversion to metaphysics, I should apprehend that the side on which you are to guard, is a tendency to sprightliness, without sufficient weight and penetrating force. You have a fine imagination, and a fine taste to regulate it. Use both of

them, as nature dictates, without effort; but let all your effort be to fill your pages with the weight and solemnity of divine truth. Under each head labor to get out that precise view of truth which you had in your most solemn hour on your knees. I advise you to read much the sermons of President Edwards. My paper is out. Mrs. G. and I will stay at your house with pleasure, at the approaching meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Won't you come and bring Mrs. T. to our commencement?

Very affectionately yours,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

Dr. G. proceeds in his narrative thus:

When I first came here there were 48 students connected with the college. The number increased before the Amherst charter was obtained, (in February or March, 1825,) to 120. That event, by the following commencement struck us down to 80. About 30 in the course of the spring and summer, took dismissions, under the impression that the college would be broken up. Nineteen graduated that commencement, and a class came in of seven, and little prospect appeared of much increase. At that crisis I formed the purpose of raising a fund of \$25,000 for the purpose of building a chapel and endowing a new Professorship. While at Northampton attending the meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, I determined to open the subscription myself with \$1,000, provided certain other gentlemen in Williamstown would do the same, or in proportion. From that time I felt better about the college. On my return from a northern tour through Manchester, (Vt.) I heard of a revival there. This excited unusual desires in my mind for a revival in college, which desire never ceased from that time.

When college came together several returned under deep impressions; and it was soon evident that God was among us. My eldest daughter at that time was married and lived in the

neighborhood; and my youngest daughter was at school at Hartford, (Conn.) about 90 miles off. As Louisa had been awakened in a revival at Newark in 1817, I came to the conclusion, as soon as I was convinced that the Spirit of God was among us, that she would, in all probability be brought in then or be lost. During the months of October and November, my agony was great and increasing for her, and her husband, and for the college. The seriousness in college continued to increase; but it was not, I think, till about the first of December, that the spirit came down like a mighty rushing wind.

My wrestlings for the college and the town were great during all this time; but Louisa's last chance appeared to have come. She and her husband were very interesting objects to me, and my absent child also. That passage in Luke, 11:5-13, opened upon me with a most interesting reality, particularly the last verse, "How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." I believed the truth of that promise as fully as I believed my own existence, and applied it to supplications for the Spirit on others as well as on myself. It appeared indeed a wonder that God should regard the prayers of such polluted worms, until I discovered, in the light of that text, which for the first time opened upon me, (Romans, 8:26, 27,) that it was the Holy Ghost that prayed. I could not help exclaiming, "No wonder that God hears prayer when it is the Holy Ghost that prays. What an awful place is the christian's closet! The whole Trinity is about it every time he kneels. There is the Spirit praying to the Father through the Son." My sermon on the Prayer of Faith, which I have just sent on to the National Preacher, and a copy of which I leave in manuscript to my children, was copied, with great exactness, from my exercises at that time, mingled in with my exercises in other revivals. Except the single clause, "because men keep not God's law," under the first head, (which I drew from the experience of David,) all the eight particulars were drawn from my own experience, with as much exactness as I could possibly attain. My desire on this occasion was heart-breaking. I searched diligently to see if I was setting up the interest of my children against God's interest, or my will against his will. I could not find that I was. I felt



my absolute dependance; and yet could never stop in the use of means. I felt greatly abased under a sense of sin. O how did I feel often when upon my knees I was forced to say with tears, "Although my house be not so with God." The case of Jacob at Penuel and that of the Syrophenician woman always stood before me. And so confident was I that the promise was everlasting truth, that I saw I might indeed take hold of it and draw the blessing down,—that I might lawfully keep hold of it until the blessing came. I seized it with both my hands, and said, "Here I plant myself down, and on this spot I will receive the blessing or die. I hold thee to thy word and will not let thee go." Once an objection started up, "Is not this holding of God to his word a taking from him the right of sovereignty?" I was alarmed at this, as though, in pursuit of every thing dear, a wall from heaven had dropped upon my path. I threw my eyes farther, I thought, than I ever did before, into the regions of truth, and soon I saw the solution: "If God had not given me this spirit to hold him fast, I should have been a clod. His sovereignty was fully exercised in that gift." As when a dam has suddenly stopped a rapid torrent, and after a time is suddenly removed, and the waters impetuously sweep; so did my restrained and eager spirit, when I saw the whole field open before me, and not a fence nor a bar in the way, sweep it with my whole heart and soul and mind and strength. If that was not prayer, and in some measure the prayer of Penuel, that could not fail in some degree to receive the blessing, I believed that I had never prayed, and was yet in my sins.

After placing myself on my pillow and disposing of all other matters, I used to betake myself to this struggle, first for others, and then for my children. And if I ever prayed, it was in those nocturnal agonies. And after thus staking my own salvation, as it were, on the issue, I would go in the morning, or in the course of the day, to see how my daughter was affected; and she, knowing the kindness of my intention, would meet me, week after week, with a filial smile. I could never have thought that such a filial smile would so wither a parent's heart. My stated question was, "Do you realizingly feel that it would be just for God to cast you off?" And she would as uniformly answer

"No." She knew all about the doctrines; her understanding was fully convinced; she was awakened, and attended all the meetings; but she went no further.

In the latter part of December, I sent for my daughter Ellen home, that I might lay her at the Saviour's feet. If I failed in my object, I knew the world would say, "There, he tried and could'nt." But I thought with myself, "She can but die." And so her brother-in-law went for her 90 miles in that season of the year. When she came home I desired her to do nothing but read and pray and attend the meetings. She complied, and was sober, but not convicted, or even awakened.

Thus things went on till Wednesday evening, Jan. 18th, 1826; in which time my anguish of spirit had well nigh laid me upon a bed of sickness. That evening after meeting, I visited Louisa, and put to her the old question, "Do you feel that it would be just for God to cast you off?" After a considerable pause, and in a low voice, she answered, "Yes, Sir." I started, as a man awoke in a new world, and said, "Do you, my dear?" After another pause, and in a low voice, she answered again, "Yes, Sir." That evening upon my pillow, I began to say, "Was she not awakened at Newark? Has she not knowledge enough? And is she not now at last convicted of her desert of hell? Has not enough been done in a preparatory way? Wilt thou not this night take away the heart of stone and give a heart of flesh?" At that moment something within me said, "No; let her be more deeply convicted of her sin and ruin, that she may know what she owes to our redeeming God and his dying Son;—that she may see the distinctive glories of that God and Saviour whom I maintained against a world in arms before she was born." The prayer passed from her to her husband, and then to her sister. Their personal interests, which had pressed like a mountain so long upon me, were swallowed up and lost, and the all-absorbing desire was, "That eyes so dear to me, may see the glory of our redeeming God and his dying Son, and that souls so dear may show in their salvation the same glory to the universe." I then saw, as I never saw before, what it is for

God to be glorified, and felt conscious that I desired that object more than all others. It appeared the most glorious object; and my whole soul went out in pantings after it.

The next morning, before I was up, Mrs. Griffin came back into my room, and said, "I have been into Ellen's chamber, and found her weeping. She says, Mamma, I woke up this morning early, and began to think how good God had been to me and how ungrateful I had been to him; and I can't sleep any more." This was her first conviction. That same morning, as Louisa was coming down to spend the day with us, (for the family spent every Thursday with us,) and when she had reached the gate, "The thought," (as she afterwards expressed it,) "dropped upon my mind, that God reigns; and it was a glorious thought." She did not tell me of this till Friday night. On Saturday morning, when I called to see her, she was all dissolved, and related the views she had had of her sin and of the mercy of God the last evening. On Thursday Ellen attended Mr. Gridley's inquiry meeting, and he told me afterwards, that in addressing her, he had tried every string, and not one of them vibrated till he touched on the goodness of God, and then she wept like a child. On Friday or Saturday I said to her, "My daughter, where do you expect to spend your eternity?" She answered, "Why, papa, I have'nt thought of that." "What then have you been thinking about?" "I have been thinking how good God has been to me, and how unthankful I have been to him." On Saturday morning, after conversing with Louisa, I took Dr. Smith, my son-in-law, into a separate room, and pressed him with all the power I could apply. He wept. The next day, (Jan. 22d, 1826,) I preached a sermon with a view to try Louisa's hope, from Psalm 99:9, "For the Lord our God is holy." I noticed that Dr. Smith devoured every word. The next day I learnt that he had been hoping since Saturday. I searched for him and found him, and after dinner he came to me. We sat in my study, and Ellen sat by the window behind me. I cast my eye back upon her, and she looked more like the image of misery than ever before. She felt that she was left alone indeed. The Dr. retired, and Ellen left the room. Not long after, Mrs. Griffin came in, and said, "Ellen has been saying to me, I am afraid

papa don't feel about me just as he did about Louisa." "Tell the dear child," said I, "to bring in my surtout, (as I was going out,) and I will talk with her." She came in, in great distress. After some conversation, I kneeled down with her, by my library." The spot and the time I never shall forget. The Syrophenician woman had been much before me. She was before me then; and so was the glorious Personage to whom she applied. And he appeared as near to me as he did to her,—as near as though he had been bodily present. And it was as easy for me to put my child into his arms, as though he had been visibly in the room. And I did put her into his arms, with all my heart and soul. And it seemed to me that it was impossible, but that she would give herself to him before she arose. When I arose I took her in my arms and said, "My dear, have you given yourself to Christ?" "Oh, no," said she, and was apparently overwhelmed. I left the room and went out to visit a family, where I met my dear Louisa, who appeared the happiest creature in the world. She was going that eveing to the first prayer meeting she ever attended, as she thought. Upon my return after tea, Mrs. Griffin met me and said, "I never witnessed such a scene. Ellen has been weeping upon my neck, and saying, Christ died for me, and I have never done any thing for him, and I cannot live so any longer." I asked her to send her in. She came in, when the following dialogue took place between us. "My child, where do you expect to spend your eternity?" "Why, papa, I think it most likely that I shall spend it in hell." "Well, my dear, that question God will decide, without asking counsel of you or me." "I know that, papa, and I don't want any body else should decide it." "Why, my dear?" "Because he appears so good and so just." "Do you think that you deserve hell?" "Oh, I know I do." "What is the greatest desire of your heart?" "To love and serve God all my days." In that condition she remained eight and forty hours, without a particle of hope. At the end of that time, (to use her own expression,) her burden fell off, and the preciousness and loveliness of Christ appeared to her view. In the mean time Louisa attended her prayer meeting on Monday evening. While I was at breakfast on Tuesday morning, Ellen received from her sister the following note.

MY DEAREST ELLEN,

I never felt so anxious to see you as I do this morning, but the weather seems to forbid. I have always felt for your body, now I would inquire about your immortal soul. When I feel the fullness there is in the dear Redeemer, his ability and willingness, yea, ardent desire to save just such sinners as we are, I cannot but hope that you have seen him too, and have been enabled without reserve to give yourself away to him. If you have not, O do not stay away another moment. Why should you? There is balm in Gilead, an almighty Physician there. Do you feel yourself to be a polluted, self-ruined sinner, totally undone? O let not your sins keep you from him. This is the very reason why you should go to him. What was his errand into this miserable world, but to "seek and to save that which was lost?" What is he now walking our streets for but to dispense pardons to the guilty: to "gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom?" O believe his promises. Think him sincere when he invites "every one that thirsteth," all that are "weary and heavy laden," "the ends of the earth," to look unto him and be saved. Do not add to all your other sins, the crying sin of unbelief. Come, and he will fill your soul with that "peace that passeth understanding." He will enable you to say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." He will enable you to say, "O that all the blind could see him too." He will enable you to point your dear companions to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." I hope your brother is in the ark. We had a long and most interesting conversation last evening. He was called away at daylight, and has not yet returned. Mr. and Mrs. Hanson are both rejoicing in their Saviour. Give my love to E. Dewey. You may read this to her. What I say to you I say to her,—to all,—to poor Susan; come to Christ. "None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good."

We had a blessed meeting last evening. O it is good to draw near to God through the Mediator. You must come up "to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Do all you can for him who bought you with his blood. There is nothing else worth living for.

My love to our dear parents. Say to them, "Be not afraid, only believe." I hope to see you before night.

Your anxious and affectionate sister,

F. L. SMITH.

Notwithstanding this note, Louisa shortly after came down and spent the day; and in the evening my three children and myself attended a most interesting meeting. Louisa has been heard to say, that was the happiest day of her life. The next day, Wednesday, Jan. 26th, Ellen was relieved. All within a week from that ever to be remembered Wednesday evening, when I first learnt that Louisa was convicted, and when I had that travail on my wakeful pillow.

The following letter from Doctor GRIFFIN, containing an account of the hopeful conversion of his children, was addressed to NATHANIEL WILLIS Esq. of Boston, and shortly after was published in the Boston Recorder.

Williams College, Feb. 2, 1826.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter gave me great pleasure. The prospect of another revival of religion in Boston is animating in no small degree. Your letter was read to the pious students who are here in vacation, with a request that they would daily remember Boston in their prayers. At a public meeting they formally agreed to do it; and at a fast held yesterday, Boston made one of the subjects of their public petitions. I intend to endeavor to engage the pious people of the town in the same course of wrestling for you.

O that the dear christians in Boston may receive a spirit of special and effectual prayer, in which desires as strong as death shall be united with absolute dependance and faith, and all combined with the most vigorous exertions to arrest the attention of sinners. These

two classes of exertions ought to be duly proportioned to each other. If much prayer is employed with little exhortation, it is like standing at the bottom of a hill and praying to be placed on the top. If much exhortation is used with little prayer, it will issue in proud, unproductive self-dependance. But then it must be the prayer of faith. God has said, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel;" and, "Ask, and it shall be given you." "We must take hold of the promise with a grasp that cannot be broken; and with an importunity that cannot be denied. Nor is this humble holding of God to his word in opposition to the fullest acknowledgment of his sovereignty and our dependance; for we know all the time that unless he gives us the spirit of prayer we cannot take hold of the promise. And if we are tempted to think this urgency and repetition teasing, we have only to refer to the parable of the importunate widow. It is a day in which, after the partial suspension of the rains of heaven, they are beginning to descend in very uncommon effusions. A late letter informed me that in the small village of Rome, ninety obtained a hope in two weeks. All through the western part of New-York, and through Vermont and New-Jersey, God is doing great things. It is time to expect great things, and to attempt great things. We are commanded to open our mouths wide. Old Mr. Elmer, of New-Jersey, in preaching from this text one day, stopped: the tear came into his eye: For my part, says he, I never expected much, and God never gave me much. I know of no place where they have a better right to expect much than in Boston. You are kneeling hard by the sepulchres of those blessed fathers who have made so large a deposite in heaven of their prayers. And God knows the need of a standard lifted up where the enemy comes in like a flood. O be not discouraged. The blessed Jesus has much people in that city, who never yet have known him. Our earnest prayers will daily mingle with yours for that ancient city of our father's solemnities.

As you were so kind as to speak so tenderly of my dear children, I know it will give you joy to hear that both of them have hopefully laid their enmity and their honors at their Redeemer's feet. My son-in-law also is in a very interesting state of mind, and I hope, not far

from the kingdom of heaven. Help me to magnify the Lord forever. I have given my redeemed children away to Christ, with a supreme desire that they may be altogether devoted to him all the days of their lives. Whether they be rich or poor,—whether they live long or die soon,—are minor considerations.

You have been a highly favored parent, and have probably had more experience than I in these solemn and awful and interesting dealings of God. As you are so largely experienced in these matters, perhaps I may drop upon the ear of private friendship some account of what God has done for me. And if it shall encourage you or any of my dear friends to agonize more abundantly for their children, my end is answered.

Little did I think what such a blessing was to cost me. The struggle came near laying me on a bed of sickness. Never before had I such a sense of the import of that figure in Gal. 4:19. I had often said that in offering their children in baptism parents must believe for them, (as far as the nature of things admits,) as they did for their own souls, and must bring them to Christ as poor lost sinners, much in the same way in which they brought themselves. But now I see that if their children are to be born again in a covenant way, (it may be done in a sovereign way without them,) they must travail in birth for them. For two full months the struggle lasted before I saw any decisive signs of an answer. My younger daughter was at school at Hartford, and I sent for her home that she might have the advantage of this blessed season. Week after week, after the midnight struggle upon my wakeful pillow, I would go to my children in the morning and be dismayed to find them the same. I would then return and examine my prayers. I could not see that I set up their interest against that of God, or my will against his will. I saw that I had no claim except on a gracious promise made to prayer. But that I seized and hung to with the grasp of death. And yet nothing seemed to follow. At last it came to this: if that was not prayer,—and in some measure the prayer of Penuel, (Gen. 32:26)—I knew nothing about prayer, and must abandon my hope. If all my children must perish, I must go down



with them. Such a hold had I fixed upon the promise, and such was the impossibility of letting it go, that I found I had staked every thing upon it, and upon its truth in reference to me, and it was an eternal heaven or an eternal hell for more than one. And yet God delayed. Ah then was the tug and struggle which shook the soul. After many nights I found myself, on my pillow, longing that my children might be brought to see their ruin, in order that they might see what they owed to God and their precious Redeemer,—might see his glory and bear witness for him and praise him all their days. Before, I had brought them to God as a personal interest; now, I wished the thing done for the Lord's sake. The next morning Ellen could not sleep to think how good God was and how ungrateful she had been; and Louisa, (whose impressions had been deeper than she had acknowledged or known,) found herself rejoicing that God reigned. Four days after as I was praying with Ellen, I felt such a nearness to Christ, and was enabled to commit her to his arms so easily, so fully, and so confidently, that I could not but hope she would commit herself to him before she arose. I humbly trust he received her then. In an hour or two she was giving strong evidence of a new nature; yet for two days she lay crushed under a sense of her unworthiness, until, as she expressed it, "the preciousness and loveliness of the Saviour opened to her view." During this awful suspense she received the enclosed note from Louisa, which I send to your daughters, my dear children whom I used to catechise.

O may my soul be thankful, and may my life and my children be wholly devoted to the Lord. With my kind regards to Mrs. Willis and your children, to Mr. and Mrs. Dwight, and all my beloved friends in Boston, I am, Dear Sir,

Affectionately yours,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

The following is an extract from a letter written about the same time, and in reference to the same general subject, to the REV.

FREDERICK MARSH, of Winchester, Conn.

MY DEAR SIR,

I received yours of the 15th inst. by due course of mail. I am truly rejoiced to hear of this wonderful favor of God vouchsafed to our dear Mr. Gillet and to the people of his charge; and it is my hearty desire and prayer to God that your congregation, and all our beloved Litchfield county, may be equally blessed. After several years of partial suspension, the rains of heaven are at length beginning to descend on our land in an unusual degree. May the whole extent of the United States be drenched in the heavenly flood.

We have indeed much to acknowledge here. From the printed notices you have probably seen what God has done for our college. Of the thirty-one who were on the ground without religion, (numbers were absent in their schools,) we hoped for twenty-seven at the close of the term. Of the other four, one had been in deep waters for a long time; the other three belong to this town, and are in the midst of the revival here. Many prayers have been offered for the absent; and as the work has extended to the town, we greatly hope that these upon their return will fall under an influence that will bring them all in. Do engage your dear praying people to intercede with heaven for an issue so devoutly to be wished.

The work has extended to the town with power and great glory. I have not heard any estimate of the numbers that are impressed, but the influence is very general. Among the hopeful converts, I am permitted by infinite mercy to name my own children. My two daughters give good evidence of a saving change; and my son-in-law is in a very interesting state of mind, and, I hope, not far from the kingdom of heaven. Help me, my dear sir, to bless and praise the Lord forever. It is my supreme desire concerning them, that they may devote themselves wholly to the service of their Redeemer all the days of their life.

Doctor GRIFFIN continues his narrative thus:—

The next spring my two daughters were admitted to the church on the same day. The Doctor has not made a public profession yet. P. S. He joined the church afterwards at Newark, N. J.

The revival saved the college. There were but two professors. One of them appeared to be sinking into the grave with the consumption; the other had made up his mind to leave if the \$25,000 could not be raised. I myself was invited to a professorship in a Theological Seminary, and had engaged to go, if the fund was not raised. The trustees were discouraged by a conflict of eleven years, and would probably have given up the college if all the officers had left them. All depended, under God, on raising the \$25,000. That would never have been raised but for the revival. For besides that this event predisposed the christian public to contribute, it operated on me in two ways. In the first place, by that timely interposition, (in addition to the many tokens of favor manifested to the college before, which are mentioned in my sermon at the dedication of the new chapel,) I was convinced that the institution was dear to God, and that it was his purpose to preserve it. Had it not been for that confidence I should have turned back a hundred times amidst the discouragements which surrounded me. In the second place, that revival gave me a sense of obligation which excited me to the mighty effort. The influence which came down to save the college, had, as I hoped, brought in my children; and I felt that if ever a man was bound to go till he fell down for an institution dear to Christ, I was that man.

The following extract from Doctor HOPKIN'S sermon occasioned by Doctor GRIFFIN'S death, will show the depressed state of the college at the time he took charge of it, and the important agency he had in relieving it from its embarrassments, and placing it on a more solid and permanent foundation.

"We now come to that period in the history of Dr. Griffin, when he became connected with this college. This was in 1821. At the commencement in that year, Dr. Moore presided for the last time. It had for some time been the opinion of the majority of the trustees, that if there was to be but one college, and it was supposed there could be but one, in the western part of this state, Northampton would be a more favorable location, and Dr. Moore had accepted the presidency with the expectation that the college would be removed. A majority of the trustees had voted that it was expedient to remove it, and had petitioned the legislature for permission to do so. This petition had been met by a spirited opposition on the part of the inhabitants of the town, and of the county; and upon their own responsibility, they raised a subscription of \$17,000, which was laid before a committee of the legislature, and which was to be paid to the college in case it should not be removed. This subscription, raised against the wishes of a majority of the trustees, but which they could not refuse without a fraud upon the legislature, some persons afterwards refused to pay, and it was made the ground of much misrepresentation respecting the college. In consequence, however, of this subscription, and of the representations made from this part of the state, the legislature refused to the trustees permission to remove the college. In the mean time, strong expectations had been excited in Hampshire county, that there would be a college there. The people of Amherst, acting in concert with some of the trustees of this college residing in that region, raised large subscriptions and erected buildings for the reception of students, with the expectation of obtaining a charter. Having, therefore, accommodations prepared in a region upon which his eye had been fixed, Dr. Moore was about to place himself at the head of an institution there, and to take a considerable number of the students with him. The trustees had already elected one or two persons as president, who had declined, when Dr. Griffin was fixed upon; and one of their number went to Newark to lay the subject before him. He had been interested in the college from its connection with missionary operations; and coming on immediately to meet the trustees, he arrived here commencement day at noon, and took his seat upon the stage. His appearance at that

time revived the hopes of the friends of the college; and it was soon understood that he would accept the appointment. He had precisely the kind of reputation which was needed for the college at such a crisis; a comparatively large class entered, and the college continued to increase in numbers and to prosper till 1825. In February of that year, Amherst obtained a charter, and as it had been often urged against granting one that two colleges could not be sustained in the western part of this state, it was supposed by many that it would be a death blow to this. This impression caused a number of the students to take dismissions, while a very small class entered at the ensuing commencement. It was now seen, that 'to extract the seeds of consumption which had lurked in the college for eleven years, something must be done to convince the public that it would live and flourish in this ground.'

"The trustees accordingly resolved to attempt to raise a fund of \$25,000 to establish a new professorship, and to build a chapel. In the raising of this sum, Dr. Griffin was the principal agent; and strengthened by an extraordinary revival of religion, with which God in his mercy then favored the college, he accomplished what probably no other man could have done. In a time of general embarrassment, he raised \$12,000 in four weeks. The fund was completed; a professorship of rhetoric and moral philosophy was endowed; this building was erected, and Sept. 2d, 1828, standing where I now stand, he dedicated it, 'to the honor and glory of the ever blessed Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' From that time it has been felt that the college is permanent; and it has been going on side by side with sister institutions, doing its part in carrying on the great business of education in this country. In estimating this effort of Dr. Griffin, it should be remembered that it was the first of the kind, and probably led to the more extended and the successful efforts of other institutions in the same way."

The following letter was addressed by Doctor GRIFFIN to the compiler of this Memoir, in compliance with a request made in behalf of one or two distinguished clergymen in England, that he

would give his views of the cause of the difference in the mode of the operation of the Holy Spirit in Great Britain and the United States.

Williams College, Nov. 14, 1828.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Your favor of Aug. 16th would not have lain so long unanswered but for a series of most pressing calls. Your friends inquire whether the difference between England and America in regard to the mode of the Spirit's operations can be referred to a difference of national character, or can in any way be accounted for. If by national character is meant every thing by which one nation differs from others in their views, feelings, and manners, the fact must be ascribed to national character, except so far as it is to be referred to inscrutable sovereignty. Doubtless the Spirit acts so much in a line with nature, that national character has vast influence; and to show all the reasons of the difference would be to show all the circumstances which contribute to render one nation unlike another. But this would be as impossible as to explain all the causes of the winds blowing in such a direction and shifting about continually. In both cases some general reasons can be assigned, but innumerable details escape our research. We must doubtless ascribe the difference in part to sovereignty more or less inscrutable,—partly perhaps to the method of God's covenanted mercy,—and so far as means are concerned, to the manner in which they are shaped by the circumstances which influence or constitute national character. Without pretending to exhaust the subject, I will offer the following reasons for the blessings which have visited our country, leaving it to our brethren on the other side of the water to determine how far they are distinctive.

(1.) The sovereignty of God. This land, which was discovered by the light of the Reformation, (in other words, by that agony of the public mind which a few years after produced the Reformation,) seems to have been reserved for the asylum of the oppressed during the

troubulous times before the millenium, and as a place where the church might take her more glorious form and grow up into millennial beauty and splendor.

(2.) Some things have occurred in the history of this country which favor such a destiny. The United States were not doomed to grow up from barbarism, bringing up with them the marks and clogs of a more barbarous state. They began in an enlightened age, and in possession of all the knowledge and institutions of the most enlightened nation on earth. The circumstances of their settlement, and still more of the revolution, swept away a thousand authorities and prejudices connected with long established forms, and left them to take that shape which the unfettered reason of an enlightened age approved. This advantage soon discovered itself in their civil institutions, in their systems of education, and no where more than in their religion.

(3.) No country was ever settled by such a colony as peopled New-England. They were among the best part of the best nation on the face of the globe, and in its best age. They broke away from every thing dear on earth for the sake of their religion; they came with unconquerable attachments to civil and religious liberty, and brought a mass of science competent to found those literary institutions which have covered New-England with light,—which have excluded ignorance, and left scarcely a man unable to read his Bible. Their churches, their sabbaths, their laws, their rulers, their colleges, their schools, all were subservient to religion. And they entailed a blessing on their posterity which proved that they transacted with a covenant God. Their descendants have been distinguished from all the other inhabitants of the United States. A part of New-Jersey was settled by the descendants of the pilgrims, where they have remained in a great measure unmixed: and I have seen the Spirit of God repeatedly pass through their towns, and stop near the boundary which divided them from another race. There are families in New-England, in which an unbroken succession of pious generations can be traced from the first settlement of the country to the present time.

(4.) There are circumstances in our history which have given a general bias in favor of revivals. In addition to the fact that New-England was born in a revival, (as it was a revival of religion which separated the pilgrims from their country and brought them hither;) a strong impression was made in favor of revivals by the embalmed name of Whitefield, and the great work of grace through the land in his day. The influence of President Edwards and Dr. Bellamy in New-England, of Presidents Davies and Finley and the Tennents in the Presbyterian church, and of the converts of that day, some of whom lived to a good old age and had great weight of character, (as the Rev. Dr. John Rogers of New-York;) the influence of these men with their writings, and the writings of their disciples, (as Hopkins and "West and Dwight in New-England, and Dr. Green and others of the Presbyterian church,) have brought almost the whole country to look on the revivals of that day as the work of God, and on revivals in general with veneration and desire. This opinion once settled, it is natural for christians to hope and pray, and strive for those special movements which are called by this name. And such is the coincidence between natural and supernatural operations, that these efforts are likely to succeed.

(5.) The boldness and energy of New-England, formed in a life of exercise, and under an invigorating sky,—formed amidst the roughness of our forests, and under the impulses of unbounded liberty; the plainness of our republican manners, and the matter of fact character of our mental operations, and of our style; the unparalleled diffusion of knowledge, under which the young grow up with strong common sense, and demand to be fed with truth instead of sound; all these causes operate to produce great plainness, and directness in the public preaching, and to confine it to a naked, pointed, condensed exhibition of truth,—of the whole truth without abatement or disguise,—even of those parts which in some places would be considered strong meat. Thus "the sword of the Spirit," naked and glittering, is brandished before all; and it is not likely to be brandished in vain.



(6.) But the most powerful means is yet to be mentioned. It is found in the distinct apprehensions which prevail in New-England about the instantaneousness of regeneration, the sinfulness of every moral exercise up to that moment, and the duty of immediate submission. Such a view of things leads the preacher to divide his audience into two classes, and to run a strong and affecting line of demarcation between them. When one feels that the moral, sober, prayerful, unregenerate part of his audience are doing pretty well, and can afford to wait a little longer before they submit, he will not be so pressing, nor fall with such a tremendous weight upon their conscience. When he feels that they cannot do much more than they do, but must wait God's time, he will not annoy and weary them, and make them sick of waiting, and compel them to come in. But when one enters the pulpit under a solemn sense that every unregenerate man before him, however awakened, is an enemy to God, is resisting with all his heart, and will continue to resist until he submits,—that he must be born again before he is any better than an enemy, or has made any approaches towards holiness; when one looks around upon the unregenerate part of his audience and sees that they are under indispensable obligations to yield at once,—that they have no manner of excuse for delaying,—that they deserve eternal reprobation for postponing an hour; when one feels from the bottom of his heart that there is nothing short of regeneration that can answer any purpose, and that he cannot leave his dear charge to be turned from enemies of God to friends ten years hence,—delivered from condemnation ten years hence,—but must see it now; O how he will pray and preach! He will give God no rest, and he will give sinners no rest; and he will bring down their immediate pressing, boundless obligations upon them with the weight of a world. Under such preaching sinners must either turn to God or be miserable. There is no chance for them to remain at ease this side of infidelity itself. But the doctrine of progressive regeneration must be attended with more silent and gradual effects.

Some of these reasons apply with peculiar emphasis to New-England; but the sentiments of New-England are scattered far and

wide through the country, and her influence, in every thing relating to religion and science, is felt to the land's end.

I rejoice to hear that some of the best and most enlightened men in England are solemnly inquiring into the cause why that land of our fathers' sepulchres,—that glory of the eastern world,—is not visited with stronger manifestations of divine power. It is a token for good; and I hope and pray that the time may not be far distant when that beloved country shall be drenched in the heavenly flood, and become the point of strong radiations to enlighten and regenerate three quarters of the globe. I am, my Dear Sir, with most perfect confidence and esteem, affectionately yours,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

TO HIS CHILDREN.

Williams College, June 28, 1830.

MY DEAR CHILDREN,

I have no doubt of the great use of the infant school system to children of three and four, and perhaps to some of more advanced age. To all, of every age below ten, it cannot fail to offer some advantages of no ordinary sort. But it is an experiment; and those who have studied the principles of education most, will think themselves obliged to keep their eye upon it, and watch its effects on different minds. The power and habit of concentrated attention are to be ranked among the most important constituents of genius; and although much of this depends on nature, much depends on education. This is a subject about which intellectual philosophers largely treat; and one of the great uses of mathematics in a system of education, is to form the habit of close and discriminating attention. It is possible that this new system may prove deficient, and want to be improved in reference to this matter, especially as relates to certain minds.

Your affectionate father,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

TO GEORGE GRIFFIN, ESQ. AND HIS WIFE, AFTER THE DEATH  
OF THEIR SON, REV. EDMUND D. GRIFFIN.

Williams College, Sept. 5th, 1830.

MY DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER,

Since the arrival of dear George's letter yesterday afternoon, we have mingled our tears and sympathies with you in no ordinary degree. This is indeed the ordering of him whose footsteps are in the mighty deep and whose ways are not known. But you know it is the allotment of Infinite Wisdom and love. I pray that you and your children may be supported. I know God can make up this loss a thousand fold by the impartation of spiritual blessings to you and to your house, and I have a strong hope that he intends to do it. It has taken a hold of Charles' mind, which encourages us to pray for him and labor with him. I went over to college to break it to the poor boy, and broke it gradually, and invited him to come home. He did, and spent the evening, and was much overcome. We all had a note for prayers put up today, at the head of which was Charles' name. He is now reading one of the most pungent of President Edward's sermons. If only Charles can be made a christian, Edmund, if he could now speak, would say, It is a good worth dying for. But I hope this for Francis and Mary, and the whole family. It is a great comfort to us that the dear youth made us a visit,—that we had an opportunity to see him, and love him and ride with him, and pay him some few attentions; and especially as it afforded George an opportunity to have that interesting conversation with him three weeks ago to-day, which, more than any thing else before the death scene, confirmed our hopes respecting the reality of his religion. We shall long cherish the remembrance of his visit; and the scenes

through which I rode with him will always be dear and associated with his name.

We regard it as a very merciful providence that George went home with him, and was present to cheer his dying hour, and to show other branches of the family the power of religion in such a scene of affliction. And yet his going depended on a very small circumstance;—a new proof among a million, that if God governs great events he must govern small. It must be a trying consideration, that after so much had been expended on his education, and such high hopes were formed of him, he should be taken away just as he was prepared to be useful. But he has not lost his education. It prepared him, I trust, for higher flights of devotion and blessedness in his Father's kingdom. And whether is better, to be a professor or an angel? These repeated strokes, my dear brother and sister, ought to loosen our hold on earth, and make us live the rest of our days for God and eternity; and to educate our children, not so much for the glories of this world as for the glories of an eternal state; and to shape every part of their education with such a reference. If I had a million of children, I would rather train them to take a part in the benevolent operations of the day, and in the sanctifying delights of the prayer meeting, than to shine in assemblies marked only with the spirit of this world. And I doubt not that by the grave of your dear Ellen and Edmund, it must appear so to you. Let me entreat you not to suffer such an impression, made in this solemn hour of truth, to wear off without permanently influencing the life. Pardon me for this freedom, and believe me to be, with a bleeding heart, and with a heart that always loves you, your afflicted and affectionate brother,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

TO HIS DAUGHTER MRS. SMITH.

Williams College, June 15th, 1831.

MY DEAR LOUISA,

The influence of a mother upon the manners and salvation of children, especially the latter, is probably greater than that of all other created beings united. On you, then, it chiefly depends, under God, what your children shall be in both worlds. If you lose your authority over them, you lose of course the chief part of your influence, and then your children lose the choicest means which God has appointed for their happiness here and hereafter. If you once form such habits of management as to lose your authority, you never can regain it; for not only your own habits will stand in the way, but the confirmed habits of depraved and untamed children, who will no longer brook restraint. The present is your forming period. Two or three years to come will settle the question unchangeably, (especially if the habits are wrong,) whether you are to have a government which will form your children to honor, and glory, and immortality, or one which will leave their corruptions to take their natural course. God will certainly hold you answerable for those young immortals, and for the distinguished talents which he has given you for their benefit. If you have any piety, my dear child, let it be brought to this bearing. Make the management of your children the object of your most anxious exertions, and the subject of your agonizing and unceasing prayers.

I have not time to go into a full treatise on family government, but will lay down the following rules for your daily and prayerful examination.

I. Exercise your authority as seldom as possible, and instead of it employ kind persuasion and deliberate reasoning; but when you exercise it, make it irresistible.

II. Be careful how you threaten, but never lie. Threaten seldom, but never fail to execute. The parent who is open-mouthed to threaten, and threatens hastily, but is irresolute to punish, and when the child is not subdued by the first threat, repeats it half a dozen times with a voice of increasing violence, and with many shakes and twitches of the little culprit, will certainly possess no authority.

III. Avoid tones and gestures expressive of agitation for trivial matters indicative of no depravity and indicating only the heedlessness or forgetfulness of children, or perhaps nothing more than is common to all young animals, a love to use their limbs. In all such cases the tones should be kind and persuasive, rather than authoritative; and the severity and even the gravity of authority should be reserved exclusively for cases of disobedience or depravity, or for the prevention of serious evil. A perpetual fretting at children for little things, will inevitably harden their hearts, and totally destroy parental authority and influence. There never was a fretting parent, who often threatened and seldom performed, that had a particle of efficient government.

IV. Establish the unchanging habit of not commanding a child but once. Cost what it may, break the child down to obedience to the first command. And when this is once done, if you are careful never to let disobedience escape punishment of some kind or other, and punishment that shall be effectual, and triumphant, you will find it not difficult to maintain your absolute authority.

Your affectionate father,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

In the course of the year 1831, Doctor GRIFFIN became deeply interested in reference to what has been commonly called the "New Divinity." He was fully of the opinion that the views which were supposed to be held by the divines of that school were essentially at variance, not only with plain scripture, but with sound philosophy; and hence he felt himself called upon to take up his pen in defence of what he believed to be the truth as it is in Jesus. The result was, that within a little more than a year, he published, in connexion with this controversy, a sermon on "Regeneration not effected by light;" a letter on "the connexion between the new measures and the new doctrines;" and a more extended treatise on "Divine efficiency." Early in 1832 he addressed the following letter to the Rev. Dr. TAYLOR of

New-Haven, with a view to ascertain from himself the peculiarities of the system which was commonly called by his name.

Williams College, March 6, 1832.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I was glad to see, in the New-York Observer, your letter in answer to the questions proposed by Dr. Hawes. Complaint had been made, you know, that you did not let the whole length and breadth of your theory out, and were not understood. I was glad therefore to see you so explicit. Still there are a few points which I do not yet understand, and on which I should deem it a privilege to receive information, if you have no objection to give it. Divine truth is the common property of the church; and all the new light that is brought forward should be so spread out that every one may examine it fully for himself. I want to examine your theory to the bottom, so far as relates to the great question of creature dependance, and perhaps may have occasion to offer my views to the public. I wish for permission to make any use of your answer which the cause of truth may to me seem to require; and unless you forbid it, shall consider myself authorized so to act.

1. You say "that the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit in regeneration results solely from the voluntary perverseness of the sinners' heart." My question is, Are not Gabriel and Paul dependant on God for holiness? not on light merely, but on the efficient power of God acting on their hearts?

2. You say regeneration "is produced by the influence of the Holy Spirit operating on the mind through truth, and in perfect consistency with the nature of moral action and laws of moral agency." On this two questions arise. (1.) What is meant by "through truth?" All allow that the new exercises are put forth in view of truth as their object, and are influenced by different truths as their reasons. Is truth any thing more in this matter? What causes the exercise towards the truth, or in view of the truth, to be love rather

than hatred? Is it God acting by his own power upon the mind? Is it truth brought clearly into view? Or is it the mind itself without any other cause? (2.) What limitation or explanation do you mean by the words, "and in perfect consistency with the nature of moral action and the laws of moral agency?" If God causes the creature to love truth rather than hate it, still the love is the creature's own act, and in it he is as free as God himself. Do you mean any thing more by the above passage? Do you mean by it to explain how God causes the mind to love the truth? If so, what is the explanation at large?

3. You say, (under the 6th head of negatives,) that as a moral agent the sinner is qualified so to use the truth presented to his mind as to become holy at once. Do you mean any thing more than that as a rational being he has natural ability, and so is reasonably bound to be holy at once? Do you mean that he ever will become holy, however fully the truth may be impressed on his mind, without the power of God exerted upon his heart?

4. Under the third head of your negatives you impliedly say, or seem to say, that God does not on the whole prefer that sin should exist rather than not exist; and that where it does exist, he could educe more good from holiness, if creatures "would render it." Do you mean to imply that God could not have prevented sin consistently with the most perfect freedom of creatures?

I hope, my Dear Sir, that you will not deem it obtrusive in me to propose these questions on a subject so interesting to us both as the friends of God and man, and that you will believe me to be, most sincerely,

Your friend and brother,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

Rev. Dr. N. W. TAYLOR.



The following is Dr. TAYLOR'S reply, and is published with his consent:

Yale College, March 20th, 1832.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I received yours of the 6th, a few days since. I regard it as dictated by the love of truth, and in no respect "obtrusive." I must however excuse myself from complying with your request in one particular. I have not time to make the statements, the explanations and the defence of my views and opinions on the points proposed, which I should be willing to make for public controversy. You know the ambiguities of language, especially in all attempts at philosophical analysis; and how difficult it is to bring two minds to understand terms in the same import. What I say therefore, (you have permitted me to make this condition,) I say with the injunction on you to make no use of it whatever in any public discussion. What is published on the subjects adverted to, is certainly all that calls for public discussion. I hope you will not infer from this, that I hold opinions which I am reluctant to state. I have, I think, given ample proof to the contrary. Your queries, if I understand them, lead directly into an analysis of moral agency. Into this, I have gone somewhat minutely in my lectures. It would give me great pleasure to go over the ground with you in conversation, and even in a correspondence, if I had time. But I cannot present my views on such a subject in extenso, on a single sheet, nor with any such minuteness as the object proposed seems to require. I cannot consent to write letters to my friends for the purpose of giving them my views and opinions, that they may quote and publish in the exercise of their judgment merely. What I say therefore, I say confiding in you to make no such use of it.

You ask me, "are not Gabriel and Paul dependant on God for holiness—not on light merely, but on the efficient power of God acting in their hearts?"—I should answer, that I do not remember any text in the Bible which asserts this fact, in respect to Gabriel. If therefore the

fact be proved, it must be proved in the way of philosophical deduction; and the inference must rest ultimately on what I esteem with Dr. Dwight, the unauthorized assumption, that God cannot create, and has not created an agent, a being in one respect like himself, viz. perfectly qualified to act, constitutionally considered, without being acted upon, by extrinsic efficiency. When I speak of this as an unauthorized assumption, I suppose you will dissent, and that many considerations will arise in your mind quite decisive with you to the contrary. Here then would be a main question. I think I can solve the supposed difficulties on this subject, without infringing on certainty of action, or what Dr. Edwards calls moral necessity on the one hand, or on human liberty, as complete as any one ever conceived of, on the other. Put this to the account current of vanity and presumption, for I have not time to enter into the development of my views. In view of what you say in your sermon in the National Preacher, and the queries in your letter, the whole question between us would, so far as I can see, resolve itself into the above question, respecting the possibility or the fact of a created agent. For aught I can see, some constitutional change in man is necessary to qualify him—or to give him natural ability, to perform his duty, or it is not. No matter as to this point, in what we suppose duty to consist, whether taste, disposition, exercise or action; for still some constitutional change is necessary to the existence of that called duty, or it is not. If such a change is necessary to this, then so long as man is not the subject of the change, he is not qualified—he has not natural ability to perform his duty. This constitutional incompetency, whether it consists in the want of intellect, or will, or susceptibility, is according to the supposition, that which cannot in any sense be removed, except by a literal act of creation and its product. But this is not in the power of man. I ask then, if man is the subject of such incompetence or disqualification in respect to duty, will not every mind decide that the thing called duty is a misnomer? Can this consequence be avoided, by saying he can if he will; or he can if he were disposed? He can, what? Can perform his duty, plainly; can become the subject of holiness. And what is this but a right state or act of will? To say then, that he can if he will, is to say that he can will

right, if he wills right. But this implies either, that he has no power to will right unless he actually wills right, which is no power at all, so long as he does not will right; so that if he wills right he has a new power;—or, it implies that he can will right by willing to will right, which is Arminian self-determination. The question then is not to be evaded by these shifts; by answers which mean nothing but what is absurd: but it still remains a plain simple question, viz. is man, or is he not, constitutionally competent;—is he, as created, endowed with every constitutional qualification to become morally perfect? Can he will right? Can he become rightly disposed? I admit his moral inability, i. e. that perversion of his natural ability, which is the reason, that he never will, if left to himself, become rightly disposed. Has he then natural ability to perform his duty? And this, in my view, is no other than to ask whether men are constitutionally qualified to love God, as his law requires. And this is answered by the fact, that the requirement itself is limited by the very terms of the law, to their powers, or ability. It is as certain that they have a heart, a mind, a soul, a strength, qualifying them to love, as that they are required to love. It is according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.

But now, on the other hand, if no constitutional change is necessary to qualify man to become morally perfect, then all philosophical reasoning founded on the assumption of its necessity, is groundless and must pass for nothing.

I know that many questions may arise in your mind, when it is supposed that sinful men are constitutionally qualified to become morally perfect. I wish I could have an opportunity with you to try to solve the difficulties. The chief point about which we should differ, would, I think, respect what I call constitutional (not moral) susceptibility to the motives to holiness, or to the objects of holy affection. This your scheme, if I understand it, denies, and maintains that the only thing in the sinful mind to which these objects appeal, or which they can touch or affect, is the selfish affection of the heart. If you have not read on this topic, I hope you will read attentively the

four articles in Christian Spectator, 1829, on the Means of Regeneration, the reply in that work to Dr. Tyler, in the Nos. for March, p. 147, and June, p. 380, for 1830. Must there not be a constitutional capacity of good from an object, before it can become a motive? Vide Edwards on the Will, part I. sec. 5. Must there not be excitement toward that good in the form of involuntary (i. e. not voluntary) desire, propensity, &c. before choice, or love, or preference is in any sense possible? Is there any mental fact of which we are more certain? "Was not the man Christ Jesus, tempted in all points like as we are? Is it not intuitive truth, that if holiness or sin begin in the human mind, and have an antecedent, in the mind, that such antecedent is not itself holy or sinful? Can there be holiness before holiness, or sin before sin? Does not the existence of this constitutional susceptibility to the good in an object, account for the choice or love of it, so far as it is necessary for this purpose to suppose any susceptibility? Compare Gen. 3:6, and James, 1:14, 15. Does not the supposition of a moral (i. e. holy or sinful) susceptibility prior to choice or preference, land us in inextricable contradictions and absurdities? Does not the denial of a constitutional susceptibility amount to a denial of constitutional qualification; to the assertion of natural inability, or aside from technicalities, to an incompetence or disqualification, inconsistent with moral obligation?\* Many seem to deny this constitutional susceptibility, chiefly on two accounts,—the one is, that through the medium of their philosophy, it looks like something inconsistent with total depravity. Whereas, it is obvious that there can be no total depravity without it. Not to love God, if I have no constitutional susceptibility to his excellence, implies, that the reason is that I have no motive to love God, and that it can no more be criminal in me not to love him than in a tree or a stone; while the love of the world or mammon, must in such a case, be, not a preference of one of two goods, but a mere instinctive feeling or affection. How diverse in respect to guilt, is this from a preference of the inferior good in a being truly susceptible to the good in both, and fully qualified to prefer either to the other? Here too I might reverse the case, and ask, how could holy angels and holy Adam sin, on your scheme, without a prior change in their mental constitution? and

appeal to Gen. 3:6, as the best philosophical account of such cases, which I have seen.

Another reason for denying my views on this subject, is the apprehension, that all will be thrown into uncertainty—thrown into the eddies of chance. This I deny. And why this apprehension in regard to me? What was the doctrine of president and Dr. Edwards, except the simple certainty of action with power to the contrary. Is this a novelty? Who can show the two things to be inconsistent? Hic labor, &c. Or if any can,—who will be orthodox, he who holds moral necessity, or he who holds natural necessity?

You ask, what is meant by "through the truth?" So it seems, this scriptural phrase is not sufficiently perspicuous; at least for certain purposes. I can express my meaning in other terms, whether more perspicuously or not. When I say, that the change in regeneration is through the truth, I mean, that the mind, the man, in view of the object, God, which truth presents, loves God supremely; or prefers the supreme good to all inferior good, with the objects of preference in view as the truth exhibits them. If this is not intelligible, I know of no terms that can render it so, neither does any other man. But you ask, "Why love rather than hate?" I answer, this fact is to be ascribed to the special influence of the Holy Spirit, without whose influence and aid it would never love God. The question then arises, why is this influence of the Spirit necessary? I answer, not because man is not constitutionally qualified to love God supremely; not because he is not thus qualified in every respect to do the very thing without this divine influence, which he actually does with it. But this influence of the Spirit, is necessary, because the sinner on account of the perverseness of his heart, the strength of the selfish affection, never will love God supremely without this influence of the Spirit. This disqualification is not constitutional, it is of the sinner's own making. But HOW does the Spirit secure this change? I answer, not by acting on the truth—not by literally creating any new property or attribute in the mind,—not in a manner inconsistent with the nature of moral action or laws of moral agency,—not in a manner inconsistent with

the fact, that the sinner's act is the same thing in kind, which it would be, had he done it without a divine influence: not by creating holiness before holiness, call it by what name we may. These negative assertions I suppose we are authorized to make, and that in making them we oppose errors actually existing. But HOW positively? I think here is a place for caution, lest we assert what we do not understand or cannot prove. The question carries us to the *modus operandi*, in a specific respect, and I think sets philosophy at defiance. There may be more ways in which this may be done, by that Spirit, which searcheth the deep things of God, than philosophy has dreamt of. You seem to me to refer to some specific way, when you speak of "the power of God exerted on the heart." If you mean, that God produces a change of heart, I say yes. And yet I suppose you mean something else; but of your meaning, you will allow me to say, your language does not convey the conception to my mind. If I was sure that I received the idea you intend to express, I would not hesitate to say what I think of it. I do not say by any means that you have not a distinct conception of the thing expressed. But I do say, that I have heard much said on the subject, which imparts no ideas to my mind, or at least nothing which we can decide to be true. The Bible seems to me to teach very clearly, that the change in regeneration is a moral change, consisting in such a state of mind as I have described in my letter to Br. Hawes: (vide *C. Spect.* 1832, p. 171. Look at this as explanatory of the different terms used,) that it is through the truth; i. e. that the mind loves, &c. if at all, with the object in view as it is,—that it never does this, however, without an influence of the Holy Spirit, distinct from the natural or simple influence of truth; that while such is the constitutional structure of the mind, and such the nature of truth, that the latter is fitted to produce, and tends to produce, holiness in the human heart, it always is and always will be resisted and counteracted by the sinner without the influence of the Divine Spirit, and that therefore when the change takes place, all the praise is due to God.

But that the Bible decides, or that philosophy can decide on the *modus operandi* of the spirit in all respects, or in any important

respect,—beyond what I have stated, I do not see reason to admit. I can conceive of more ways than one, in which he who created mind can influence mind. But what the actual way is, I pretend not to know.

I have not said, that God does not on the whole prefer that sin should exist, rather than not exist. On the contrary, I believe he does, i. e. that he prefers its existence to its prevention by himself; and that the reason may be, that the nonexistence of sin, i. e. its prevention by God, would involve the non-existence of the best system; (making a distinction between system and its results in moral action.) If the existence of sin is incidental, in respect to divine prevention to the best moral system, then we can see in what respect, or for what reason, God may have purposed the existence of sin, without preferring sin under the present system, to holiness in its stead. As to God's power to prevent sin, consistently with perfect free agency, I have never said it, nor any thing which implies it, in this absolute form of statement. God has such power in some cases, for he does prevent sin in some cases, without destroying free agency. But it is equally certain that had he prevented sin in all cases, or in any case in which it has existed, he must have altered the system. And if he had altered the system;—if, for example, he had interposed by miracles, and brought Tyre and Sidon to repentance, as he could have done, (vide Matt. 11:21,) no one can prove that the requisite interposition would not, beyond prevention on the part of God, have resulted in a vast increase of sin in the moral system.

In conclusion, let me say, I am altogether pleased with your letter;—and one thing more, not inconsistent with the high respect I entertain for your character, viz. you do not seem to me to be well possessed of our views. Pardon me in this. It may be our fault, though we think that such cases admit of another solution. I confide in you to regard my request in respect to this letter.

Yours respectfully,

N. W. TAYLOR.

TO THE REV. F. MARSH.

Williams College, Sept. 18th, 1833.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received your kind and interesting letter of Aug. 10th, and want to write you a whole sheet; but my health warns me to be short. I have been much out of health for the greater part of a year. I have no recollection of the conversation you allude to. but I remember, and never shall forget, the new views of the Saviour I had just had. Those views were partly expressed, soon after, in a sermon, from Heb. 7:26, which I thought of sending you by P—if you did not come to commencement. But my hurry and fatigue let him get away without.

I am glad to hear the good account, in all respects, of your dear deaf son. Give my love to him, and tell him that when he kneels to pray, Christ is not deaf.

I pray that God may give you those views of Christ that are both consoling and sanctifying. I have no doubt that you will one day have them in perfection. And with your desire and humility, if you will ask more believingly, I doubt not you will receive at once. Give my love to Mrs. Marsh and all your children.

I am, Dear Sir,

Very affectionately yours,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

TO THE REV. DR. AVDELOTT OF CINCINNATI.

Williams College, Nov. 6th, 1833.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,



I have just received your favor of the 25th ult. and was gratified at the sight of your signature and at the approbation you bestowed on my little book.\* I am sorry you did not reach us last fall, and beg you to be assured that I shall always be happy to see you. On the three points about which you inquire, I will answer with the utmost pleasure.

First, you understand me to say on p. 79, "that if the depravity of man furnishes the only occasion for the divine interposition," that interposition "must be merely moral suasion." Not exactly so. What I did assert was, that all who believe that the Bible teaches divine efficiency in respect to men, will acknowledge it true in respect to angels: "for those who make our depravity the only occasion for the interposition of the Spirit, and thus limit his operations to men, deny efficiency altogether, and make that interposition a mere matter of moral suasion." This is what they do; it is no inference of mine. It is a fact, I believe, that no one doubts the application of divine efficiency to angels who believes it applied to men: and certain it is, that those who deny its applicability to men, do, in their express theory, leave nothing but divine moral suasion both for men and angels. This they assert; and in this they are doubtless consistent with themselves. I was only stating their theory. But it is manifest that if nothing but depravity gives occasion for divine efficiency, that efficiency is not applied to the holy angels, and either they are let alone or are only beset with divine moral suasion. But none believe this who believe in any thing more than divine moral suasion in respect to men. And even with this belief, I see not how they can make depravity the only occasion of a treatment applied both to the depraved and the spotless.

Second point, relating to what is said on the 103d p. Had there been no foundation of hope, there would have been no return to God; for if there had been no Saviour there would have been no Spirit to sanctify. It is true also that we ought to love and thank God for that foundation of hope and for all his invitations and promises; because these exhibit the real benevolence and excellence of his nature. But

for a son who has offended and abused an excellent parent, to say, I cannot be sorry until I know that my father will forgive me, would be selfish and ignoble. God in his government of wicked men, often addresses himself to mere self-love, for they have nothing better to address. And where nothing but self-love exists, it is dominant selfishness; and nothing worse exists in hell. There are two ways in which God addresses self-love. First, he does it directly, as in the case of the wicked; secondly, he does it indirectly, as when, in showing the measures he has taken for the happiness of his creatures, he shows his own benevolence, and thus addresses something to a higher principle than self-love,—something to the love of benevolence or holiness. The case supposed on the 103d p. was that of beings who had all the excellence of God set before them, and all their obligations, (for the lost constantly violate obligations, or they have no present sin,) and yet could not love him or repent because they had no prospect of good to themselves. And pray, whither would this principle carry us? If the lost are not reasonably bound to love God and his creatures since they are unchangeably assigned to perdition, they violate no obligation by withholding love, and under these boundless provocations, are equally excusable for all their malice and rage. But if they are bound to love God in their hopeless state, to say they cannot be influenced by truth to love, as I cannot carry that mountain, is false; for it is saying they are not bound without hope, (as a man is not bound to work for me without expectation of reward.) For if they have no natural ability, they have nothing to be the basis of obligation. To say that the lost cannot be influenced by truth because they have no hope, is to say that they cannot love God without the prospect of reward, which by an easy figure may be called a bribe.

You must know, my Dear Sir, that for the greater part of a century the language of some of the old divines on this subject has been condemned by the body of the New-England divines. That language has seldom come to my ears from living lips, if ever. A young man, however, once introduced it into the pulpit in Newark, before I went there, or in my absence, and it was long remembered as a strange

doctrine. He said, without hope we never could have loved God. I mention this to show you that the language of the old divines to which you refer, is considered erroneous by the mass of the churches in our country.

Third point. You refer to p. 193. I beg leave to refer you also to the bottom of p. 15, and to pp. 181, 182, 183, and middle paragraph of 187. If future events depend on God's efficient will, he can foresee nothing which he has not willed. For if he has not willed a thing, its existence is not certain, and cannot be foreseen as certain. In regard to events which do not depend on his controlling will, (if there be any such,) in other words, which are independent of his will, all I can say is, it is impossible for us to conceive how he could foresee them. I rest nothing here on the impossibility of creating a self-determining power, though that would seem like imparting self-existence. The popular expression, that omniscience foresees all possible events, is very deceptive, without explanation. If it means, that God knows all the events which he could bring to pass, it is true. If it means that he foresees whatever he has willed to produce, or to suffer when his permission would secure the event, it is true. But if it means that he foresees events which belong to neither of these classes,—events which are not possible as being within the reach of his power, but possible as being, though independent of him, within the reach of creative power; then I observe two things; first, no such independent power. I suppose, is possible; secondly, if it were, we cannot conceive how God could foresee events wholly independent of his efficient power or effectual permission.

Thus, my Dear Sir, I have answered your three questions as well as I could, in a very disordered state of my head and nervous system, and with the many avocations which constantly call me away. I hope your reflections will add much light to these imperfect thoughts, and am, with great regard,

Your friend,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

To Dr. L. A. SMITH, in reply to an invitation to return to Newark and reside in his family.

Williams College, Oct. 8th, 1835.

MY DEAR SON,

Your most affecting letter of the 28th ult. was received on Monday, and the kindness of you and Louisa so affected my nerves that I scarcely slept at all on Monday night. I thank you both with all a father's love. The offer was manifestly hearty and most delicately expressed. I never for a moment contemplated going into your family, for I thought it would not be convenient for you; and I fully believed that it would be impossible for me to live any where in Newark on my income. But Newark is the place of all others which I would choose for my residence, and your house is the house of all others which I would select in Newark. If I come, all my posterity would be under your roof. I should wish to talk and pray with the children once a day, and set myself in earnest to promote their salvation. And there is another matter which I will ask leave to mention. My conscience cannot let go the second service at the table, unless I am compelled by necessity. Should you have any objection to my performing that service, reserving to yourself the right of retiring when business calls you? I shall hope to divide the family services with you.

I have the same view as you have respecting the importance of my staying here while I have health to be useful to the college. I think I shall stay at all events till next commencement. If it then appears that I cannot attend recitations for the next year, I think I ought to retire. Besides, I want to prepare my MSS. for the press, and perhaps shall find in that employment work enough for the remainder of life.

Your affectionate father,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

Jan. 17th, 1836. In the great fire in New-York a few weeks ago, I lost about \$2,400, which led me to think it was the will of God that I should remain here longer; for on account of my health I had nearly made up my mind to leave after next commencement. The loss led me to hope that God intended to improve my health, so that I could continue to labor for him here. I have seen his will in this dispensation, and have certainly been resigned to it. I would not change the circumstances if I had it in my power. I was affected in reading Heb. 12:5–11; particularly the following words: "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us. They verily chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." The kindness of my heavenly Father in this chastisement has appeared very tender; and I have begged of him to continue to chastise me as much as I need. I never before was so much affected by the anecdote of the man who, when cast down, gave as the reason, "I fear my heavenly Father has forsaken me;" and when asked why he thought so, replied, "It is a whole month since my heavenly Father afflicted me."

I never in my life have more deeply realized the duty of casting myself wholly on God for support and for every thing. This I have done; and have felt as I never did before, that wonderful passage in Luke, 12:22–31: "Take no thought for your life.—Consider the ravens.—Consider the lilies.—How much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith. And seek not ye what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For—your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." O how different was that passage intended to make us from what we usually are, in regard to

dependance on God and submission to him, and trust in him, by the hour,—by the minute. Such a constant action of the mind towards God in prayer and praise, I have seen to be intended by 1 Thess. 5:17, 18. "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks." I do not mean that we should think of nothing else; but at every change of measures, when we are alone, and not employed in study, and frequently at other times, we should pray and give thanks.

Several months ago I was deeply interested by Christ's representation of the Father's willingness to answer prayer, particularly for the Holy Spirit, where there is importunity. I have been interested in it ever since. But I found some difficulty in believing that he would assuredly answer my prayers, from a doubt whether they proceeded from holy love. But I have lately had such a sense of the real love of God, that I have deeply felt that he is more ready to give the Holy Spirit to them that importunately ask him, than parents are to give bread to their imploring and hungry children. The passage is in the first thirteen verses of the 12 of Luke. The disciples had asked the Saviour to teach them to pray. He had given them the form of the Lord's prayer. He then added the case of the man who prevailed to borrow three loaves by his "importunity." Then follow these words: "And I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?—If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

Jan. 24. The last week I have seen and felt the truth of that passage in Rom. 5:3, 4. "We glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." Afflictions have made me feel that God had sent them, and have made me submit in patience and in trust; and that experience has made me hope in God as a reconciled Father. The

more I am afflicted, the more I cast myself upon God, and the more I submit to him and trust in him. O that heavenly lesson, to "pray without ceasing," and "in every thing" to "give thanks." How much I have lost by not learning that lesson more perfectly before.

My sins have appeared most aggravated and innumerable. I believe my afflictions have been sent on their account; and the good effects of these have made me hope that my sins are pardoned and forever removed. And I have often prayed, and prayed with hope, that my past transgressions may never rise again between God and me. I do hope to enjoy his presence more than I have done, and to be enabled to submit to him, and trust in him in all things,—to "pray without ceasing," and "in every thing" to "give thanks." I must thus submit, and trust and pray and give thanks, if I am to enjoy this access to God without a middle wall of partition between us.

Jan. 31. I have been favored of late with a spirit of submission to the will of God, and trust in him for all needed comforts. My mind has so habitually moved in these two ways that I have continually referred every thing to his will in submission and trust. And it has led to continual prayer and thanksgiving. I am truly grateful to God for the afflictions he has sent upon me; and cordially desire that he should appoint my trials rather than to order my own circumstances. This has led to peace. I have found in some measure the truth of that assertion, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." In consequence of this referring of all things to the will of God, his providence, in a number of instances, has remarkably interposed to provide. His truth and faithfulness have distinctly appeared. My hope has been so strong that I have not been afraid to die. If I am to live, I pray that I may have health to devote to his service with a zeal and success unknown before. If I am to do no more for him, I pray him to take me to himself. I have been very much affected with a sense of gratitude; and so far as I can obtain distinct views of his perfections I do certainly approve of them, and think I love them. I would not have

them altered for any consideration; nor would I have any other one to order the circumstances of my life.

I have been tried with the circumstance that so many millions must endure such eternal anguish when God could have prevented sin. Of late I have risen above this trial. In examining the feelings which I have towards the moral attributes of God, I have found it necessary to examine those attributes distinctly, and with a marked reference to the question—Why is there a hell? The examination has opened to me the following views.

God is infinite benevolence. This is certainly most glorious and lovely. He cannot of course bear to see creatures rising up against each other in rage and war, but must delight in seeing them love one another, and in seeing the happiness thus produced. This is his holiness, and it is only a particular operation of his benevolence. This certainly is lovely. The only question now remaining is about a moral government. Was it benevolent for God to make a law requiring love in creatures towards him and towards each other, and forbidding the opposite passions and conduct? If he had not made such a law, he would have stood aloof from creatures, and had no more connexion with them than the supreme God of the Brahmins is supposed to have. And then all exhibitions of his glory, and all intercourse with him, which together constitute the happiness of the universe, would have been lost. And what then would have prevented creatures from rising up against each other in everlasting war and confusion and wretchedness? Do you say, his sanctifying power could have prevented? And would not that have converted the whole creation into mere machines? No call for the exertion of their rational faculties in a way of duty, no sense of obligation; only they are propelled to certain feelings and actions by a secret influence. Where is the operation of their reason or conscience? Where is their sense of right and wrong? Where is their holiness? Nothing rising above mere instinct. You say, he might have told them what was right, without command or penalty. But that would have left them without obligation,—certainly without any of those infinite obligations



resulting from his authority. It would have left them altogether loose from him, without any chance for the exhibitions of his glory, or for intercourse and communion with him. And if there must be a law, there must a penalty; otherwise it is no law but mere advice. And if there must be a penalty, that penalty must be executed, or it is nothing. Let it be given out or understood that the penalty is never to be executed, and the penalty is dead, and the law is turned into mere advice. Had the death of Christ given out that the penalty was never to be executed, it would have destroyed the penalty and the law. There must be a hell or there is no moral government. And if no moral government, there is no intercourse or communion between God and creatures. Had matters been left thus, there would have been no chance for all that wonderful manifestation of God and that unspeakable happiness to creatures which result from the work of redemption. The benevolence of God was therefore engaged to execute the penalty of the law by an eternal hell. I say eternal, for if at any future time punishment should terminate, and it should be given out that the penalty of the law should no more be executed, that moment the moral government of God would cease. And if there must be a hell, sin must be permitted.

Now the execution of the penalty of the law is the exercise of God's justice. If, then, the support of government by the punishment of sin is benevolent, his justice is only another exercise of his benevolence. Thus his holiness and justice are both comprehended in this glorious truth, "God is love."

These, with the goodness exercised in creation and providence, and the mercy and truth manifested in the gospel, comprehend the whole of God's moral perfections. And these appear to me glorious. I could not wish nor bear to have one of them changed. Let such a God forever reign and be glorified.

Feb. 2d. The perfections of God,—his benevolence, holiness, and justice, and his moral government, have, since I wrote last, appeared more glorious than ever. He is such a God as I heartily approve. I

love him and thank him adoringly. I submit to his providence; I trust in him who feeds the ravens, and clothes the lilies, and am at peace. I find my heart swelling with love and gratitude to God, and with good-will and kindness towards all men, as I never did before. This morning I spoke to a young man about that world of love and holiness to which I wished him to go. My heart bounded at the thought of a world of everlasting love and holiness, and I repeated the words over. I felt that I wished no other heaven but that. I rejoice to be in God's hands, and have no anxiety about any future circumstances in life. I leave every thing at his disposal, with a confidence that he will provide for me. My sins have lately appeared exceedingly aggravated. I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. I have often asked, and with hope, that past sins may never rise again between God and me. I do hope they never will. I long to have my health, and to devote my health and strength to the advancement of God's kingdom and glory; with a zeal and success unknown before. If I am not to labor for him any more I am willing he should take me to himself.

Feb. 7th. Some time ago I was troubled with the thought that if I should be pardoned up to this time, my future sins, which will be constant, will stand between me and God. A few days ago, while reading, that passage, Heb. 10:14, opened upon me most convincingly: "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." I think I certainly had faith that the one sacrifice of Christ would remove from those who are once sanctified, the guilt of all future, as well as all past sins. My faith in Christ of late has been much more clear than it commonly has been. I find it easy to realize that the death of Christ, by answering the purpose of our punishment, is the ground of our pardon; that his obedience obtained for us all positive blessings; that he is the ground of our acceptance with God; that as King of Zion he distributes the whole estate, and may be approached in prayer, as God himself, for all needed blessings. All this is a delightful reality.

In connexion with this, the other day while reading in the Psalms, a verse respecting God's truth delighted me with a realizing sense of that perfection. I forget what verse it was, but it was one like the following: "For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds." "His truth shall be thy shield and buckler." "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help,—which keepeth truth forever." "Let thy loving kindness and thy truth continually preserve me." I have since had a most impressive and delightful sense of the truth of God.

The benevolence, holiness, justice, mercy, and truth of God appear real and delightful; and his moral government appears glorious. I find an habitual submission to him, and trust in him for all needed blessings; and look to him to guide me in the path of duty. I long for higher degrees of sanctification. I love to be in his hands, and feel safe there, without anxiety for future provisions for this life. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." I feel more benevolence and tenderness towards my fellow men, more patience in view of their faults, more meekness and humility. I read the Bible with more faith, and pray with more delight and more confidence in God. I think I am enabled, in some measure, to comply with the injunction in Phil. 4:6, 7, and to enjoy the peace there promised. "Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

When I sat down to write my treatise on Divine Efficiency, I was out of health, and was so lame that I could take no exercise. It occurred to me that to write that book without exercise might cost me my life. But I was so affected with the dishonor cast on God by denying him the glory of efficiently sanctifying the heart, that I said with tears, I will write this book and die, meaning I will write it if I die. I wrote it with a tender regard for the divine glory which I was defending. I never wrote a book with so much feeling of this sort, nor a sermon

except one. I mean the Murray-street Sermon, from 1 Cor. 1:31, written in 1830. I wrote that with my eye on Dr. W—, then an infidel, and sick with what proved his last sickness. I was most deeply affected through the whole of it, and wrote it with a strong desire for the conviction and salvation of Dr. W. He had just before resisted my argument with vehemence if not with passion. After I had finished my sermon I read it to him at two different sittings—half at a time. He never resisted afterwards; and gave such evidence of conversion and faith that his pious wife and other pious friends have no doubt that he went to heaven.

Feb. 14th. I have been affected of late by that passage in Eph. 5:22–33. The Church is Christ's spouse, whom he loves as his own flesh. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Then certainly Christ's love to believers must be constant, boundless and unchangeable. And the Father, regarding them as the very flesh of Christ, must feel an infinite nearness to them,—of course for Christ's sake. Contemplating them as the body of Christ, and of course dear to the Father because Christ is dear, I have found it easy to realize that we are loved and accepted for Christ's sake. There is one between us and God, who is the medium through which he views us,—who is infinitely dear to the Father, and is the real ground of our acceptance, and of every favor sent upon us. All this is real to my mind. Can it be otherwise than faith?

And if I have been distinguished from my former companions, who were left to perish, by a principle of life and a title to heaven, what boundless and eternal obligations has it laid me under! Everlasting thanks to God! May all my powers be devoted to his service and praise. My heart's desire is, that for the rest of my life I may give up the world and be wholly his,—that I may submit to him and trust in him for all things, and that my past sins may never again rise between him and me.

Feb. 17th. Those words in Phil. 2:3, 4, "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own

things, but every man also on the things of others;" have of late been made special to my mind, as reminding me of my duties to my fellow-men. O God, may I subject my own interests and feelings to the interests and feelings of others as far as thy word requires; and may I keep this law ever before me!

I have had this winter turns of dizziness and faintness. Two days ago I had a turn, and wholly lost myself,—for how many seconds I cannot tell. The physicians apprehend apoplexy. It has produced upon me a solemn impression that I must hold myself ready for a sudden death. Lord, may I be prepared to resign my spirit into thy hands without a moment's warning!

Feb. 25th. I have been struck lately with two passages, encouraging an unlimited trust in God. The first is in Hebrews 13:5, 6. "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." The other is in 1 Peter, 5:7. "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." Surely we may and ought to trust in God for all things, even in the darkest times. There is no extravagance in this, unless we indulge in unreasonable desires and expectations; as if we should trust in him for an independent fortune. The xxxviith Psalm is throughout of the same kind.

This is the day of fasting and prayer for the colleges. O God, help me to pray, and help the great body of christians to pray, for the permanent effusions of the Spirit upon our colleges and schools! And may great effects follow from the exercises of this day.

Feb. 26th. In offering thanksgiving to God to-day I was struck with the thought that this exercise, truly performed, is really the exercise of gratitude in that view of his perfections and their operations which produces love, or is love; and that if I wished to be filled with gratitude and love to God, to be really holy, the most effectual way

was to be much employed in thanksgiving. The subject opened upon me in a light entirely new, and convinced me that I had not enough dwelt on this part of my duty in prayer.

TO DR. L. A. SMITH.

Williams College, Feb. 26th, 1836.

MY DEAR SON,

Eight or ten days ago I had a faint turn and entirely lost myself for a second or two, attended with a labor in breathing. I have had such turns, more slightly, often this winter, occasioned, I believe, by writing and intense thought, and perhaps bending to write. I have transcribed 36 sermons since quite late in October. I am afraid of apoplexy, and so is Dr. Emmons. I must hold myself ready for a sudden death. I never had such views as I have had since my loss, and especially since my faint turn. I have had nearly the full assurance of hope, and have felt not afraid to die. A collection of Scripture texts which have been made very special to me, I want to send to Louisa, and think I shall ere long. I have often said, and generally thought, that I would not have that afflictive providence changed for a thousand worlds.

Your affectionate father,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

March 20th. It appears more and more important to address the Saviour on his throne, and to thank him for coming down to the agonies of the cross, and to ask of him sanctification and pardon. He is "the author and finisher of our faith." and was enabled to be both "a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." As mediatorial King he has power to distribute all the blessings which come through his atonement, or which he purchased by his obedience. I think I certainly depend on him as the ground of all that I hope to receive, and feel that it is the Father's love

to the Son, and his love to the body and members of his Son from his love to the Head, (as well as his own infinite benevolence,) which induces him to give us the Holy Spirit and all other positive blessings. If I do not believe in these things I know not what I do believe.

In view of the wonderful work of redemption and the unequalled display of the divine glory therein, I have lately felt bound to thank God for selecting this distinguished world for the place of my existence; this world which is to send out a report through the universe, and to be the sun to enlighten all other worlds. And O the obligations I am under for having my birth in a land of Gospel light, and not in pagan darkness, which would have ensured my destruction; and for distinguishing me from my former companions who were left to perish, by regenerating grace, if indeed I have been born again. For this I am bound eternally to give thanks. To such a God I ought to have devoted my life continually. And O to think of the sins which I have committed since, crushes me in the dust.

I have lately been delighted with the thought that the day is coming when there shall "be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord, and every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts;" when the most common utensils for dressing food, and every article, shall be consecrated to God. I have desired thus to consecrate all that I possess, and do rejoice that God is to be thus glorified through the earth. I can think of nothing more delightful than that. Among the grounds of gratitude to God I have lately, and with strong feelings, placed the circumstance of living in such a day as this, so near the millenium, and when the Protestant church is waking up to strong and increasing efforts for the salvation of the world and the glory of God. If I am not delighted with the plan of salvation,—if I am not grateful to God for his wonderful and constant mercies,—if I do not love the character of God, and believe in the gospel of Christ,—if I do not repent of sin,—if I do not feel my dependance on God for all things, and trust in him who feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies, and feel resigned to his providence,

whatever he sends,—if the truths of his word are not made to me glorious realities,—then I am indeed greatly mistaken as to the most sensible exercises of my own heart.

May 1st, Sabbath. A few days ago, and for more than one day, I felt it uncommonly sweet to trust in God for every supply and for every want in life,—a feeling which, in a less sensible degree, has been habitual through the winter and spring. There appeared One above whom it was delightful to trust, whom I loved to think upon as having the management, and who held himself bound to provide for all who trusted in him. I could say from sweet experience, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

Some time ago it became a delightful thought that the time was coming when Holiness to the Lord would be written on the whole furniture of this globe, and that the earth would thus be filled with the glory of the Lord. It was so delightful that I have incorporated the thought with my daily prayers. I think I can truly say that there is no thought so sweet as that God will be glorified, and glorified in the great work of redemption.

This day was the sacrament. In praying beforehand that I might give myself away to Christ at the table, my heart bounded at the thought. I had longed to be united to the Saviour and to have him for my Saviour, and now I had permission to give myself away to him and effect the union. This was the shape of the thought which appeared real and delightful, and opened to me as something new. I longed to honor that Saviour, to have him for my own, and to enjoy him.

May 8th, Sabbath. For some days past, being unwell, my mind has been so depressed in view of past sins, as to create a doubt respecting my religious state. The same causes weakened my faith and love. But this morning, in reading that blessed passage, Luke, 11:1–13, my faith and love revived, and I could contemplate God with confidence and delight. I believe that he will hear prayer. I delight to put my trust in



him for all things, and am rejoiced that his glorious perfections will be revealed to an astonished universe through the amazing work of redemption.

June 13th. Yesterday, (the sabbath,) in reading the life of Brainerd, I fell upon this sentence: "In the evening had the most agreeable conversation which I remember in all my life, upon God's being all in all, and all enjoyments being just that to us which God makes them, and no more." My heart instantly went into the subject, and felt it desirable and pleasant that the will of God should in all things be done. I had been tried about provisions for this life, and was then under trial. I then saw that the will of God would in all things be done. I chose that it should be so. I had confidence in him, and trusted in him for future support, and was resigned to his will. I have felt so, most of the time, while awake, ever since; and though an event which I had feared has come to pass, I feel quiet, undisturbed, and commit all my future course to God, and rejoice that "the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

June 26th. Sabbath. For the last three days especially, I have been delighted to have the will of Christ done in the government of the world, and have felt resigned to his will, and wished it done rather than my own, and have found it easy to trust in him, confident that his will must be the rightest, the wisest, the most for the public good, and most to be rejoiced in. This has swallowed up all anxiety about my future interest on earth, and produced a feeling of real gratitude and delight.

July 13th. Trust in God for future support is encouraged and enjoined in 1 Tim. 6:17. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." This trust I continue habitually to feel. I am daily delighted to think that infinite wisdom and love control all events, and my eyes have repeatedly moistened at the thought that Christ is on the throne and governs all things. It is delightful to think that he loves his disciples as the

Father loveth him; John 15:9; that he loves his church as his own flesh; Eph. 5:22–32.

July 31st. Sabbath. I had supposed, from my loss by the fire, that it was the purpose of God to give me health to remain here a few years longer. But I find a general discouragement about my health among the trustees and scholars, mingled with great respect and kindness. And on the occasion of the late visit of the standing committee of the trustees, I became as fully convinced as I could have been by a voice from heaven, that it will be my duty to resign at commencement. I have earnestly prayed for direction, and feel thankful to God for making my duty so plain. I tendered my resignation the last commencement, but the trustees did not see fit to accept it. They will accept it now. How I am to be provided for I do not know, but I trust in God, and I feel it my duty and my privilege to be entirely resigned to his will. Infinite benevolence and wisdom will do that which will be most desirable for the holy universe.

I expected my absent children and grand-children here on Friday. They have not come, and sickness has likely detained them at Newark. This whole business I leave with God and rejoice that every circumstance respecting them is under his control.

That trust in God which I have expressed in former articles continues; and I have for some time wished to present, in one view, those texts which have encouraged my trust, and others which I find in the scriptures. I will now do it.

Texts which plainly require, and fully authorize an unlimited trust in God, for the good things of this life. Luke 12:22–31, (as Mat. 6:25–34.) "Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have store-houses nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you, with taking thought, can add to his stature

one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not; they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after; and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you."—Ps. 37:3–5, 7, 11, 18, 19, 22, 25, 29, 34, 40. "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him. The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The Lord knoweth the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be forever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil times, and in the days of famine, they shall be satisfied. For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth. I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell therein forever. Wait on the Lord and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land. And the Lord shall help them and deliver them; he shall deliver them from the wicked and save them, because they trust in him."—Ps. 1:1, 3. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doth shall prosper."—Ps. 5:11. "Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice; let them ever shout for joy because thou defendest them."—Ps. 18:30. "The word of the Lord is tried; he is a buckler to all those that trust in him."—Ps. 27:10. "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."—Ps. 31:19, 20. "O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men. Thou

shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues."—Ps. 23:1, 2, 5, 6. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."—Ps. 34:9, 10, 22. "O fear the Lord ye his saints; for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants, and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate."—Ps. 40:4. "Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust."—Ps. 55:22. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."—Ps. 84:11, 12. "The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."—Ps. 128:1, 2. "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands. Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee."—Prov. 10:3. "The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish, but he casteth away the substance of the wicked."—Prov. 13:25. "The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul, but the belly of the wicked shall want."—Prov. 16:3, 20. "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established. He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good; and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he."—Prov. 22:4. "By humility and the fear of the Lord, are riches and honor and life."—Prov. 28:10, 25. "The upright shall have good things in possession. He that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat."—Prov. 29:25. "Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe."—Prov. 30:5. "He is a shield unto them that put their trust in him."—Isaiah 30:18. "Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him."—Isaiah 57:13. "He that putteth his trust in

me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain."—Jer. 17:7, 8. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree, planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."—Mar. 10:29, 30. "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sister, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred fold now in this time, houses and brethren and sisters, and mothers and children, and lands with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life."—Phil. 4:6, 7. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—1 Tim. 4:8. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."—1 Tim. 6:17. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."—Heb. 13:5, 6. "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me."—1 Pet. 5:7. "Casting all your care upon him for he careth for you."

There are other texts which speak more generally of the effects of trusting in God. 1 Chron. 5:20. "And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that were with them: for they cried to God in the battle, and he was entreated of them, because they put their trust in him."—2 Chron. 16:11, 12. "And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power. Help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God, let not man prevail against thee. So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa."—

Ps. 17:7. "Shew thy marvellous loving kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee, from those that rise up against them."—Ps. 21:7. "The king trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved."—Ps. 22:4, 5. "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee and were delivered: they trusted in thee and were not confounded."—Ps. 26:1. "I have trusted in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide."—Ps. 28:7. "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him and I am helped."—Ps. 32:10. "He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about."—Ps. 56:4. "In God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me."—Ps. 91:2–16. "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in him will I trust. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee. Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."—Ps. 125:1. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever."—Ps. 144:1, 2. "Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight; my goodness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer, my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me."—Prov. 16:20. "Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he."—Isaiah, 41:17, 18. "When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water."—Isaiah, 64:4. "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the eye, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him."—Jer. 39:18. "I will surely deliver thee and thou shalt not fall by the

sword,—because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the Lord."—Dan. 3:28. "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him."

In view of the whole, we may break forth in the sweet language of the evangelical prophet, (Isaiah, 26:3, 4,) "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

August 7th, Sabbath. I received a letter yesterday, bringing with it a disappointment about a charitable contribution for the college to purchase my library. In the evening my daughter received a letter from her husband, Dr. Smith, who had heard of my intention to remove, and who rejoiced in it, and cordially invited me to his house as my home. The first letter gave me pain, though accompanied by resignation to the will of God and trust in him; the latter was mercifully ordered for my support under the disappointment. I this morning feel entirely resigned to the will of God, and can trust in him for future support. What can I desire more than that infinite wisdom and benevolence should govern the world and order every event? I wish to employ those means which duty dictates; and having done that, I will leave the ordering of my life to God. I know that I am resigned to his will in regard to all future circumstances in this world, and can, though with less distinctness, trust in him for future support.

August 14th. Sabbath. Expect to preach to-day for the last time in this meeting-house, a sermon to the graduating class. In my weak state of health I had been somewhat agitated with the uncertainty and trouble of selling my library, furniture, and other things, and about my future support; but for a day and a half past I have been remarkably composed under the influence of resignation and trust. My being sent hither was doubtless a great mercy, and I have every reason therefore to bless God for it. And now it is plainly his will that I should go. It is his will that I should be placed in just such

circumstances; and it is doubtless my duty to submit to him and trust in him with entire composure and peace. How sweet to think that infinite benevolence and wisdom will shape all my circumstances. What can I desire more? I was yesterday composed by reading Luke, 10:38–42. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." Instead of being troubled about the things of time and sense, I long that my future life may be devoted to God with heavenly affections; and that, no longer careful about the world, I may be wholly engaged in promoting his kingdom and in preparing for my glorious rest. O may I thus spend the residue of my days! I think I never desired this so much before. May my future years or months be wholly taken up in the love, and service, and praise of God. May I be carried through the present scenes with the sweet composure of submission and trust. Why should I be anxious about the world? My mind has lately been considerably impressed with those words of the Apostle, 1 Tim. 6:6–11, "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things." O may these sentiments be deeply and permanently impressed upon my heart. And then I see not what I have to be anxious or careful about, but to promote the kingdom of Christ and prepare for heaven.

Doctor GRIFFIN'S health, which had been gradually declining for two or three years, at length became so much enfeebled that he found himself quite inadequate to the duties of his office; and accordingly at the meeting of the Board of Trustees in August, he again tendered his resignation, after having occupied the Presidential chair fifteen years. It was of course accepted, but with



deep regret on the part of the Board that the occasion for it should have existed, and with the warmest gratitude for the important services which he had rendered to the institution.

In reference to the arrangements for his removal to Newark, he writes thus in his diary:

Aug. 28th, Sabbath. I contemplated the sale of my furniture and books and the trouble of removal as a fearful undertaking; and without submission and trust should have sunk under it. But God has so remarkably supported and prospered me during the last week, that I seem almost to have been brought through this trial. Thanks to a merciful and faithful God for all these blessings! Since my contemplated removal I have longed more than I ever did before, to spend the remainder of my life in heavenly devotion. I cannot calculate so much as I have done on public usefulness, (though this I desire,) but I long and pray for high communion with God, and for affections toward him more ardent and delightful than I ever felt before. O God, give me this high state of holiness and enjoyment for the rest of my life, and all the usefulness which thy wisdom can allot to me, and my highest wishes of a personal nature are gratified.

Doctor GRIFFIN remained at Williamstown till about the close of September, completing his arrangements for the removal of his family to Newark. He subsequently refers in his journal to the event of their departure in the following paragraph.

I left Williamstown with my family on Thursday the 29th Sept. The people there showed us great affection and expressed much regret at our departure. The students appointed a committee of two from each class to express their respect and attachment, and it was done in a manner the most affectionate. The Faculty invited me to a social dinner at the Mansion House. As I was getting into the carriage on Thursday morning, the students came up in procession to take their last leave. I made an address to them from the carriage, and some of them wept.

The following is the letter from the students referred to in the preceding paragraph.

REVEREND SIR,

Prompted by the feelings which the near departure of one so respected and esteemed naturally elicits, the college assembled this morning and appointed us their committee to express to you their sentiments on this occasion. Those of them who have been witnesses and partakers of the benefits you have conferred on the college, acted from the deep feeling of gratitude; those who have lately become of the number of students, were influenced by your celebrity as a preacher—your character as a man.

Knowing this, it is with peculiar feelings that we have undertaken to become their organ, and we should despair of expressing to you their opinions, were we not conscious of their active existence in our own bosoms. When a distinguished man departs from the scene of his former actions, he is followed by the aspirations of those who have been benefitted by his influence. If to have given celebrity to our Alma Mater, and a name of which we can proudly boast,—if to have given us sound moral and religious principles, on which we can firmly base our actions, and to have exemplified the beauty and simplicity of a good man's career, have conferred on us obligations,—you will appreciate the feelings which agitate our minds at the thought of your departure. Praise we do not offer, for it would be futile;—useless to one who stands so high in the opinion of all; but we present you with a better gift,—our kindest feelings and hopes for your future welfare.

In the name of the college, we bid you an affectionate farewell.

LEWIS BENEDICT, Jr.

Committee.

SAM'L G. JONES,

THOS. A. HALE,

LABAN S. SHERMAN,

SAM'L P. ANDREWS,

RUFUS G. WELLS,

BARNABUS COLLINS,

OLIVER DIMON,

Sept. 27, 1836.

## CHAPTER VII

### HIS LAST RESIDENCE AT NEWARK, AND HIS DEATH

Doctor GRIFFIN reached Newark with his family, for the last time, Oct. 1, 1836. It is scarcely necessary to say that he was greeted with a most cordial welcome by a large circle of friends, and that he found himself in the midst of a community who well knew how to appreciate his residence among them, and many of whom it was his privilege to reckon among the seals of his ministry. Under date of Nov. 29, he writes thus in his diary.

Since I have been here the affection and respect of former friends have been overwhelming. Several have united in making me a handsome present. The trustees of the first church have offered me a pew for my family. God has ordered all things in mercy. I have been sick for near two months,—very sick,—but I now am somewhat better. I long to do something for God and his church before I die. May I live devoted to him, and walk in the light of his countenance, and hold myself ready to depart at a moment's warning.

TO HIS NIECE, MISS JULIA ANN LORD, OF LYME.

Newark, Jan. 19, 1837.

MY DEAR JULIA ANN,

I received your very kind and gratifying letter of Dec. 16th, and thank you for all the delicate respect which it evinces. My health has been so feeble that I have not felt able to write to you before, and now must be somewhat brief. On the 15th of December while walking on the floor, I suddenly fell on the carpet like a corpse, and fainted clear away. I have repeatedly had some of the same symptoms since, but have not fainted. For the last fortnight I have been better. The attention which I receive from my old parishioners and spiritual

children is most affecting, and exceeds any thing I ever received from a public body in my life. My friends hope that God has sent me here to promote revivals of religion in Newark. O that it may be so! And, my dear cousin, how infinitely important that revivals of religion should prevail in Lyme. What will become of some of your dear sisters if this is not the case? After one has reached the age of thirty, unconverted, the chances against him are perhaps forty to one, and when he has reached the age of fifty, they are probably fifty or sixty to one. And are there any in your family who stand these many chances to one for eternal burnings? Surely no more time ought to be lost—not a single day or hour. Every hour that is lost increases the danger, and every hour that is spent in enmity against God involves guilt that deserves eternal damnation. And then what a call there is for our agonizing prayers! A few christians with such prayers, may bring down the Holy Spirit. Do read and ponder closely upon Luke 11:1–13,—particularly the 13th verse. O let your faith take hold of that assurance and it may bring down the blessing. I remember you all in prayer several times a day.

On sabbath evenings, Dr. Smith's family sing psalms, while he plays on a bass viol. It is the best means that I attend during the week. Last sabbath evening he sung a verse which dissolved me to tears, and affected me more than any verse ever did, I believe. It was the following:

These eyes which once refused the light,

Now lift to God their watery sight,

And weep a silent flood:

These hands are raised in ceaseless prayer;

O wash away the stains they wear,

In pure redeeming blood.

I am sorry to break off so soon, but my strength seems to require it.  
With very tender regard, I am

Your affectionate uncle,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

Jan. 25th, 1837.

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,

Let me hide myself in thee."

If Christ is the Rock of Ages, he is our firm foundation, our sure defence, and the same from generation to generation. What is a better foundation than a rock? What is a better bulwark than a rock cast around us? And a rock of ages is the same from age to age. I have been so affected by that figure that I have examined to see whether I could find it in the Bible. I cannot find it in our translation; but in Isaiah, 26:4. I find it in the Hebrew: "Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is the Rock of Ages." The atonement of Christ is the solid foundation of our pardon, our sure defence against the wrath of God, and is always exerted in his intercession as a priest. The righteousness of his obedience is the foundation of all our positive happiness in both worlds, is the sure protection of all our interests, and this undeniable claim to a reward is unchangeably urged in his intercession. Thus he immutably exerts his influence as an atoning, obedient, and interceding High Priest, to obtain those reliefs and blessings from pure Godhead, which, in the name of God, he administers as mediatorial King. And as King, he is the Rock of Ages. The incarnate God who fills the throne of the universe, and dispenses all the pardons and blessings obtained from pure Godhead by the pleading of his atonement and obedience, is the unchanging foundation of all our reliefs, and hopes, and comforts; and the defence which, amidst all our changes and imperfections, gives us everlasting protection and safety. Thus as both Priest and King he is the Rock of Ages.

March 3rd. Latterly I have been specially praying for faith in Christ. I could see his love to us all as manifested on Calvary; I could see his mercy to me in the innumerable blessings around me; but when I contemplated him in his relation to me personally, I could not view him in any other light than as a sin-hating Saviour,—the sins of my life appeared so enormous. But some Psalms and Hymns sung in the family which by the blessed and peculiar influence of Psalms and Hymns sung, that carry up the mind to Christ and fix it upon him immediately, rather than upon God, and that raise us to him as direct and unbounded love, have been mercifully appointed to overcome this difficulty. The words and the tune have rung through my mind in the waking hours of night, and led me directly to the tender love of Christ. I saw that I had too much confined my thoughts to God, and that I ought to go directly to a Saviour's arms, and that I ought to believe that, as abominable as my sins have been, if they have once been pardoned, they form no partition between me and the heart of Christ. He loves me as tenderly as though I had never sinned, and in proportion to my faith is as ready to hear my prayers. How was it at the time of the crucifixion? After the disciples had forsaken him and fled, and after Peter had denied him with oaths and curses, when he came out of the sepulchre he said to Mary, "Go and tell my brethren." By his death the sins of believers are totally cancelled, and are never imputed to them any more; and although, while under the means of grace they are chastened for remaining sin, as a means of their sanctification, they are no more condemned for their past sins than Peter and John are now condemned for theirs. He loves them as well as he will love them in heaven,—I say not their characters, but their persons. When he turned and looked upon Peter, he loved his person none the less for his oaths and curses. We ought to feel, if we have evidence of our faith and pardon, that he loves our persons none the less for our past sins. Of two things one: either he loves us thus or we are under condemnation to hell. Which is it? If we do not abandon our hope, we ought to believe unhesitatingly in his direct, most tender, and unbounded love to our persons,—that he stands ready to hear our prayers, and with open arms to receive us to his bosom. This is faith in Christ. This will bring a sense of his infinite love in the

work of redemption, of his infinite mercy in the management of our lives, and will fill us with hope and peace, and gratitude and joy.

Since I have been in Newark, I have been distressed at the low state of religion in the city, and have prayed much for a revival here and through the country. I have visited many families, and talked with the unregenerate as faithfully as I could. Others have been at prayer also. And, blessed be God, the Holy Spirit has begun to descend, not only here but in the country around, and in the neighboring city. Forever blessed be his name for this return to our American church after several years of absence. Oh may he greatly enlarge the power and make it to endure until the millenium.

March 8th. The obedience and death of Christ answer the purpose of our sinless obedience or righteousness. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. 10:4. "For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. 5:21. "Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:17. "The righteousness of God without the law is manifested,—even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ." Rom. 3:21, 22. "If by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. 5:17, 18. "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." Rom. 8:3, 4. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." 1 Cor. 1:30.



There must still be a qualification in us, uniting us to Christ; but that qualification is no more works, but faith. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom. 4:5. "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Gal. 3:6.

Although the offering of Christ cannot be applied to us before we sin, nor faster than we sin, (future sins being not pardoned,) yet his one offering completely fills the space of our sinless obedience or righteousness, so that our pardoned sins, (all the past sins of believers,) are fully set aside as the ground of condemnation, though not as occasions of chastisement for our good. As grounds of condemnation they are as though they never had been. We ought to hate them and abhor ourselves on their account, but they form no bar to the love of Christ or of God towards us, though they may be a bar to the present manifestations of his love. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Rom. 5:8–10.

This was the marked difference between the typical sacrifices, and the offering of Calvary. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Then, said I, Lo I come, to do thy will.—By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Heb. 10:1–4, 7, 10, 14.

April 16th. Sabbath. I was led, by reading a chapter in Baxter's Saint's Rest, to take up my printed form of self-examination, which I had not examined of late. And I was delighted, and rather astonished, to find that my heart readily responded to every question in the whole form. I see not therefore why I may not indulge the full assurance of hope. Forever blessed be the Lord for this infinite benefit; and O may I devote my whole soul, for the rest of my life, to his honor and praise.

July 8th. I have read the form of self-examination every day since the 16th of April, and can say "Yes," to almost or quite every question, and have enjoyed something like the full assurance of hope. I am determined to read it every day for the rest of my life, unless prevented by sickness.

Last night after retiring to rest I was asking for some blessing as the reward of Christ's obedience and in answer to his intercession. It opened to me in a clearer light than ever before, that Christ was pleading for our happiness and considered himself rewarded by what made us happy. This gave me a new and affecting view of his real and most tender love to us. He considers our happiness as his reward, and seeks for no higher reward than to see us blest. O the reality and infinite tenderness of the love of Christ! He not only desires our happiness, but considers it, and the glory of God involved in it, as the richest and only reward of his obedience "unto death." O may the love of Christ be more real and affecting to my soul than it ever was before! Let me by no means confine my views to his atonement, by which my sins were to be forgiven, but dwell upon his obedience, which procured all my positive blessings, and upon the boundless love which regarded them as his reward, and which constantly pleads for their bestowment!

August 7th. Mrs. Griffin was removed by death, after a sickness by dysentery of twelve days, on Tuesday the 25th of July, at half-past five o'clock, P. M. aged 67 years, 10 months and 11 days; having been born Sept. 14th, 1769. Since the funeral I have been so unwell as to

be unable to enter this account before. On Monday morning I told her she would probably be in heaven before the next morning. She said she felt composed, and put her trust in Christ. She told Dr. Smith that she had in her mind no uncomfortable feelings. She soon lost herself so far as to be able to add no more. She died an easy death. In addition to an exemplary life, for several months she had exhibited peculiar kindness and concern for me and some fresh evidence of her sanctification. My heart during all that time had gone forth in prayer for her, that she might be fully prepared, and might die an easy and triumphant death. The prayer was answered as to the outward circumstances of her death; and the strong desire I felt for the other part, gives me new and very consoling evidence that our loss is her eternal gain. The Spirit does not give special desires in order to disappoint them. It is a stroke I never felt before. I shall soon follow her. O may this solemn dispensation be sanctified to me and to my children, and may we all be supported under a stroke which the love of Jesus has inflicted. Her entrance into that blessed world makes heaven appear like another apartment of my own house.

The following letter from Mrs. SMITH to the Compiler of this memoir, containing a minute account of her mother's last illness and death, cannot, it is presumed, be unacceptable to the reader.

Newark, August 9, 1837.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Your welcome and most gratifying letter to my dear father was this morning received, and I hasten to convey to you his thanks and that of his children for this new expression of kindness, and for your christian sympathy under our sore bereavement. It is with melancholy pleasure that, in compliance with your request, I review the scenes of sickness and death; but I bless God, it is with different emotions that we are permitted, and at times enabled, to follow the spirit of my sainted mother to one of those "many mansions" which

the Saviour had gone before to prepare. You, Sir, knew our departed friend, and to you may I not say, to know was to respect, to love. You knew her to be gentle, kind, humble, refined; but how gentle, how humble, how forbearing, how guileless, how wholly divested of selfishness, you cannot know. No, it is only the two who were nursed on her bosom, who were led by her gentle hand, who were watched ever by her tender eye, for whom she lived and for whom she would gladly have died,—we only can know what we have lost. My sister and I had neither before witnessed the sundering of the immortal from the mortal part; our first definite conceptions of the work of Death were formed while watching his ravages upon that delicate frame. And though, as we are assured by all who were present, he dealt his gentlest blows, and we were enabled to feel that Infinite Love regulated every movement, yet the work was awful, it was sure, —it took from us a mother.

But I will no longer speak of ourselves; it is almost the first time I have been tempted to do so. It is the conviction that you, Sir, are peculiarly fitted to share the afflictions of the mourner, that has led me thus freely to open the recesses of a bleeding heart. But while I now attempt to fulfil the purpose for which I seated myself, you will see that the same Hand which placed in ours the cup of sorrow mingled with it so much sweetness that we almost at the time forgot its bitterness.

You are aware, Sir, that my beloved mother suffered for many years from the frequent and periodical recurrence of sick head ache. I well remember your mingling your sympathies upon this point, during your late visit, and her referring to the similarity in your cases since. Since my dear mother's residence with us, longer intervals had passed between her head aches than ever before since my remembrance, and I had fondly hoped she was preparing for many years of comfortable health. But I now remember that when I congratulated myself and her on her freedom from head ache, she did not seem to enter into my joyful anticipations. She did not say any thing to check them, for she loved to see us happy, but I now

doubt not she felt the increasing infirmities of a broken constitution, perhaps the hidden workings of a fatal disease which forbade her to look for health, save in that world where sickness cannot come. She had a cough for more than five years which distressed her friends, but which she never acknowledged as causing her any pain. This cough disappeared from the commencement of her last illness. Since the commencement of warm weather my parents had both improved in health. My father had preached seven sabbaths in succession before my mother's death. Four times she heard him with delighted interest. On the 9th of July she attended church all day, and afterwards walked through the burying-ground, where 18 days after she was laid, and where she did not remember to have walked before since her removal to Boston. But I linger from the closing scene, as if unrecorded it would become untrue. On the night of the 13th of July my dear mother was attacked with dysentery. In the morning she told me her system was disordered, and I procured for her such simple remedies as her case seemed to require. She had been so inured to suffering, and had learned to suffer so patiently, that I think she was not aware of the nature or severity of her disease. It was not before the sabbath that we became aware of it. From that time my husband became anxious, and every thing that affection and human skill could do, was, I believe, done. The disease seemed checked in its violence from that time till the day previous to her death; but her strength was wasted by an internal fever, which was indicated, not so much by the pulse and skin, as by a constant thirst, which demanded cold water and ice, and which even these did not allay. Her reason, her calmness, her patience, her kindness, never for a moment forsook her, and Ellen and I watched over her, with sympathy indeed, but with little apprehension of the result. "What ardently we wished we still believed," and we looked for that on the morrow which each day failed to bring, an entire removal of the disease. It was not till the Saturday evening previous to her death that my husband's faithfulness forced us to look upon her recovery as doubtful. She was then very feeble, and we found it necessary to apply both external and internal restoratives, which soon brought warmth and comparative vigor to her system. From about eight to

twelve we were occupied in this way, during which time I frequently asked her if she was in pain; to which she calmly answered "some." About twelve she suddenly became entirely relieved, and continued so through the night. Every time I laid my hand on hers she would open her eyes and repeat in her sweetest tone, "quite easy." The sudden change made me anxious, and I went to my husband repeatedly through the night to inquire whether there was cause for alarm. But as her system seemed more vigorous in its actings than the evening previous, he ventured to hope she was better. About daylight my mother inquired of me what the Doctor thought of the sudden change. I told her he hoped she was better. Said she, "I never felt as I did last night." "How, mother?" "Those dying pains," she twice repeated; and yet through the whole she had only acknowledged in answer to my repeated inquiries that she suffered "some." She continued more comfortable through the sabbath; and when my husband retired that night he pronounced her better, and expressed a hope that she would have a comfortable night. But when I went into her room at one o'clock Monday morning, I found her restless, and suffering with thirst. I remained with her through the night. Early in the morning my husband found her feverish and her disease more alarming in its progress. From that time he was almost without hope, and immediately communicated his fears to his beloved patient. "Mother," said he, "you are very ill." "I know it," she calmly answered. "And I have serious fears," he added, "that you will never be any better. What are your feelings in view of death?" "I have no uncomfortable feelings?" was her reply. "Are you willing to trust yourself with the Saviour for life or death?" "Yes." Ellen then asked her if she had thought much of death during her sickness. She answered, "I don't know that I have thought more of it than I did when I was well." She had slept much and conversed but little since her illness, but when awake usually lay with her hands clasped as if in prayer. After breakfast my father came into the room, and, struck with the great change in her countenance, he thought her actually dying. Feeling there was no time to be lost, he at once exclaimed, "My dear, I think before to-morrow morning you will be in Heaven!" This sudden announcement, following so soon upon the first

intimation of her danger, might have been expected to have produced at least a momentary excitement. I was bending over her, where I should have seen if a breath was quickened, or a nerve was moved; but with unruffled composure, closing her eyes, she twice repeated, "I hope so." My father said, "I want you to look to Christ." After a moment's silent meditation, she gently repeated, "Great sinner, great sinner, great Saviour." She then expressed her wishes as to the disposal of her letters, clothing, &c.—sent messages of love to all her friends, &c. My father said, "My dear, I don't want you to be thinking of these trifles. I want you to be looking to Christ." "That is just the reason," she replied, "I want to have my mind at rest." I said, "You are not afraid to die." "No." "We do not want to part with you." "I do not," she sweetly answered. "I hope we shall follow you to heaven." "I hope so;" and placing her hand gently on my father's arm, added; "It will be but a little while." My father asked, "Before we meet in heaven?" "Yes." She had that morning seen every member of the family, and kissed her grand-children. One of them coming in the second time I called her attention to it. She answered, "I have seen them all." In less than an hour from this time she sunk into a state of insensibility, from which she roused not again, except to ask for air and drink. Her intercourse with mortals was ended, but not before she had said all that she wished and all that we could desire. At two o'clock on Tuesday morning my father was called up to see her die. He said to her, "My dear, we think you are dying, and I am going to pray with you." She immediately folded her hands across her breast, (no longer able to clasp them,) and fixed her glazed eyes upon him for a moment, but before he closed she sunk again into insensibility. She thus alternated between life and death till some time in the afternoon of Tuesday, when suddenly her countenance assumed the fixedness of death. Her respiration became harder and harder, then shorter and shorter, then suddenly ceased. She gasped, then stretched herself as an infant awaking from sleep, gasped twice, stretched herself again—and again—The spirit had fled!\*

There was a heavenly sweetness about her countenance after death. Perfect peace was written there. She was laid unchanged in the grave

on Thursday, 27th.

We selected the 3d hymn, Book II. to be sung at her funeral. Mr. Eddy chose the very text I had selected: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Doctor Hillyer of Orange, the only early friend of my parents in the ministry left in this region, offered the prayer.

The chamber of death and the house of mourning were filled with long tried christian friends, who had welcomed her return, and who were anxious to pay the last tribute of respect.

I have already mentioned that my father's health had been improved of late. He sustained this trial as a christian, most of the time calm, never overwhelmed. But the "outward man" quailed under the stroke, and for several days after the funeral he was very feeble; his difficulty of breathing returned, and he felt as if he was soon to follow his sainted wife. "And Oh how she will welcome me," he would exclaim with tears. He is now much better, and is going to attempt supplying Mr. Eddy's pulpit for the next five sabbaths. He spoke at the communion table last sabbath, and referred most affectingly to the "amazing realities which had broken upon the view of those who had lately gone from our bosom to the bosom of the Saviour."

My father wishes me to present him to you most affectionately, and we all unite in our gratitude for your prayers and sympathy.

Believe me, Dear Sir,

With respectful regard, yours,

F. L. SMITH.

August 16th. I have been blest this morning with clearer views than I ever had before. I certainly delight in God's glory and happiness more than in any thing else, and I do not wish for a personal happiness distinct from that delight. I do love to lie at his feet and to



look up from the dust and see him on the throne. I desire above all things to see him known and honored as God. It is because he is in heaven that I wish to be there. I rejoice to know that he is his own reward,—all that reward to himself that he ever expected or desired. I long to be holy because it is right and agreeable to his will, and not primarily for the sake of the reward. The happiness I seek is derived from the happiness and glory of God. I feel that my sins against his authority and happiness and glory, are unspeakably vile, and do deserve more misery than I can measure, and my judgment tells me, eternal misery. I love to repent. It is a luxury to lie low at his feet and mourn for sin. Christ is precious to my soul, the chief among ten thousands and altogether lovely. That God should have regenerated me, according to an eternal decree of election, making all the difference in my favor between an eternal hell and an eternal heaven, lays me under boundless, boundless, boundless obligations. My most earnest desire and prayer is, that I may spend my life in his service and in heavenly devotion.

My practice founded on the rule to pray without ceasing, and in every thing to give thanks, has opened God to my view, somewhat, I think, as he will be seen in heaven,—and it would be so fully if the rule was fully observed. It has established a habit of gratitude more constant and tender than I ever experienced before.

Mrs. Griffin's death has certainly been sanctified to me, and has rendered heaven more familiar, and real and dear. And as God had evidently prepared me for that event, I know not but his present dealings are intended to prepare me to follow her soon. I should be glad to live to carry my MSS. through the press, and for a little while longer to promote revivals of religion by preaching. I have no wish to live for any other reason; and I am willing that God should defeat these purposes by my removal, if he sees fit.

August 20th. I certainly do love God with great tenderness. My heart is dissolved in gratitude to him for his amazing and distinguishing love. That he is infinitely and eternally happy, and that he will be

known and honored and glorified as God, are the two sweetest thoughts that ever enter my mind. I think I love him better than myself. It has been a question whether to see him known and honored as God, was my supreme desire, or whether a wish for my own happiness was stronger. But I am convinced that the happiness I wish for, instead of being superior or opposed to his glory, consists in it. The delight of seeing him known and honored, is the very heaven I desire. I certainly long to be holy because it is right and agreeable to the will of God, antecedent to all considerations of reward.

August 24th. Do I love God better than myself? My happiness consists in the happiness and glory of God, and in his will's being done. I do not, therefore, habitually set up my own will or happiness against him, and of course do not love myself better than God, but God better than myself. It is my supreme desire to see him known and honored as God, for I place my highest happiness in that; and therefore do not set my own happiness above his honor and glory.

TO THE REV. DR. TUCKER.

Newark, N. J. August 29th, 1837.

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

Your kind favor, by Mr. Stafford, of the 22d inst. was duly received. I thank you very much for your sympathy, and thank dear Mrs. Tucker for her participation of our sorrow, and also your beloved children for their kind and tender feelings. You say, "we shall now have another subject of prayer." I thank you, my dear brother, and hope I shall indeed have an interest in your petitions. I value it much. I probably have been already benefited by your prayers. I think I have enjoyed the love of God and of Christ since the death of Mrs. Griffin more than I ever did before. God had been preparing both her mind and my own for the solemn event for eight months beforehand, and she died an easy death, with great tranquillity, without any

uncomfortable feelings of mind, with composure and trust in the dear Redeemer. I would not call her back for ten thousand worlds.

"Thou art gone to the grave; but we will not deplore thee,  
Though sorrow and darkness encompass the tomb;  
The Saviour hath passed through its portals before thee,  
And the lamp of his love is thy guide through the gloom."

For a million of worlds I would not change the counsel of the Most High. The glory of God and the happiness of God are certainly the two objects dearest to my heart, in which I most rejoice, and in which I place my highest happiness. Let him do with me as seemeth good in his sight. It is a most overcoming thought that Christ, after all his obedient labors, asks for no reward,—desires no reward,—but what consists in blessings on us, together with the glory of God and the good of the universe therein involved. O the amazing love of Christ portrayed in that glorious truth! I never saw his love so affecting in any other light.

My health was affected by the event for more than a week, but I have so far recovered as to be able to preach. I hope ere long to renew the work of transcribing my MSS. about which I know you feel a deep interest. I wish to live long enough to carry them through the press, and to promote revivals of religion by preaching the kingdom of Christ, and by any other means in my power. These are the only two objects for which I wish to live. I perceive by your letter, and your kind request for me to write, that these several statements would not be ungratifying to you. With sincere love to Mrs. Tucker, and the dear children, I am, my beloved brother,

Very affectionately yours,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

Sept. 1st. Do I long to be delivered from sin more than from any other evil? Sin is against the blessed God, against his rightful authority, against his glory, against his happiness because against the happiness of his kingdom, and against the life of Christ. In this view of sin, as against that glory and happiness which are the dearest to my heart, I think I do wish to be delivered from it more than from any other evil.

TO THE COMPILER OF THIS MEMOIR.

Newark, N. J. Sept. 21, 1837.

MY BELOVED BROTHER,

I received to-day the Argus, containing the distressing news of the death of our dear Mrs. S—, and an obituary notice. Though sick, I cannot delay the expression of my heartfelt grief, and my tenderest sympathy. I know your sorrows, and can enter into them with the deepest interest. From the moment I heard of the event I have been praying for you and your dear children. May God support and comfort you and take care of them. Our whole family feel deeply for you. Even the children enter into it as an event very interesting to them, in consequence of your visit here and your sympathizing letter to me. Our dear wives are now together, and it will be but a few days and we, I trust, shall be with them. Mean time heaven must be nearer and dearer to us for their being in it. God has done it, and it is right. From his great kindness to me, I trust the more that he will enable you to rejoice in him more than ever during this afflictive season. Ever since the commencement of my illness, more than three years ago, he has been pouring in truth in a new and affecting light. For the last six or eight months it has been more so. But since the death of Mrs. Griffin it has been so more than ever, so that I have sometimes apprehended he was preparing me to follow her soon. The two sweetest objects to me in the universe, and those in which my happiness chiefly consists, are the glory and the happiness of God. That he is infinite in his benevolence and wisdom, is a thought that

renders the universe rich beyond expression. A few weeks ago, in asking for something as the reward of Christ, it opened upon me, that he neither asks nor desires any reward, since he has taken his throne and government, but what consists in blessings on us, (together with the glory of God and the good of the universe therein involved.) In blessings on this Christ crucifying world! Never did the love of Christ open upon me so before. I resolved to carry that thought with me to my grave, and I love to impart it to my dear friends. O such a God and Saviour! What may they not do to us? If infinite benevolence and wisdom and mercy and faithfulness, have the management of all our affairs to the smallest particular, what need we fear? What occasion have we to be agitated? Gabriel and Paul see the universe blest in containing such a God, and that constitutes their heaven. The same heaven shall be ours to-day, if we will enter fully into the love and contemplation of that glorious God. Let him take our wives and our children,—let him take all that we have,—only leave himself,—and Paul and Gabriel cannot be richer. O my dear brother, it does my heart good to know how rich you are, in your deserted house and in your lonely chamber. Take hold of those riches in both your arms, and rise up above every anguish, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Doctor Smith and my two daughters unite with me in tender love and sympathy. Give my tender love to your dear children, and kiss them all for me. They have a mother still, and she is where I hope and pray they all may be.

With the most tender sympathy in your present afflictions, I am, my dear brother, most affectionately yours,

E. D. GRIFFIN.

Sept. 28th. My former complaint has returned upon me and threatens to carry me off. I am willing that God should do as it seemeth good in his sight. My disease (thought to be dropsy in the chest) prevents me from lying all night in bed. The idea of sitting up

the most of the night was dreadful. But last night it was so delightful to think that infinite wisdom and love would order the whole, that I felt no apprehension. The consequence was, that though I had to get up at a quarter after ten, I had a comfortable night and slept well in my chair. Blessed be the Lord.

Oct. 1st. Sabbath. I have done lying in bed, and sit upon my chair all night and all day. The other day, Dr. Smith, in answer to my inquiry, told me it was not likely that I should live till spring; and was very doubtful whether I should live till January. The idea was delightful. I have looked forward to death by dropsy in the chest as very dreadful; but it no longer appears so. A sense that infinite wisdom and love will order every thing for me, leaves no anxiety about any thing. It was very fatiguing to sit up nights, and I dreaded it much. But that consideration of infinite wisdom and love, removed in a minute all that anxiety some days ago, and it has not returned for a moment since. It seems to be about as pleasant to sit up as it formerly did to lie in bed. This mental feeling has been aided by some merciful provisions which render it easier to sit in my chair.

I have been deeply affected of late by these most merciful and faithful provisions for a poor wretched sinner, so needful for an old man going down into the grave after his beloved wife. Not one anxious thought is left me from day to day about the event or the manner. I am taken up in thanking the blessed God for his wonderful mercy and faithfulness in thus dealing with me. That he should select this time to do for me what he never did before, to remove every concern and to fill me with peace,—to make that most solemn event, and all the dreaded means, no longer dreadful, but delightful,—is proof of mercy and faithfulness beyond the power of language to express. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

Oct. 8th. Sabbath. Dr. Smith told me this morning that, if the swelling continued to increase as it had done for a fortnight past, I should not probably live the month out. The idea was delightful, and

awakened tears of gratitude. O the wonderful mercy and faithfulness of God!

Oct. 14th. I have been very sick and nervous during the last week; slept but little and had very uncomfortable nights, with a dread of the pressure for breath, which was between me and death. Yesterday afternoon I saw that God would appoint all these things. The thought relieved and comforted me at once, and brought submission and trust. And that submission and trust were followed by such a night as I have not had for a considerable time. Though I had not exercised any, on account of the rain, I had altogether the most comfortable rest that I have had since I ceased to lie down. The weather had changed to cold to favor such a result. O the mercies and the faithful providence of God! His interpositions are constant and manifest, and full of mercy and faithfulness.

The preceding paragraph concludes his diary; for though his death did not occur till the 8th of November, the rapid progress of his disease rendered him incapable of the effort of writing. His funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Doctor SPRING of New-York; and shortly after, another discourse, occasioned by his death, was delivered at Williamstown, by the Rev. Dr. HOPKINS, President of Williams College; both of which have since been published.

The following letter from Mrs. SMITH to a friend in Boston, embodies the most important particulars of her father's last illness and death.

Newark, Dec. 11, 1837.

MY VERY DEAR MRS. K.

Your truly affectionate letter was not the less welcome, for being one of many with which we have been favored; all bearing the kindest expressions of sympathy for us, and of veneration and love toward our dear departed parents. We ought truly to adopt the language of our bereaved father:—"The tender sympathy of our friends here and

abroad, has been unbounded, and the love of our Father and Saviour has been most supporting." We can truly make the sentiment of the beloved Cowper our own:

"My boast is not that I deduce my birth  
From loins enthron'd, and rulers of the earth;  
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—  
The child of parents passed into the skies."

You could not have imposed upon me a more delightful task than that of reviewing the never-to-be-forgotten scenes of my dear father's sickness and death. Oh, my friend, if you have ever stood "quite on the verge of heaven," you have been where I stood for two months; each day ministering to one who seemed just ready to take his upward flight; each day listening, perhaps for the last time, to the heavenly words that fell from the lips of my only remaining parent.

My cousin W. no doubt told you of the "quiet spirit" of the aged, feeble, afflicted saint, called so unexpectedly to part with her, whose affectionate sympathy had cheered his pilgrimage for more than forty years, and which he had hoped would bless him to the end. Yes, the "angel of the covenant" supported him as he passed through these deep waters. He leaned upon the everlasting arm, and it failed him not. He had prayed fervently that my dear mother's departure might be easy and triumphant; and when he saw this desire so fully accomplished, his whole soul went forth in gratitude on her behalf. But this event broke his hold on life. He murmured not, but the outbreakings of his widowed heart were most affecting. He committed to memory those beautiful lines of Heber, "Thou art gone to the grave," and often while sitting at the table they would seem to rush upon his recollection, and he would repeat them in his own affecting manner with many tears.



You remember his love for sacred music, connected with sacred song. This never forsook him. From the day that he came into our family, it was our custom to devote sabbath evenings to songs of praise, in which his grand-children were the principal performers. These seasons were always welcomed by my dear father, for whom a chair was placed in the midst of the little group, with whose infant voices his own and that of my dear mother would sometimes unite. He often spoke of these seasons as among his most precious means of grace. He copied in a book all the pieces that they sung, making additions from time to time, till within a few weeks of his death. The last lines which he inserted were these—"And to eternity love and adore." The hymn commences thus: "Come, thou Almighty King." From the commencement of his last illness, it was his custom to spend every evening in the parlor, where he sat with his little book before him, selecting hymns for his darling Malvina to play and sing. And only the day before his death, when, to use his own expression, "the agonies of death had come upon him," he was led into the parlor, that he might once more listen to the praises of earth, before he went to join in the anthems of heaven. It will ever be among Malvina's most hallowed recollections, that she was thus permitted to smooth the passage of this man of God, this endeared parent, to heaven. Oh, shall he listen in vain amidst a choir above for one of those voices which he so much loved to hear?

My father continued to preach from church to church every sabbath till my mother's death, till he had proclaimed his last message in seven of our churches and in two of our neighboring villages. In August he was invited to supply the pulpit of the first church during the absence of our pastor. In compliance with this request, he gathered up his strength to perform this last service for the beloved church over which he had watched for nearly eight years previous to his residence in Boston. He preached seven sermons in four sabbaths: and after this delivered his last sermon in the pulpit of the Rev. J. H. Jones at New-Brunswick, a nephew of my mother. This was on the 10th of September. His text was Jeremiah, 31:31–34. The subject, Salvation taken into God's own hands. He thus fulfilled all

his appointments, except at Elizabethtown, where he had engaged to preach for both Presbyterian clergymen, one of whom—Rev. N. Murray, was his former pupil.

On the 13th of Sept. the American Board met here. On the same day my father was taken suddenly ill, and was not able to attend any of the meetings except the last, on the 13th, when he made his last public speech and prayer. He attended church for the last time on the next sabbath, and heard his early friends, Drs. Richards and Humphrey preach. About this time a dropsical effusion took place, which progressed so rapidly, that from Thursday of the same week he never attempted to lie down again. He said to me that night, "I never expect to lie down again, till I lie by your mother's side."

Previous to my mother's death, he had attained to the "full assurance of hope," and this event, making heaven, as he said, "seem like another apartment in his own house," severed his strongest tie to earth, and bound his thoughts and affections more firmly to heaven. From the first appearance of dropsy he gave up all thought of being relieved, and was enabled to look without a fear into that eternity which was just at hand. But the wearisome days and nights which seemed appointed to him, and the dreadful closing scene—from these nature shrunk. Even this was but a passing cloud. The thought that infinite wisdom and love would order every circumstance, soon dispelled it forever. After this he was often heard to say, "God has made it about as pleasant to sit up as it formerly was to lie down."

There was indeed nothing of gloom about the chamber of death, but it was a solemn place; one which could not but strengthen the faith of the feeblest saint, and which might well have shaken the confidence of the boldest infidel. The beloved patient, not content with his own sure prospect of eternal life, was constant in his intercessions for a ruined world. There were more than forty individuals among his impenitent friends whom he bore on his heart before the Mercy Seat many times each day. And as he had opportunity, he failed not to warn every one of them with tears.

There was a 'joy unspeakable and full of glory" which seemed to fill his soul. There was that peace of which the Saviour spoke when he said, "My peace I give unto you." There was indeed a majesty in the calmness, the faith, the love, the submission, the gratitude of this dying saint, which words cannot describe. And yet there was no mere animal excitement. To a friend, who asked him what his views of heaven were, he replied, "My mind is too weak for lively views. I know heaven must be a blessed place. God is there. Christ is there." This view seemed to satisfy him. To my mind there was something more delightful in the filial confidence with which he committed himself to his Heavenly Father, than in those enlarged and exciting views which might have been expected from such a man as he.

His humility was affecting. The touch of death disturbed not the tranquility of his features; but it was disturbed by the remark of a friend, to whom, after bearing testimony to the kindness of his Heavenly Father, he had said, "And you may expect that he will do the same for you when you come to die." She replied, "If I am only as faithful as you." For a moment he was silent, and then with deep feeling he rejoined, "Don't say that again, sister: it is not because I am good, but because Christ has died."

His gratitude was constant. After adverting to some simple provisions for his comfort, he added, "Your love to your sick and dying infant is hatred, compared with the love of my Heavenly Father towards me."

His submission was truly filial. After stating to a friend that he never expected to lie down again, till he was laid down for the grave, he sweetly added, "And I am willing to sit here, just as you see me now, for twenty years, if it is God's will."

His love to the Saviour kindled into a brighter, purer flame as he traversed the ascent of Pisgah. To a nephew, who visited him in August, he remarked, "Never did I have such views of the Saviour as

I have had for the last two months;—never before such as I have had for the last week."

He received every intimation of the rapid progress of his disease with expressions, and often with tears, of gratitude. It was not impatience to be released from suffering; for He to whom with filial confidence he had committed himself, carried him so gently down, that he never spoke of pain, except for a short time on the day previous to his death (Tuesday.) He then said, "You talk of dying agonies; they have come upon me." Being asked if he could describe them, he answered, with his hand upon his breast, "Something here that will not let me sleep or breathe hardly." It was in this emergency that he sought the sweet influence of music. While he sat by the piano, one of his brethren in the ministry came in. My father, extending his hand to him as he entered, said, "You see me just going home." His friend said, "It has often been your privilege to administer consolation to the dying: I trust you experience all those consolations you have offered to others." Raising his voice in the most emphatic manner, he repeated, "More,—more,—much more."

On the sabbath previous to his death, new symptoms appearing, he was told that his disease was approaching a crisis; and subsequently, that it might form one in twenty-four hours. On Monday, a long-trying friend who called, said to him, "Your journey is almost over." "Blessed be God," said he,— "twelve hours."

To his grand-children and the domestics he gave his parting charge to meet him in heaven.

To Malvina he said, "I want you to examine yourself a great deal before you venture to hope."

To Edward and Lyndon, "You must give your heart to the Saviour. Don't put it off another hour."

To Frances, "Be a good girl, and give your heart to the Saviour while you are young."

On Tuesday morning, Nov. 7th, we were called up to see him die. He was, as usual, panting for breath. My husband asked him if he suffered any pain. "None," said he, and then broke out in the following expressions, interrupted, scarcely audible, but most impressive. "My Heavenly Father,—my dear Redeemer,—wonderful in mercy and faithfulness! I pray you to give him glory forever and ever." Being asked if he still continued to dread the dying struggle, "No," said he; "I leave it all with God; I refer it all to his will."

In the afternoon his brother inquired if his mind was still unclouded. "Without a doubt," was his prompt and emphatic reply. After bathing his feet, he cheerfully said, "I never expect to bathe my feet again. My soul I hope to wash in the blood of the Lamb." He bade his brother, who was obliged to leave him, a cheerful and affectionate farewell. He gave his parting blessing to all who called to see him, and failed not to send messages of love to the absent members of their families.

Early in the evening, a beloved friend, a sister of my husband, was introduced to him. "I do not recollect my friends now," said he. "You remember the dear Saviour who is by you?" she asked. "Oh yes," emphatically; "he never so manifested his preciousness to me before." After his grandchildren, excepting Malvina, had left the room for the night, having received as usual the parting kiss, Sarah repeated to him several of his favorite hymns, at the close of each of which he exclaimed, "precious,—very precious." These were among his last recollections of earth. While we stood around him, he fell into a gentle sleep; and five minutes before four o'clock on Wednesday morning, Nov. 8th, ceased to breathe, without a struggle or a groan. His age was sixty-seven years, ten months, two days; nine days younger than my beloved mother. He served the Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel ministry, forty-five years.

Every expression of veneration and love has been paid to the memory of this man of God. His funeral was attended in the first Presbyterian church, where hundreds pressed to take a last look, and to read the inscription placed upon his breast: "Remember the words

which I spake unto you while I was yet present with you." Most of the clergymen in this city preached with reference to his death. One of them alluding to the providence which brought him back to Newark, beautifully remarked: "It was fitting that he who came in his youth to teach us how to live, should come, when his head was gray, to show us how to die. It was fitting that he should lie side by side till the resurrection morn, with them to whom he had preached Christ 'the resurrection and the life.' "

"Devout men" bore both my parents to the grave; where they lie side by side, on the very spot purchased by my father for a burial-place before his removal to Boston. The following inscriptions mark the spot:

SACRED

to the memory of

The REV. DR.

EDWARD DORR GRIFFIN,

who departed this life

in the hope

of a glorious immortality,

Nov. 8th, 1837,

in the 68th year

of his age.

They that turn many to righteousness

shall shine as the stars forever

and ever.

\*SACRED

to the memory of

Mrs. FRANCES GRIFFIN,

Wife of the

REV. DR. EDWARD D. GRIFFIN,

who departed this life

in the hope

of a glorious immortality,

July 25th, 1837,

in the 68th year

of her age.

In her tongue was the law of kindness.

On such the second death hath no power.

Oh death where is thy sting!

Oh grave where is thy victory

The disease which in its accumulated ravages wasted my father's strength, and laid him in the grave, was of more than four years continuance. It apparently commenced in a slight attack of paralysis, affecting his left side, in the spring of '33. It resulted, as ascertained by a post mortem examination, in an enlargement and softening of

the heart. The immediate cause of death was a general dropsical effusion.

In August, 1834, symptoms of dropsy in the chest appeared. I have often heard him describe its commencement. "I awoke," said he, "with a new and dreadful sensation here," laying his hand upon his breast; "and I asked myself, what if only this were eternal! The thought was overwhelming. My mind at once turned to some whom I had loved, and who had gone into eternity, leaving no evidence that they were prepared for heaven. The scene of their sufferings became as real as though I had stood on the margin of the burning lake." I visited Williamstown soon after this memorable night, and found this impression stamped upon his soul. He was as solemn as though he had indeed seen the dread reality. His mind was weighed down with the prospect of the eternal, the unendurable suffering of the wicked; and it was not until he was enabled to take a comprehensive view of the government of God, that he threw off the gloom that rested upon his mind. It was the only time I ever saw him gloomy. From this time the salvation of souls from this eternity of misery, was the one subject that occupied his time, his conversation, and his prayers. From this time may be traced his rapid increase in spirituality, and his evident ripening for heaven. Soon after, his symptoms became alarming, but for himself he manifested no anxiety. The passage in Phil. 4:6, 7, seemed to dwell upon his mind, and to leave its own impress there. These dropsical symptoms soon yielded to medical skill, and returned not again till after my mother's death. But that noble frame which had stood firm and erect for more than sixty winters, was henceforth to crumble away under the influence of disease.

On my father's return to this scene of his early labors, he was welcomed with a warmth of affection, to him unexpected and overwhelming. Here he found many of his spiritual children, who hastened to remind him of their spiritual relations; and many of the children of his departed friends, whose parents had taught them to honor him from their infancy. Here too he found the aged sinner,



who in former years had listened to his appeals as an ambassador for God; and here and there a child of the covenant, who was yet an "alien from the commonwealth of Israel." Amidst such recognitions, the yearnings of a pastor's heart revived. Early in the spring he commenced a course of visitation, which occupied his mornings for several successive weeks. And who that marked his feeble footsteps as he bent before the chilling blast, but felt that some mighty purpose moved his soul? These visits, these admonitions, these prayers of anxious love, can never be forgotten. They will be reviewed at the judgment. God grant that they may not then appear as a witness against any whom he sought to save!

He preached eighteen sermons during the last year, besides attending several funerals and addressing us, in his own impressive manner, at our communion seasons.

The only objects for which he wished to live, as he repeatedly said, were to promote revivals of religion by his prayers, conversation and preaching, and to prepare his MSS. for the press. For this he was willing awhile to linger an exile from heaven.

He was permitted to sow the good seed in many hearts;—to lay up a rich inheritance of prayer for his children and friends;—to commend the departing spirit of his beloved wife to his Saviour and hers, and to see her precious remains safely deposited in sure hope of a glorious resurrection;—to show us how a good man may live, and how too he may die;—and then he was taken, I doubt not, to the "rest that remaineth to the people of God." "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. They rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

Your affectionate friend,

FRANCES LOUISA SMITH.

FROM THE FACULTY OF WILLIAMS COLLEGE TO DR. SMITH.

The Faculty of Williams College, having recently heard of the death of the Rev. Dr. Griffin, and having been long associated with him either as his pupils, or in the instruction and government of the college, are desirous to express to his family and near friends their sincere sympathy with them in their bereavement, and the high sense which they entertain of his talents and worth.

They feel that a great man, and a benefactor of his age has departed. From his powers as a pulpit orator, and the peculiar positions which he occupied, his influence as a preacher will be long felt, while his writings must take their place among standard theological works.

Of his connexion with this College, we, in common with all its friends, would speak with gratitude. To him, probably more than to any other man, is it owing that this College was placed on a permanent foundation, and enjoys its present degree of prosperity. His labors in its behalf were arduous, persevering and successful. During his Presidency the College enjoyed several powerful revivals of religion, and it was especially from its connection with the cause of Christ, that he watched over its interests and prayed for it. Through his pupils his influence is now felt in heathen lands.

We rejoice to hear that his death was peaceful, and that in that trying hour he was supported by the religion which he had so long preached, and so extensively promoted.

The former members of his family, whom we can never cease to regard with interest, will please accept, together with yourself, our respectful and affectionate remembrance.

In behalf of the Faculty,

M. HOPKINS, Pres't.

DR. L. A. SMITH.

FROM THE REV. HOLLIS READ TO MISS GRIFFIN.

Babylon, Nov. 13th, 1837.

MY DEAR MISS GRIFFIN,

The Newark Daily Advertiser, announcing the death of your dear and venerated father, has this moment reached me. The first impulse of my heart—that ever beat with love and gratitude to that ever-blessed, but now glorified saint, and with the most tender and respectful affection for his family, is to beg the privilege and honor of mingling my tears with yours on this mournful occasion. But how mournful? I mourn for myself that I have lost so valuable a counsellor, and so dear a father and friend. I mourn for you, dear sister, and for all those to whom he was so justly dear and valued. I mourn for the church of Christ and for this dark world, because another bright and shining light has sunk below our horizon. But here my mourning stops. My tears dry. I look up and see that innumerable throng around the throne. I listen—a new harp is strung. A new voice is heard. Its infant notes are distinguished amidst the countless host. They mingle with the harmonious sounds of the ten thousand times ten thousand in the New Jerusalem. It is the voice of our father. Yes, of our father. I am the son of the travail of his soul. He has entered "the gates of pearl." He walks the golden streets. He finds peace within its jasper walls—rest on its "precious" foundations. Though the mortal part slumbereth in the dark grave, yet slumbereth not the spirit. He hath no need of the sun to shine upon it, for the glory of the Lord enlighteneth it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

Thanks then to God that he has gone before us. Heaven is now nearer, dearer, sweeter. Is it not pleasant to think that our dear father waits to receive and welcome us? He has taught us here how to sing the song of redeeming love. And now, since he has gone to take lessons at the feet of infinite Perfection, may he not there again teach our unfledged souls to soar and sing and praise him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood?

Happy, happy saint! We love to follow him. We love to listen to the sweet sound of his heavenly music now. We love to look back and recall the past. What scenes with us are associated with one period of his ministry! We love to contemplate him now so soon reunited in the bonds of everlasting love, to your dear mother; forever joined in holy activity and ceaseless praise with "heaven's best gift" in his earthly pilgrimage.

But hark! there comes another sound from those once loved and always revered lips. It is a sound of warning, of fear and trembling, for his spiritual sons and daughters. It comes to me; to you; to all who stand in this endeared relation. It says, "beware"—"watch"—"strive"—"fear lest a promise being left—some of you should come short of it."

But I must close. Accept my most heart-felt condolence in this hour of severe bereavement. Your tears will flow. It is nature. It is right. You know the Mourner's Friend. Your Redeemer liveth. May he be found a ready help.

Mrs. Read unites with me in hearty sympathy and affectionate regards to yourself and Dr. and Mrs. Smith. I beg they will receive this humble token of condolence and affection equally with yourself.

Yours very affectionately,

H. READ.

FROM THE REV. DOCTOR HUMPHREY TO DR. GRIFFIN'S  
CHILDREN.

Amherst College, Nov. 13th, 1837.

MY AFFLICTED FRIENDS,

The southern mail, last evening, brought us the intelligence that your revered and honored father has fallen asleep! Soon, but not too soon

for him, has he followed your beloved mother, as we confidently believe, to her eternal rest. The news was not so unexpected as to be surprising; for when I saw him at the meeting of the American Board, his hold on life appeared too feeble to last long. I have known Dr. Griffin for about forty years, and have always regarded him as one of the most eloquent, pungent, and useful preachers, that I ever heard. There was a melody, a solemnity, a charm in his voice, during all the prime of his ministry, and even up to the age of sixty, which always struck strangers as very remarkable, and what was of infinitely greater importance, he dealt so faithfully with the conscience, that few could go away so much admiring the preacher as to forget themselves.

His natural talents were certainly of a high order. His mind, if not quite so rapid in its movements as some others, was highly discriminating. He could grasp a difficult subject with much apparent ease, and hold it at his pleasure. He saw the relations and differences of things, with uncommon perspicuity; and what he saw clearly himself, he knew how to present in a strong light to other minds. Of this there are many fine examples in his Park-street Lectures—a book by the way, which will go down to posterity.

To say nothing of the eminent services which he rendered to religion and learning, in other stations, few ministers of the age, I believe, have been instrumental of awakening and saving more souls than Dr. Griffin. How will his crown of rejoicing sparkle with gems in the day of the Lord Jesus! Though he spent more time in several other places than in Boston, I have always been impressed with the belief, that his pre-eminent usefulness was on that ground. When he went there, the piety of the pilgrim fathers had nearly ceased to warm the bosoms of their descendants. Calvinism was a byeword and reproach. Orthodoxy hardly dared to show its head in any of the Congregational pulpits. It wanted a strong arm to hold up the standard of the cross, a strong voice to cry in the ears of the people, and a bold heart to encounter the scorn and the talent that were

arrayed against him. And nobly, in the fear and strength of the Lord, did he "quit himself."

Nothing was more striking in his character, than the high ground which he always took in exhibiting the offensive doctrines of the gospel, particularly divine sovereignty, election, the total depravity of the natural heart, and the necessity of regeneration. These doctrines he exhibited with great clearness and power, before friends and enemies. The crisis required just such a master-spirit, and Boston felt his power; or rather felt the power of God, which I must think wrought in him mightily during his short ministry in Park-street. From the time of his going there, orthodoxy began to revive; and we all know how many flourishing churches have, as it were, sprung from that one stock.

With your thrice honored father God was every thing, and man was nothing. He wanted to see every body lying at the footstool with perfect submission to the divine will, putting a blank into God's hands, to be filled up just according to his infinite wisdom and pleasure; and there he loved to lie himself. This was the theme of his remarks when I saw him at your house, a few weeks ago. He seemed fully resolved, that if ever he was saved, God should have all the glory of it—that if he went to heaven, he would go there to sing redeeming love. Never shall we forget either his address, or his prayer, on the last forenoon of our session in your church. Both were close on the verge of heaven! And how exquisitely did he enjoy the hymns of praise in your family circle on the evening of the sabbath when I saw him last.

Most sincerely do I sympathize with you in your afflictions, and rejoice with you too, in the bright hopes which shine upon the path of your sorrows. May the Lord bless and sanctify you; and may you ever be followers of those, who through faith and patience inherit the promises!

I am, very sincerely, your friend,

H. HUMPHREY.

The following letter from the Rev. Dr. BURDER of London, shows in what estimation Dr. GRIFFIN'S character was held abroad.

Hackney, June 7th, 1831.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

It cannot but be gratifying to me to have an opportunity of addressing a few lines to you, under circumstances which shelter me from the charge of being obtrusive. A few days ago I had the honor of receiving the diploma which bears your signature; and in my view, if the entire value of that document were derived from that revered name, it would be entitled to warmer acknowledgments than my words can convey. I feel, however, greatly indebted to every member of the "Senatus Academicus," as well as to their honored President, for the degree which has been conferred in a manner so kind, and handsome, and indulgent. To you, my Dear Sir, and to the learned body over which you preside, I owe, in some respects, even a greater debt of gratitude than to the University of Glasgow, where I pursued my studies, whose kindness has conferred a similar honor. May I become less unworthy of a distinction which I could never have presumed to solicit!

Through the kindness of our mutual friend, Dr. S., I have had the pleasure of cultivating that kind of acquaintance with you, my Dear Sir, which is rendered practicable by the press. To many of the habitual and powerful workings of your mind I am no stranger. You have assisted me in my feeble efforts to seek a "Heavenly mind." Your Park-st. lectures have given many a vigorous impulse to my thoughts on the great things of God; and this very morning I have perused, with no ordinary emotions, your Murray-st. discourse on "glorying in the Lord." May those energies of intellect which the Father of spirits has awakened and consecrated, long be continued,

in unimpaired power, for a blessing to America, to Britain, to the world.

I am beyond expression interested and impressed by the intelligence I have received in reference to the present revivals of religion in your happy and honored country. Oh what a day of glory has dawned upon your churches! Did my family (of four children, now motherless,) and my flock permit, how enraptured I should be to cross the ocean and mingle with you in your joys and thanksgivings and supplications. Oh pray, my Dear Sir, for us, that the blessed influences of the Holy One may thus descend upon the land of your fathers!

With blended emotions, of gratitude, respect, and attachment, believe me to be, Rev. and Dear Sir, very cordially, and faithfully, and obediently, yours,

HENRY FORSTER BURDER.

## CHAPTER VIII

### GENERAL ESTIMATE OF HIS CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE

It has been the design of the preceding chapters to exhibit Doctor GRIFFIN'S general course through life, in connexion with such extracts from his private journal as seemed best adapted to illustrate the various stages of his christian experience. It only remains to present some of the more prominent features of his character a little in detail, and to attempt some general estimate of the extended and diversified influence of his life.



Doctor GRIFFIN was remarkable in his physical conformation. He measured six feet and nearly three inches from the ground, and his frame was every way well proportioned. His gigantic and noble form attracted the attention of strangers as he walked the streets; and when he rose in a great assembly, he towered so much above the rest as to throw around men of ordinary stature an air of insignificance. His countenance was peculiar—expressive both of strong thought and strong feeling; and those who knew him will recognize a faithful delineation, both of his features and his expression, in the engraved portrait prefixed to this memoir. Though he was somewhat feeble in his early childhood, he ultimately developed a fine constitution, and during much the greater part of his life possessed an uncommon share of physical vigor. It may also be mentioned in this connexion, that he was remarkable, even to the last day of his life, for his habits of personal neatness. "The last sun that shone upon him," says a member of his family, "found him brushing his teeth as thoroughly as he ever did, and his regular shaving and change of apparel were never intermitted."

It is hardly necessary to say that Doctor GRIFFIN was quite as extraordinary in his intellectual character as in his physical powers and proportions. It would perhaps be difficult to say whether the imagination or the reasoning faculty constituted the predominating feature of his mind; for he was one of the rare instances of pre-eminence in both. He seemed equally at home in the heights and in the depths: if his mind was prolific of the most magnificent and burning conceptions, it was also capable of pushing the most abstract subject of inquiry to the farthest limit of human investigation. But while his imagination soared high, and his reasoning faculty penetrated far, neither the one nor the other was particularly rapid in its operations. The movements of his mind all partook more of the majesty of the thunder-storm than the impetuosity of the whirlwind.

His intellectual habits were substantially those of every thoroughly disciplined mind. He had no time to devote to useless employments, and his faculties never became rusty from inaction. A domestic in his

family testifies that she never entered his room without finding him engaged in writing, reading, or prayer. He was also in all things, the smallest as well as the greatest, remarkably attentive to system; and he was never satisfied unless every thing around him occupied its appropriate place, and every thing devolving upon him was done at the proper time. And to these qualities may be added a spirit of uncommon perseverance; a fixed purpose to do well whatever he undertook; to get to the bottom of every subject which he attempted to investigate. During the last year of his life he copied out a little book of hymns, as correctly as if they had been designed for the press; and within a sabbath or two previous to his death, as he was reading some missionary journal, he requested his daughter to hand him his atlas that he might find certain places mentioned in it, and he bent over the map with untiring interest until he had traced the whole course.

Dr. GRIFFIN'S dispositions and feelings were so far moulded by the influence of religion, that it was not easy always to distinguish between the man and the christian;—between the elements of nature and the graces of the Spirit. There was, however, a tenderness and generosity and magnanimity about him, which every one felt to be instinctive. He was also naturally of a social turn, and accommodated himself with great felicity to persons of different ages and capacities. In almost every circle into which he was thrown, he was sure to lead the conversation; and yet not in a way that seemed officious or obtrusive, but because he was put forward by the united consent of those who felt his superiority.

It would appear from the journal that he kept of his private religious exercises, that the leading element of his christian character was a deep sense of his own corruptions and of his entire dependance on the sovereign grace of God in Christ; and hence he was always peculiarly jealous for the divine glory:—always ready to buckle on his armor for conflict when he saw any movements in the theological world, which looked hostile to the sovereignty of God or the dignity of his Son. In the early part of his christian course, his mind seems to

have been occupied more with the severer truths of God's word, especially the nature and obligations of his law; but in his later days he was much more disposed to dwell upon the grace and glory of the gospel—the fulness of its provisions and the freeness of its offers; and hence his piety, as he advanced toward the end of his course, became increasingly cheerful and attractive. Those who had the opportunity of enjoying his society in the last months of his life, felt that his eye was turned directly and habitually upon the sun of Righteousness; and that every desire of his heart was swallowed up in this—that God's will might be done, and God's name glorified.

Doctor GRIFFIN was remarkable for his strict adherence to truth. He had no sympathy with those lax notions on this subject which have been so lamentably common in these later years, among many professed christians, not to say ministers of the gospel—especially the notion that it is lawful to practise some degree of deception in religious matters, for the sake of gaining what is supposed to be an important end: on the contrary, he allowed not himself either by his words or his actions, either in respect to religion or any thing else, intentionally to leave an impression upon any mind that was at variance with his honest convictions. "I well remember," says his daughter, "his early attempts to fix my confidence in his word;—a confidence which he never forfeited. He would place me on a high mantle piece, and then removing himself a short distance direct me to throw myself into his arms, assuring me that it was safe, and that he would take me down in no other way. I would sit for a long time, pleading, trembling, perhaps weeping, till finding him inflexible, I was forced to make the dreaded leap, and test the truth of his promise. In after life it was his frequent and fearless appeal, 'Did your father ever deceive you?' In his diary he mentions assuming a smile at the side of Ellen's sick bed, in order to conceal from her my danger, and then adds, 'and for the first and only time deceived my child.' "

Another peculiarly amiable feature in his character, was his freedom from censoriousness. The law of kindness was upon his lips; and

though he was often engaged in controversy, and felt himself called in obedience to his strong convictions of duty, to expose what he deemed the errors of others either in doctrine or practice, yet he was uniformly courteous toward his opponents. The maxim which regulated his conduct as a controvertist was, "Crush heresy, but spare the heretic."

Intimately connected with the preceding, was another quality which, to those who knew him best, constituted one of the brightest attractions of his character—viz. a meek and forgiving spirit. Few men have suffered more than he, either from the detraction and virulence of enemies, or the mistaken impressions of friends; and few, it is believed, in similar circumstances, have evinced so much of christian forbearance and magnanimity. Doctor SPRING, who had known him long and intimately, says, in the sermon preached at his funeral, "I have known him a greatly injured man, but I have never known him cherish a retaliating or revengeful disposition. I have seen him weep under injuries, but I never heard him utter an angry sentence against those who reviled him. There was a kindness, a generosity, a nobleness of heart about him, which his enemies never knew how to appreciate." If any further evidence were needed of his possessing in a high degree this attribute of christian character, it is furnished by the following record—equally touching and sublime—which he made in his diary, relative to certain slanderous reports which had been put in circulation concerning him.

"At this period the greatest trial of my life commenced through the unkindness of friends whom I had never injured. Through misrepresentations and misapprehensions I was accused of things of which I was perfectly innocent. In that time of trial I was determined not to say a wrong thing, or do a wrong action, to save my character or life. I never saw before how little love I had, how hard it was to love a mere neighbor, an enemy as myself, and never before saw the miracle which was exhibited in the pretorium and on the cross. I felt a spirit of forbearance and kindness which I scarcely thought

possible; and when another spirit arose, my remedy was to go to my knees, and pray for my persecutors until I could forgive them."

As the interests of Christ's kingdom lay specially near his heart, he was always ready not only to urge upon others the duty of consecrating their property to its advancement, but to do this himself according to his ability. He was never rich; but out of the competence which he possessed, he contributed more or less to most of the great benevolent objects of the day. The generous donation which he made to the college, and with which he commenced the effort that resulted in its extended means and increased prosperity, has been noticed in a preceding chapter. During his residence at Williamstown, he had, on a certain occasion, subscribed a hundred dollars to assist a feeble congregation in the neighborhood in building a church. As the time for payment drew near, he found it difficult to command the necessary means for meeting it. About that time he journeyed eastward in behalf of the college, with an intention to spend one sabbath with his friends in Boston. But on his arrival there, he met a clergyman who urged his passing that sabbath with him; and added, "My wife says, If Dr. G. will come and preach for us, I will give him fifty dollars." The Doctor understanding this to be intended for the college, relinquished his purpose of remaining in Boston, and accepted the invitation. When his plate was removed from the breakfast table Monday morning, he found a hundred dollar note lying before him, with a request that he would accept it as his own. This sum, with his accustomed promptness, he appropriated to the payment of his subscription. The circumstance he was accustomed to reckon among the peculiar providences of God toward him.

And this suggests another striking feature of his character, viz. his habitual recognition of a divine providence, and his confidence in God under all circumstances. He was fond of repeating the maxim of the blind Mr. PRINCE, "He that will observe the providence of God shall never want for matter of observation." His calculations for the future seemed always to be made in the spirit of the Apostle's exhortation, "If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that." A

striking instance of his confidence in God for the success of his labors, occurred at a meeting of ministers shortly after his removal to Boston. The conversation having turned upon the peculiarly difficult and responsible station in which he had been placed, Dr. SAMUEL SPRING turned to him and said, "Dr. G. you seem like a man placed upright upon the point of a steeple with nothing to hold by—now how will you stand?" "You mistake," said Dr. G. "I have God to hold by."

As he felt deeply his dependance on God, his life, especially the latter part of it, seems to have been eminently a life of prayer. For a considerable period previous to his death, no small part of his waking hours was spent in private devotion. The following touching circumstance, as related by his daughter, shows how closely he had interwoven this duty with the economy of every day: "On one of his last sabbaths," she says, "when his debility had produced a drowsiness hard to be overcome, about noon he suddenly raised himself and said, 'I have not prayed since morning, I have been so sleepy. I wish you would lead me into the next room' (where there was no fire) 'that I may wake up to pray.' I accordingly led him to the sofa, and wrapped a cloak about him and left him alone. Here as he sat for nearly an hour, I heard his voice from time to time raised in supplication. He then asked for his Form of Self-examination, and remained some time longer engaged in reading it over."

In glancing at Dr. G's public character, it is natural first to contemplate him where he was perhaps more in his element than any where else—in the pulpit. As a preacher it may safely be said that few of any age have reached so commanding an eminence. Some of our transatlantic brethren, who have listened to him, and who were familiar with the best specimens of the eloquence of the pulpit in Great Britain, have unhesitatingly expressed their conviction that Dr. G. was not exceeded, either in matter or manner, by the best British preachers they had ever heard. In the selection of his subjects he evidently kept in view, in an unusual degree, the only legitimate end of preaching—the sanctification and salvation of men; and hence he

never degraded the pulpit by the introduction of topics which might gratify a mere intellectual taste, but which could never find their way to the conscience or the heart. His sermons were eminently rich in divine truth; those truths which humble man and exalt God; and no man who listened to him attentively had ever any just reason to complain that he had nothing to carry away. Though he was an acute metaphysician, yet he rarely introduced metaphysical discussions into the pulpit; and whenever he did, it was rather with a view to repel the assaults of the enemies of truth with their own weapons, than to borrow light from reason for the establishment of scripture doctrine. He reasoned indeed, and reasoned with great power; but his arguments were based on scripture and common sense, and were ordinarily within the comprehension of any class of his hearers. And as he administered to the intellect its appropriate aliment, he knew how to address himself with equal power to the feelings; and it was difficult to say which was most to be admired, the cogency of his reasoning, the grandeur of his conceptions, or the tenderness of his appeals. Now he came down upon the sinner's conscience with the weight of a mountain, and again, by a wonderful effort of imagination, he seemed to raise the christian to the very gate of heaven, and hold him there till he became well nigh entranced with its glories. His manner was emphatically his own; and though a faint resemblance of it has been shadowed forth in a considerable number of our preachers, yet the best effort at imitation does nothing more than painfully remind us of the magnificent original. In more senses than one he might be called the giant of the pulpit. His stately and noble form, his erect and dignified attitude, would enchain a congregation of strangers before he opened his lips. And then his voice was in good keeping with his person: it could express the softest and gentlest emotions with inimitable effect, while it could swell into the majesty of the thunder or break upon you in the fury of the tempest. His sermons for the pulpit were always written, and with very few exceptions always read; but his style was so adapted to his manner, and his reading so admirably perfect, that even the most bigotted opposers of reading in the pulpit were constrained to acknowledge that this mode of preaching answered very well for him.

His gestures, like every thing else that pertained to his manner, were bold and striking; and when he was excited, as he almost always was in some part of his sermon, they succeeded each other with great rapidity. In his ordinary preaching, there is said to have been very considerable inequality; though even his most moderate sermons had something to identify them as his own, and bore more or less of the impress of his noble mind. In his more public and extraordinary efforts, for which he always took ample time to prepare, he rarely if ever failed; and on some of these occasions he rose to the very highest pitch of eloquence. His sermon on "the art of preaching," delivered before the Pastoral Association of Massachusetts, is perhaps the very best thing extant on that subject; and it would be difficult to find a man who combined in a higher degree than Dr. GRIFFIN himself the qualities which he has there so admirably described as essential to perfection in preaching.

In his pastoral and private religious intercourse Doctor G. exhibited all the tenderness of his heart. He attached great importance to visiting from house to house, not only for the general purpose of religious intercourse with his people, but that he might learn from the state of his congregation what he ought to preach on the one hand, and what effect his preaching had produced on the other. The following circumstance furnishes a beautiful example of the tenderness of his spirit in his intercourse with the careless and ungodly. A Jew who now professes to be a christian, called upon him in company with a clergyman. In the course of the interview, Dr. G. turning to his clerical brother, inquired, "What are our young friend's views on the subject of religion?" He could not tell. The Doctor instantly took the hand of the Jew, and threw his arm around him, and exclaimed, "I love the Jews—Oh, you must love the Lord Jesus Christ."

But it was in revivals of religion especially that Dr. G. appeared with surpassing advantage; and in connexion with these perhaps he has rendered his most important services to the church. The history of his life seems little less than the history of one unbroken revival; and



it would perhaps be difficult to name the individual in our country since the days of Whitefield, who has been instrumental of an equal number of hopeful conversions. But while he possessed in so high a degree the spirit of revivals, he had no communion with the spirit of fanaticism; and when he saw a community at the very highest point of religious excitement, he still insisted that every thing should be done decently and in order. No man deplored more deeply than he the erratic and extravagant measures by which so many of our more modern revivals have been marked; and no one labored more zealously than he to purify those scenes in which he so much delighted of every unhallowed admixture, and to bring back the scriptural simplicity and order of other and better days.

The following extract of a letter from a distinguished clergyman of the Presbyterian church, who was a pupil of Dr. G's at Williamstown, will not only serve to show what he was in revivals, but to illustrate some striking traits of his character.

Early in the spring of 1824, if I remember rightly, there were glowing appearances of a most extensive revival. The college and the town were greatly shaken. Dr. G. was all fervor and zeal. The excitement continued four or five weeks. A few individuals seemed converted. A wicked fellow, by the name of R—, began to exhort us with great power and effect. But the excitement subsided as suddenly as it sprang up. And after all feeling had passed over, there was but one in town or college that gave evidence of true conversion; and that was William Hervey, whose bones repose in India, where he went as a missionary under the American Board. He was one of the best men I ever knew. In a few weeks R— was found drunk. In reference to all this matter, I heard Dr. G. say afterwards, "To save one immortal soul the Lord will shake a whole church, a whole town, and if nothing less will save it, he will shake a whole continent." And to illustrate this position, he would narrate, with melting pathos, the story of Hervey's conversion.

If I recollect dates aright, in the spring of 1825 there was a truly powerful and genuine revival in town and college. In this work Dr. G. was the prime instrument. Some of the most touching moral scenes that I ever saw or heard of occurred during its progress. Guilty of the sin of David, we numbered the converted and the unconverted. The report went out one morning, and reached Dr. G. that all college was converted but eighteen. There was to be a prayer meeting that night, and he sent over word that he would meet with us. Although the evening was dark and stormy, and the ground exceedingly muddy, there was not probably a student of college absent from the meeting. We waited in breathless silence for the Doctor. He came, and the lecture room was so crowded that he stood in the door, whilst giving his hat to one, and his cloak and lantern to others. He stood for a moment gazing through his tears on the crowd before him. Then clasping his hands and lifting up his face to heaven, he uttered in the most moving accents these words—"Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?" The effect was overpowering. For minutes he could not utter another word, and the room was filled with weeping. It was one of those inimitable touches which he could occasionally give beyond all men that I have ever known. I narrated the incident to him a few weeks previous to his death. He wept aloud on its recital; but had forgotten all about it.

Another of these touches he gave at the last service but one that I heard him perform. It was at the funeral of the Rev. Mr. G. of this town. After a solemn service he offered the concluding prayer, which he commenced thus—"O Lord, we thank thee that good men may die." Being uttered, as it was, in his peculiar manner, it deeply impressed and affected every mind.

During revivals his sermons were nothing in comparison with his talks and lectures. I have heard him preach great sermons, but the most eloquent and glowing thoughts that I ever heard from mortal lips, were from him in the school-houses at Williamstown.

In my repeated interviews with him previous to his death, I found nothing to interest him so much as little incidents in reference to revivals in college, and intelligence in respect to the usefulness of students who had been converted under him. He seemed to feel as if he had been multiplying himself in every student converted through his instrumentality. In my last interview with him, I told him the story of the conversion in 1825, of a Mr. H. now a highly useful minister, but then a profane and worthless profligate. The Doctor was in the habit of frequently closing his sermons with "Hallelujah, Amen," and always repeated the words in a peculiarly varied and musical tone. His tones were caught and repeated with laughable accuracy by H—-. Just at the commencement of the revival he was often heard repeating these words, and with great force and wit and sarcasm, exhorting his fellow students to get converted; swearing that he himself would get converted the very first one. And as God would have it, he was converted the very first one. He was seen on a fast day morning coming into the prayer meeting, as we all thought, to make sport. But before the meeting ended he arose, and such an appeal to the students as he made, and such an effect as it produced, I never witnessed. And to the close of the revival he was as useful as any among us. The story affected the Doctor to such a degree that for a time he was entirely overcome.

It has already been intimated that Doctor G.'s heart was much in the great cause of christian benevolence, and that his hand was ever open to contribute to its advancement according to his ability. But much of what he did on this subject, belongs rather to his public than his private character. The spirit of missions is intimately allied to the spirit of revivals; and if he caught the latter at a very early period and in a very high degree, he was not less eminently imbued with the former. In the formation of most of those great national institutions which for years have been radiating points of benign and illuminating influence to the world, he was active; his eloquent voice has often been lifted up in the most overwhelming appeals on their behalf; and there are multitudes with whom the impression that he produced on these occasions still remains almost as vivid, as if it

were of yesterday. The American Board of Foreign Missions with which he had been identified from the beginning, and in the formation of which he exerted an important influence, continued always the special object of his deep and earnest regard. At the last meeting of this Board which occurred at Newark a few days before his death, he was present, though in a greatly enfeebled state, and took part in its deliberations, and even made a public address, which is said to have been one of his most delightful and impressive efforts. It was the voice of an aged pilgrim on the verge of heaven, pleading for the salvation of a world from which his spirit was in a few days to take its final flight.

If there was any one department of christian benevolence in which Doctor G. took a deeper interest than in any other, perhaps it was the education of young men for the sacred office. He saw early and clearly that this was vital in any system of instrumentalities which should be introduced for evangelizing the world; and upon this he seems to have had an anxious eye at least from the period of his introduction into the ministry. In a letter to the Rev. CALVIN DURFY, then of Hunter, Greene county, New-York, dated March 4, 1828, he writes thus: "I was glad to hear of the blessing of God upon your labors, and of the prospect of your settlement in that part of the country. May you be used as an instrument of great good to Zion. I hope you will be able to send some of those young men whom God is sanctifying, to assist our prayers here, to take your place within these halls, and to prepare here for the future service of the church. Will you not keep your eye steadily fixed on this object? I used to think at your age that if I could bring forward one young man who would make a better minister than myself, in that single act I should do more good than in all my life beside." In accordance with the sentiments here expressed, he had always a watchful eye and a helping hand in relation to this subject; and there are not a small number now usefully engaged in the ministry, who, but for his paternal counsel and aid, would have been devoted to this day to some secular occupation.

Doctor GRIFFIN was in no small degree distinguished as a teacher of youth, especially in the department of rhetoric and oratory; and hence those who enjoyed the privilege of his instructions at Andover, are so often heard to speak of him in this respect, in terms of unqualified admiration. His powers of criticism were well nigh unrivalled. A piece of composition which to an ordinary eye might seem to be tolerably free from defects he would take, and in reading it over a single time would reveal errors enough, even to the author's own eye, at least to furnish an antidote against any over-weening pretensions. To a friend who requested him to criticise a sermon, he said, "Yes, I will do it; but you ought to know that I am a bloody man in these matters;" and then proceeded in his criticism, verifying his declaration by drawing blood at every stroke. Those only who have enjoyed the benefit of his instructions, can form an adequate idea how much he was above ordinary teachers, especially in every thing belonging to the department of criticism.

Notwithstanding he presided over the college with great dignity, and was particularly successful in keeping up those various forms on which the order of such an institution so materially depends, yet, after all, his power of managing youth is said to have been less than his power of communicating instruction; owing to a natural quickness of feeling which sometimes temporarily prevailed over the dictates of his judgment. But ordinarily he manifested much of a fraternal spirit toward his pupils, and he was especially alive to every thing in which their religious interests were involved. One of them gives the following interesting account of his first interview with him:—"I was first introduced to him by letter in the fall of 1822, when I went to Williamstown to enter the Freshman class. The first sight of his gigantic frame overawed me. In a moment he placed the timorous boy at his ease. After reading my letter, he rose and came to the corner of the room where I was sitting, and laying his hand on my head, said, 'I am glad to see you here; you must be my son, and I will be your father, and you must inform me of any thing that you need or wish.' He acted to me the part of a kind father, in every respect, as long as he lived."

As a theological writer Doctor GRIFFIN is no doubt destined to occupy a place among the first of the period in which he lived. His treatises on the atonement and on Divine efficiency are both monuments of great intellectual labor, and could never have been produced but by a powerful and thoroughly disciplined mind; but it was, after all, in the composition of sermons that his pre-eminence as a writer especially consisted. His Park-street Lectures is perhaps the work on which his reputation hitherto has depended more than upon any other; though there are several of his occasional sermons which are not at all inferior to the best portions of that volume. It is an invaluable legacy to posterity that he has left in the sermons which are now to be given to the public; and it will be gratifying, not only to his friends but to the christian community at large, to know that there are sermons enough in manuscript still remaining, for one or two additional volumes, all of which have been rewritten in his later years, and have undergone his careful and finishing touch.

It may probably occur to some readers that the view which has here been presented of Doctor GRIFFIN'S character must certainly be a very imperfect one, inasmuch as he was a man, and yet nothing has been said of his infirmities and imperfections. Of course it is not intended to claim for him an exemption from the frailties of human nature; but whatever defects of character he may have had, (and where is the man who is free from them?) those who knew him need not be told what they were, and those who did not know him, would be little likely to profit by the information. Suffice it to say, if the record of his private experience is to be relied on, he was prone to any thing rather than self-justification. No small part of his life seems to have been passed in mourning over his errors and corruptions; and the views which he has recorded of his own character before God greatly exceed what the most scrutinizing caviller would have dared to utter before men.

In reviewing the life of Doctor GRIFFIN, we find occasion to acknowledge the divine goodness, not only in the transcendent powers with which he was endowed, and the holy impulse which

these powers received from the influence of God's Spirit, but in the providential arrangement of events with reference to their most advantageous exercise. He began his career at a period of unrivalled interest; a period when great events were the order of the day, and the spirit of missions was breaking forth in one country, and the spirit of revivals in another, and in a third, a storm of atheistical fanaticism, that made the very foundations of society rock. He quickly caught the spirit of the new era—a spirit for regenerating the world; and he found himself at home in the field which opened around him. Had he lived at an earlier period, he would indeed have been remembered as a great man, and perhaps as an eminently devoted minister; and yet the monuments of his pious activity might have been comparatively few: his commanding energies might have been exhausted in prophesying to bones upon which the breath from heaven had not begun to fall, even to the time of his going down to the grave. But he came upon the stage at the very time when the preparation in providence seemed to have been completed for the introduction of a new order of things: the fields were white around him, and what he had to do was to take his sickle and go forth to the harvest. It is worthy of remark also, that, upon his first settlement in the ministry, he was thrown into the immediate society of some of the most eminently devoted ministers which this or any other country has produced; such as Mills, Hallock, Gillet, &c. and there is no doubt that his frequent and intimate intercourse with these venerated men, had an important bearing upon his subsequent character and usefulness. Nor is the providence of God less to be acknowledged in respect to the different public stations which he occupied;—stations for which his talents and acquisitions admirably fitted him. His first settlement was indeed in a comparatively obscure place; but while his labors there were crowned with an abundant blessing, the retirement of his situation was favorable to increasing his stock of ministerial furniture, and thus preparing him the better for the more public field which he was destined to occupy. At Newark he preached to one of the largest and most important congregations in the United States, while the vicinity of his residence to the city of New-York, brought him much before the eye of that

metropolis, and greatly increased the amount of his general influence. Though his sojourn at Andover was short, yet it was of great importance, not only on account of the benefit which his instructions secured to his pupils, but on account of the character which his pre-eminent talents at once gave to the infant institution. In Park-street he accomplished what it may safely be said scarcely any other man could have done. Fearless of opposition, and relying on Jehovah his Strength, he planted the standard of evangelical truth there, and called aloud upon those who were willing to appear as soldiers of the cross to rally around it. Though his doctrines found no favor with the multitude, there was an attraction in his eloquence which it was not easy to resist; and there were some who came to scoff, and others who came to admire, that went away to pray. It was an enterprise of fearful hazard and responsibility which he undertook;—an enterprise that drew towards him the anxious eye of many a friend of Zion, and that drew upon him the bitterest obloquy of many an enemy of the cross; and though, in its progress, he seems sometimes to have become well-nigh discouraged, and to have imagined that he was spending his strength for naught, yet he was really laying broad and deep the foundation of one of Zion's noblest watch towers; and those only who remember the religious state of the metropolis of New-England previous to 1809, and are familiar with it now, can form an adequate estimate of the importance of his labors. At a later period he became president of Williams college, just in time to save it, by his persevering efforts, from extinction, and to raise it to the highly respectable standing which it now holds; and here for fifteen years his ruling religious passion had full scope in the opportunity he enjoyed of endeavoring to bring as many as possible of the rising generation into the service of Christ and his church. And after his bodily energies began to fail, and his gigantic frame to totter, there was a moral sublimity in that providence which carried him back to die on the spot which was most endeared to him, with his entire family once more gathered around him, and in the midst of a community to a large part of which he had been united in one of the tenderest relations. Here he passed his last days, with the simplicity and dignity of a patriarch; blessing those whom he had



baptized, and administering counsel, consolation, warning, to those around him, as God gave him opportunity. In the last months of his life especially, all who visited him were deeply impressed with the tenderness and the heavenliness of his spirit, and felt that he had nearly reached the gate of that world where the everlasting employment is thanksgiving and praise. And the same gracious providence that gave such serenity to his last days, kept him tranquil and fearless in the dark valley. Jesus and his salvation were the burden of his thoughts,—the theme of his praises, so long as his tongue could move; and death did its work so gently, that when the breath was gone, it was not easy to realize that he had been in the hands of an enemy. Thrice honored father, while we cherish thy memory and embalm thy virtues, we will bless the God of nature for endowing thee with such noble powers, and the God of grace for sanctifying and directing them, and the God of providence for placing thee in a field where thou couldst labor so effectually for the salvation of men and thy Redeemer's honor!

# SERMONS

## SERMON I

### THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful of every good work, and INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.—(Particularly the last clause.)- COL. 1:10

The knowledge of God lies at the foundation of all true religion. It is the want or indistinctness of this knowledge that occasions all the stupidity of sinners and all the false hopes of professing christians; that produces most of the religious errors which abound in the world; that causes so much superficial, proud, worldly religion even among the sincere, and so little religion even among judicious christians. Although this most precious of all knowledge is open to all, yet there is very little of it in the world,—very little of it in the church of Christ. There is so much unbelief and aversion to God, so much pride and worldliness, so much guilt that shrinks from clear views of God, so much sluggishness which binds the soul to earth, that the mass even of christians pass to the grave with a very incompetent knowledge of God. Even their serious thoughts linger too much on earth. Their religious knowledge and conversation are too confined to subordinate subjects; and in their very prayers their eyes are apt to be more intensely fixed on the blessings they ask or the sins they deplore, than on the face of God himself. Now and then a christian arises who outstrips the piety of his contemporaries, and stands a luminary to enlighten and to be admired by remote generations. If you search for the cause of his pre-eminent piety, it is

to be found in his superior knowledge of God. Desirous to see a greater number of eminent christians formed, and to witness the prevalence of that religion which is enlightened, judicious, and humble; I am anxious to press upon my hearers, to press upon my brethren in the church, to press upon my own soul, the study of God. The knowledge which I would recommend, though it includes the speculation of the understanding, is not confined to it. It consists in a clear discernment of God's spiritual glory and in a holy intimacy with him; which can be obtained neither by a speculative knowledge without right affections, nor yet by warm affections without deep and extensive knowledge.

In general it may be observed that the great end for which men were sent into the world was to learn the character of their Maker, by studying his glories in his works and word, that they might obey and enjoy him. The great end which God had in view in all his works was to make an illustrious display of his perfections, that creatures might know him and be united to him in sublime and everlasting communion. All things which are proposed as objects of our belief or knowledge, are but one complicated lesson of God which we were sent into the world to learn. The vast and interesting object on which his divine eye is immovably fixed, and which in the progress of time he will fully attain, is to fill the world,—the universe,—with the knowledge of his glory. He declared to Moses, "As truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." The harp of prophecy awoke to rapture on this delightful theme. Isaiah struck the note, and Habakkuk triumphantly resounded, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." The object of the whole creation will not be lost; creatures shall know him. The end for which human beings were placed on this earth will be attained: it must be that men shall know their God,—know him in a far greater measure than they have done in past ages. The times are rolling on,—the light is bursting from a thousand sources,—the world will be flocking to the great display,—all nations will be in motion. Arise ye and join them, and hasten to the

knowledge of God. Come, for it is the end of all things, and it is the end of your creation.

Further, God is the being with whom we have the most intimate and interesting connexion; and therefore we ought certainly, and it chiefly concerns us, to become acquainted with him. He is the being with whom we chiefly have to do in time and eternity. It is in him that we live and move and have our being, and he will be our final Judge. He is the author of all our comforts on earth; and he will be to eternity either the author and object of our whole enjoyment, or the executioner of his wrath upon us. Should it not be a chief desire to get acquainted with the benefactor who has sent all our comforts to us for so many years, and with the fearful Name on which all our future destinies depend? Shall a man be anxious to see the generous stranger who once relieved his wants, or the relation in a foreign country who is to make him his heir? and shall we be indifferent to an acquaintance with our God?

Further, there is room for far more enlarged knowledge of God than any of us have yet acquired. In the recesses of his nature are laid up treasures of knowledge which eternal research will not exhaust. None but he who from eternity lay in his bosom could with perfect propriety say, I know thee. In this world the best of christians see through a glass darkly, and know but in part what they were destined to know. Agur found reason in his humility to complain, "I neither learned wisdom nor have the knowledge of the Holy." The apostle Paul, after having spoken of the primitive christians as knowing God, thought proper to correct the expression as being too strong: "But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God." This distinction is made by the same apostle in another place: "If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know; but if any man love God, the same is known of him." The lowest degree of perfect knowledge is reserved for heaven: "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." Our knowledge of God will at best continue imperfect "till we all come in the unity of

the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." There is therefore abundant room for the most enlightened christians to increase in the knowledge of God, and to plunge deeper and still deeper into this ocean without a bottom or a shore. What a call then for christians of ordinary attainments to stir up their sluggish spirits, to clear away the mist from their eyes, that they may gaze with more intensesness upon God,—that they may study him with deeper scrutiny and contemplate him with clearer discernment.

Several motives to this have already been presented. What remains is to show that a clear knowledge and discernment of God is of all things the most purifying, the most humbling, the most exalting, the most happy.

I. It is the most purifying. A sight of God is transforming. It is only when "with open face" we behold "as in a glass the glory of the Lord," that we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory." A view of God shining "in the face of Jesus Christ," is the faith which purifies the heart and produces good works. When God is seen in all the majesty of his glory, in the awful purity of his holiness, the christian cannot, dare not wilfully sin. He has a holy jealousy of himself; he dreads the least movement of unhallowed affections, the least hypocrisy in his devotions, and towards men is meek, gentle, and affectionate. He pants after universal purity with groanings that cannot be uttered. This is the faith "which worketh by love,"—by deep and fervent love: and it is love only that can purify the soul. Under the influence of these views the christian knows what it is to be moved to action by the love of God in Christ, and can draw from God all his motives to active service and holy living. He feels it reasonable to dedicate himself forever to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and longs to employ all his faculties to the glory of his heavenly Father. This is the faith which overcomes the world. Riches, honors, the world are dead. The christian can now view things precisely in the light that Paul did when he counted all things but loss in comparison with the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Such a view of God in Christ will do more to purify the soul from sin and to guard it against temptation, than the most refined knowledge of subordinate subjects in religion,—than all systematic proficiency,—than gazing forever at the outside of the temple without looking within. It will do more than all prayers, and means, and exertions which are not accompanied with these direct views; for nothing but direct views can produce love. A raging fire is not extinguished by beating the flame, but by a plentiful application of the opposite element. And the fire of lust and passion is not to be subdued by human efforts directly applied; it yields only to the love of God,—love which nothing but direct views of him can excite. These views are of more efficacy to cleanse the soul than all the glooms of guilt. It is a mistake to calculate on purifying the heart by confining our views to ourselves and our sins, and plunging into darkness to avoid being proud of our comfort. One such view of God as saints enjoy in heaven, is a greater defence against sin than all the glooms of hell. Hence we read of escaping "the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and are exhorted to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour." Our text connects a fruitfulness "in every good work" with "increasing in the knowledge of God;" and Peter speaks of eminent christians not being "barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." The want of this knowledge is made a distinctive mark of slaves to sin, and a profession of this knowledge is counted for a profession of purity: "Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some, [does he say that they are slaves to sin? no, but he says the same thing in other words; for some] have not the knowledge of God." "They profess to know God, but in works they deny him," and prove by their sins that they know him not.

Would you then make greater advances in grace? Would you escape the sins and overcome the temptations which cause you so much distress? Would you attain to a more heavenly mind and wear forever a brighter crown? There is but one way;—you must increase in the knowledge of God.

II. This knowledge is the most humbling of all things. Other knowledge "puffeth up," but the more God is seen the more abased the soul will be. All the glooms of guilt, all the fears of hell, all the views of sin which are not accompanied with a spiritual discernment of God, will not humble the soul. These all exist in hell, but there is no humility there. The most just and exquisite sense of sin is acquired by considering, not so much what we have done, as what God is. A discovery of his awful dignity and excellent holiness reveals the evil of sinning against him, and lays the penitent soul speechless at his feet. When we can perceive God to be so holy and glorious that a bare neglect to love him would deserve eternal wo, and that no conceivable punishment is great enough for the wretch that dares rebel against him; when with spiritual discernment we contemplate God turning the angels out of heaven for sin, turning Adam out of Eden, turning a beautiful world into a prison house of groans, a shambles of blood, turning millions into hell, and more than all, thrusting his sword through the heart of his own Son; then we discover, in a light unknown before, what sin deserves and what we are; and lifting a pleading eye to Jesus, we lay ourselves down in the dust to wonder at the patience and mercy of God. No flights of soul are felt, but a heavenly calm. Animal feelings lie still and overawed. All is silent wonder and complacency; not a passion, but a solid reality of feeling; not a tender tumult of animal nature, but something like the clear vision of the soul. While the religion of the animal affections inflates the soul with self-conceit, this is the surest death of pride and every evil passion. Instead of making comparisons in his own favor, the christian now thinks himself a barenaked nothing before God, and wonders that such a being should set his love on him. The more he feels his guilt, the more happy his humbled spirit is; for guilt brings a sense of the precious mercy of his God and Saviour; and he now perceives, what to some may seem a paradox, that if a sense of guilt were banished from heaven, much of the happiness of heaven would be banished with it. While he thus lies in the dust, gazing upon the face of God, he forgets to make calculation for his own character, and thinks not so much what he is or is to be, as what God is. He would rather enjoy the light of heaven in

retirement, unknowing and unknown, than without this to be arrayed in imperial purple. He feels indifferent to human distinctions, and has no present necessity to guard against the fear of man. He is now conscious of the impenetrable fortitude which disinterested humility can produce. With all his views, he is sensible that he yet sees but a glimpse of God, feels guilty for the want of clearer apprehensions, fears the loss of the little sense he has, and pants earnestly after more.

Such a glimpse of God had Job when all his glory fell and withered in the dust. No sooner had God spoken from the whirlwind, than he laid himself on his face and meekly said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." When Elijah was in Horeb, neither the "great and strong wind" that "rent the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks," nor yet the "earthquake" nor the "fire," could move him; but when the "still small voice" came, diffusing through his soul a sense of God, instantly he wrapped his blushing face in his mantle. When Isaiah saw "the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up, and his train" filling "the temple," and the seraphim crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts," and "the posts of the door" moving at the sound of their voice; then it was that he exclaimed, "Wo is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; [how did he discover this?] for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." When Peter discovered the Godhead of Christ shining gloriously through the man, he instantly fell at his feet, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." When Daniel, Ezekiel and John, had visions of God, though it was but a glimpse that they saw, they fell on their faces and became as dead men. Thus it appears that a sight of God has the greatest power to abase the creature. If then you wish the haughtiness of your heart reduced, the torment of your pride relieved, and would enjoy the luxury of an humble mind, you must increase in the knowledge of God.



III. This knowledge, at the same time that it is the most humbling, is the most exalting. One such view as Moses had, will raise the soul above the world and lift it to heaven. It will do more than all other views to ennoble the mind, to elevate it above the vulgar pursuits of men, and make it conversant with the skies. If it is a dignity to be intimately acquainted with great men, what is the dignity of knowing and being known of God? It is the most noble and sublime knowledge, and worthy of the most aspiring desires of the immortal mind.

IV. This knowledge brings with it the greatest happiness. One direct view of God fills the soul with greater peace than the most splendid attainments in the subordinate branches of divine knowledge,—than the most extensive acquaintance with human science,—than all the glories of the world. Such is the nature of God, and such is the nature of man, that nothing in heaven or earth can fill the human soul with peace and joy, and satisfy its immortal cravings, but the knowledge and enjoyment of God. This is to be the happiness of heaven, because nothing greater can be provided for creatures. When the glories of God break upon the soul, peace descends upon it like "the dew of Hermon;" all its disturbing passions are still; it feels not the uneasiness of one unsatisfied desire. God reigns,—God is in its view,—God is its portion, and it is enough. It enjoys a peace which passeth understanding. Bright are its mornings, calm its noons, and serene its nights. When the ardent Peter cast an affectionate eye upon the churches, he would breathe no wish more fervent than that "grace and peace" might "be multiplied unto" them "through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." Let the race of men then return from their idle pursuits, and know that the shortest and only road to happiness is found. Here is the great secret discovered which men have searched for in every land, and roved to seek in the ends of the earth.

These direct views of God, and none but these, can bless the soul with "the full assurance of hope." The lower exercises of religion cannot do it. Self examination, without these direct views, cannot do

it. But under these open views, the christian is conscious of taking firm hold of God in Christ, and knows that there is not a phantom in his embrace, but the very God of Israel. He sees him to be a solid rock, and knows that he rests his soul on him and cannot sink. He is conscious of believing in him, and trusts in the divine word that he shall be accepted and kept to the heavenly kingdom. His former hopes, which arose from tender meltings of soul, were feeble and wavering; but now his hope is a solid thing, excited by an open view of the fulness and faithfulness of God in Christ. He can now lift an unpresuming eye to heaven and call it all his own. He can gaze at the throne of God which once rocked with thunders, and see no terrors there. With lips trembling with gratitude and eyes suffused with tears, he can look up and call the Almighty God his father, and the blessed Jesus his Saviour and his brother. Standing on the summit of Pisgah and stretching his eyes over his inheritance, he rejoices "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." This is the blessed consequence of "increasing in the knowledge of God." "Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee."

Suffer me now, my dear hearers, to bring these several arguments to bear on the single point, and to press you with their united force to devote yourselves to the study of God, and to earnest exertions after more clear and spiritual views of him.

My first address shall be to professing christians. By all the motives which have been presented, I pray you, my brethren, not to rest satisfied with superficial knowledge, nor with enlarged knowledge of subordinate branches of christian science; but seek earnestly to obtain a deep and spiritual discernment of God. Rest not contented with the name and profession of christians. Rest not contented with a few serious thoughts, added to a cold round of external duties, while your minds remain confused on every elevated point of religious truth. Think it not enough that you can weep at a description of Christ's sufferings, without understanding the designs of his death or discerning the glories of the way of salvation by him. Seek to know more of the vast designs which God is carrying into

execution in the government of the world. Strive to add to systematic knowledge, clear views of the glory of God in all his works and ways. When you open your bibles, let it be with earnest desires to find something that shall give you a greater insight into the character of God and the wonders of redemption. When you open any other religious book, let it not be to amuse yourselves with the beauties of the style, nor to obtain mere systematic knowledge, nor to produce a general indiscriminate impression of seriousness; but to obtain, if possible, clearer and more extensive views of God. When you enter the house of God, let it not be to gratify curiosity, nor to conform to fashion, nor merely from a general wish to perform a duty; but always come with a prayer on your tongue that you may behold the glory of God in the sanctuary, and carry away some enlarged views of his perfections. When you hold religious conversation with your christian friends, let it not be to hear yourselves talk, and to indulge the common loquaciousness of empty minds, nor to display your zeal, nor to enjoy the pleasure of being moved yourselves or moving others to weep, nor even for the sake of the mere satisfaction of spending a serious hour; but let your object be to obtain and communicate a more distinct and affecting knowledge of God. When you kneel to pray, let it always be with an intense desire to obtain clearer views of God, and to arise more deeply impressed with a sense of his glorious attributes. In the time of prayer, keep your eyes steadfastly fixed on God, and let all the efforts of your devotion be to look further and still further into the immeasurable heights of his perfections. Let this be the object of all your serious meditations and of all your religious duties.

Such a course, persisted in with sincerity and ardor, could not fail to raise you to the rank of eminent christians. If you would faithfully make the experiment for a single year, you would see what a great difference it would make in your graces and comforts. And I will venture to predict with confidence, that you will never grow in grace in any other way, and that you will grow in grace exactly in proportion as you sincerely pursue this course. You never will become eminent christians on easier terms. Will you then set out in

this course, and holding on your way with unwearied zeal, aspire to eminence in piety? Why should you not become distinguished christians? Why should you not aim at the eminence of Enoch and Moses and David and Elijah? The same God that raised them so high still reigns, and is accessible to you. You may go to that exhaustless store-house and take as much as you please. Why benumb every effort by the miserable calculation that it is not for you to attain such eminence? Who told you so but your own sluggish hearts? The grace and power of God are open to you, and if you fall short of that superior height the fault will be your own. If you are straitened, you are not straitened in God but in yourselves. Will you then arise from your sluggish repose and march manfully toward the mark, and resolve to die stretching with all your might to outstrip the piety of the prophets?

Alas the world draws so powerfully that I fear few will be excited to such noble calculations. In the present rage for gain and distinction, the mass of professors seem determined not to be encumbered with more religion than will allow them to take the world along with them to heaven. How few there are that aspire to more religion than just enough to keep them out of hell. It is not a day to form many eminent christians. It is a day of too much prosperity and worldly attachment. The times of persecution and ancient simplicity could produce a Flavel and a Baxter and a thousand others, inferior only to them. But where are the Baxters and Flavels of the present day? Prosperity has weakened our strength, and the world has bound us fast, and here we sleep in ignoble sloth, and exist only to shame our fathers and contaminate our children. In the name of God, my brethren, awake and move towards heaven. Rend the veil from your eyes, tear the world from your hearts, and arise to life and to action. Must I return and make the complaint to him who sent me, that they will not hear? While I speak thus to you, my dear brethren, I reprove myself. I have reason to bow under the humiliating thought that I too have little knowledge or sense of God. To whom then shall we all apply? Who shall give us and a sleeping world a clearer discovery of God? He, he only, can pluck the film from our eyes and pour his

glories upon our astonished sight. O that he would come forth and force himself upon our view. O that he would speak, and shake a drowsy world from their sleep, and show them what a God there is that ruleth in the earth.

One word to impenitent sinners and I have done. Have you no desire, my unhappy friends, to know that God in whose presence you must shortly stand, whose hand must measure out your rewards or smite you with his thunders? Did you never read that "the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God?" You are they that know not God; and in this state you are fast approaching the judgment of the great day; and here you are sleeping in dreadful security! God Almighty awaken you from the slumbers of your destruction! Do you begin to awake? Do you wish to find the knowledge of God? Shall I tell you how you can be so blest? "If thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver and searchest for her as for hidden treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God." I can say no more. I deliver you over into the hands of divine grace, and pray "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." Amen.

## **SERMON II**

### **THE TENDER MERCIES OF GOD**

I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness towards the house of Israel which he hath bestowed on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses. - ISAI. 63:7

The prophet, when he uttered these words, appeared to labor under an ineffable sense of the tender mercies and loving kindnesses of his God. He had been contemplating the wrath with which God would one day visit Edom when he should come to deliver his people from her oppressions. Immediately he raises an interesting contrast and sets before his eyes God's "great goodness towards the house of Israel" in loosing their Egyptian bonds and conducting them through the wilderness. In this type as through a glass, he discovered the wondrous love which redeems the Church from more oppressive chains, and supports her in her journey to the heavenly rest. Under this view he seemed transported, and in his rapture exclaimed, "I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness towards the house of Israel which he hath bestowed on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses."

Though we should not raise our eyes to the exalted love which shines in the Gospel, still we should have abundant reason to mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord. Without any adviser or helper he introduced us to rational existence, and raised us to intellectual enjoyment. By his unceasing care, that existence is hourly supported. Our table is furnished and our raiment supplied by his benignant hand. We are blest with pleasant habitations and possessions; we enjoy the delights of refined society, the blessings of friendship, and the life and happiness of our friends. Our health is sustained by a thousand minute and constantly repeated touches of his hand to the various parts of our complicated machine. All the pleasures of imagination, of memory, of hope, of sympathy, and of sense; all the magic charms which play on nature's face, are the gifts of his bounteous hand. By his watchful care we are protected from countless visible and unseen dangers. By innumerable impressions made on our animal spirits by his careful touch, we are put in tone to enjoy the objects around us. More numerous are his mercies than the stars which look out of heaven. On no section of our life,—on no point of nature's works,—scarcely on a circumstance in our relations

to society, can we fix our eyes, without seeing "the loving kindnesses of the Lord." But when we lift our thoughts to his "great goodness towards the house of Israel," our souls faint under the labor of expressing the praise we owe. Redeeming grace most fully displays the richness and extent of his loving kindnesses; redeeming grace was the theme which transported the author of our text; and redeeming grace shall be the subject of this discourse.

To discover the heights or to fathom the depths of this grace, exceeds the power of men or angels; yet the view perhaps may be enlightened by some of the following reflections.

In purposing and planning the great work of redemption, the Eternal Mind was self-moved, uncounselled, unsolicited. No angel interceded or advised; no man by his prayers or tears excited pity. Before men or angels had existence, the purpose was fixed and the plan was formed by boundless love, unmoved, unasked, untempted by any thing without but the foreseen miseries of a perishing world.

This love was wholly disinterested, having no reward in view but the pleasure of doing good. What other recompense could God expect from creatures who have nothing to give but what they receive? What other reward could eternal self-sufficiency need?

This love is still more sublime considered as acting towards inferiors. When love is not the most pure, we daily see, it will overlook those who have no eminence to engage respect. On this account the condescending regard which some benevolent prince may pay to the poor and forsaken, is peculiarly affecting. What then shall we say when we behold Infinite Majesty descending to such tender concern for dust and ashes?

Redeeming love is still more wonderful as exercised towards enemies; towards those who could reject the offered salvation,—who were not to be moved by all the entreaties of heaven,—and who had

malice enough to murder the Author of life in the very act of bringing it to them.

This love appears altogether astonishing when we consider the greatness of the sacrifice it made. That God himself, (infinite, eternal, and self-sufficient as he was,) should bring himself down to a mortal form; that he who made the heavens should descend from among the adorations of angels to assume the form of a servant and to receive the spittings of Roman soldiers; that he should exchange the quiet of eternal repose for a laborious life,—the abodes of inaccessible light for the degrading manger,—the society of the Father and Spirit for that of illiterate fishermen,—the heights of infinite bliss for the agonies of Gethsemane and Golgotha;—and all to atone for abuses which he himself had received from men; fixes angels in astonishment and rivets their eyes to him who still bears the prints of the nails and the spear. That this divine Sufferer did not recede, but remained immovable in his purpose in a near view of his agonies; that he did not strike and rivet his insulting murderers to the centre, but spent his expiring breath in prayer for their life; evinces, not love only, but love unconquerable.

The extent of redeeming love further appears in the magnitude of the blessings which it intended for a ruined race. It stooped to catch a falling world; to snatch them from eternal flames to the transports of immortal life,—from everlasting contempt to be "kings and priests" forever "unto God;" to raise them from the turpitude of sin to the purity of the divine image,—from a dungeon to the radiance of heaven,—from the society of devils to communion with angels,—from the blasphemies of hell to the songs of paradise,—from universal destitution to inherit all riches,—to be sons and heirs of God,—members of the Redeemer's body,—to live in his family and heart, and forever to expand in the regions of light and life.

This mercy is heightened by the fact that the Saviour is so necessary, reasonable, and all-sufficient. Intrusted with all the offices needful for man's redemption, he possesses powers fully adequate to the



infinite work, and exerts them when and where they are most needed. It is his stated business to strike off the chains from wretched prisoners,—to administer balm to those who are wounded to death,—food to those who are perishing with hunger,—eyes and light to the blind and benighted. He is the "shadow of a great rock in a weary land,"—"a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest." In his prophetic office he brings out to view the secrets of the Eternal Mind: as a Priest he pacifies divine wrath by atonement and intercession: as a King he subdues the stubborn will, marks out the road to life by salutary precepts, defends from spiritual enemies, and renders all events subservient to the good of his people. As Captain of the Lord's host he will carry them through their warfare and bring them off victorious. As Physician of souls he will heal all their spiritual maladies and confirm them in immortal health. He is a most pleasant resting place from the perturbations of guilt, the vexations of care, and the anguish of affliction. Possessing inexhaustible life in himself, he is the source of unfailing life to his members, who before were "dead in trespasses and sins." As "Heir of all things" and Distributer of the whole estate, he has every necessary good to impart, in this world and infinite riches in the world to come.

This mercy is still further heightened by the patience and condescending tenderness which he exercises towards his people. He calls them his friends, his brethren, his children, his spouse, the members of his body, the apple of his eye. In the character of a near and tender relation, he has become a mild medium through which they may look up into the insufferable splendors of the Godhead without dazzling or paining their sight. Although the awful God of majesty, he is not ashamed to own and befriend a poor race of unsightly outcasts and to take them into union with himself. With unconquerable patience he bears with all their provocations, and with unfailing faithfulness remains their friend during all their perverseness and ingratitude. Though their returns are such as would weary any other love, he is still engaged in pardoning their sins, subduing their corruptions, and conducting them to glory. As a tender shepherd he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them

in his bosom. And O with what overpowering kindness does he speak to them when he holds communion with them: when he meets them in a happy hour as they are walking out like Isaac to meditate at the evening tide, and drawing aside the vail, shows the sweetest countenance dressed in celestial smiles; or when finding them bowed to the earth and drenched in tears, he gently raises them in his arms, and with more than a mother's tenderness wipes the sorrows from their cheeks and breathes ineffable consolation into their spirits. Ye who have known his love, can witness the ineffable sweetness with which he manifests himself at such seasons. In his providence he takes care to suffer no real evil to befall his people, to withhold from them no real good, and to make them the happier for every event. And when this trying life is past, he will receive them to his own presence, to a near and ever increasing union to himself, where love perfect and reciprocal shall hold immortal reign.

This wondrous mercy is further expressed in the gift of sabbaths and sacraments, and especially the written word. When we perceive the breathings of divine love in those precious Scriptures which were inspired by the Holy Ghost; when the soul lies at some divine promise, drinking in immortal refreshment, and filling itself as from some celestial spring, O how rich and vast does the love of God appear.

Fresh evidences of this love spring up at every review of his past providence towards the Church. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bore them and carried them all the days of old." The preservation of Noah in the ark, the call and protection of Abraham, the deliverance of the Church from Egypt, its support in the wilderness and establishment in Canaan, the numerous deliverances wrought for Israel, their restoration from Babylon, the establishment and astonishing growth of the Christian Church, its protection during the successive persecutions, and the continued efforts of the Spirit to preserve and enlarge it, are all monuments of amazing love and faithfulness. And when we cast our

eyes down the slope of ages and behold the glory of Zion filling all the earth, how do we dance as in fancied visions and think the bliss too great to be real. And then, when we open the Scriptures and behold a "Thus saith the Lord" expressly to confirm our hopes, with what rapturous gratitude do we make our boast of him; "Lo this is our God, we have waited for him and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

All these are the more affecting as being marks of distinguishing love. Redeeming grace passed by the fallen angels to bring salvation to men. The privileges of Gospel light and ordinances were taken from the heathen to be given to us. The blessings of personal holiness and divine communion are conferred on the people of God while withheld from the rest of the world. Our lives are continued in a world of hope while millions are called to their last account. While God was preserving the Hebrew Church and nourishing it with a Father's care, Edom, Moab, and Ammon were given to the sword. And while angels sing only of the goodness of the Lord, the redeemed will shout "grace, grace" and with higher notes and ecstasies chant, the praises of redeeming love.

The grace of God appears still greater as being abundant and free for all. The language of divine compassion is, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

Having drawn this outline of the mercies of God, I shall now present them as motives to holy feelings and practical godliness.

What admiration should possess our minds as we contemplate this wonderful love of God. Nothing in the universe is so amazing. Not an angel in heaven but lives in astonishment continually. And yet it is infinitely greater than ever Gabriel imagined. As the sublime intellects of the upper world expand, it will appear more and more amazing to eternity.

And while we wonder let gratitude fill our hearts. Of what avail is our admiration without our thanks? It would only bring us to the condition of those who gaze "and wonder and perish." What are our hearts made of if they can lie under the weight of all these obligations and be unthankful still? Let us retain a sense of divine mercies always upon our heart, and not suffer them, after a transient impression, to pass off into oblivion. Let not the blessings of former years be forgotten, but let them frequently be brought in review before us, that we may never cease to remember how much we owe to our Lord.

To lasting gratitude let lasting love be added. What infinite beauty and worth belong to Israel's God. And shall we be thankful for personal favors and not love the benevolence which embraces the universe? This would be only the contracted gratitude of a heart that can be engaged by nothing but the loaves and fishes.

Let it be our daily joy that the universe contains such a God,—a God whose happiness consists in doing good, and who is executing so vast a plan for the promotion of creature, happiness, that he already realizes infinite blessedness in gratified benevolence. Let universal joy catch from heart to heart and circulate through heaven and earth that such a God lives, reigns, and is happy. Let this be our morning and our evening song. Let it break in like the dawn of day upon our gloomy hours; and like the sinking but recovered David, let us be transported with the thought, "But thou, O Lord, shalt endure forever, and thy remembrance unto all generations."

To such a God our highest praise belongs. He is the object of the incessant and rapturous praise of all the choirs of paradise, and shall men neglect their harps? In the warm transports of David's heavenly muse, let us invoke the sun and all the orbs of light, the earth and all the things thereon, the heavens and all their happy spirits, to praise the Lord,—to praise him in the heights and in the depths,—to praise him with the voice of song, and with all the varieties of instrumental harmony.

Let such a God be the supreme object of our faith, our hope, our confidence. On him let us place our dependance for every thing we need for time and eternity. Renouncing this delusive world and every idol which would rival him in our hearts, let us make him our only point of rest, our only portion. Let him be the object of our daily and cheerful worship. Let hypocrisy be banished from our religion, and let sincerity mark our worship of him whose friendship for man has been so sincere. Disclaiming all self-seeking, after his disinterested love to us, let us live only for him; and in duty to one who so greatly denied himself for us, let us largely practise self-denial. Henceforth let us consecrate ourselves to the service of him who served us in death; and by our obedience to all his commands attest the sincerity of our love and gratitude.

God forbid that we should be ashamed to confess him before men who was not ashamed to own and befriend us before his Father and the holy angels; or that we should fail to speak to a listening world of his excellent greatness and his excellent loving kindness.

It becomes us to imitate his devotedness to the glory of God and the happiness of men; to put on bowels of mercy and kindness, forbearing one another in love, doing good to all as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith; condescending to men of low degree, meek and gentle to all, affable, courteous, and obliging, ready to forgive injuries, given to hospitality, and generous in distributing to the poor the gifts of a generous God.

To the dominion of enthroned love it becomes us to submit; resigning all our interests to the divine disposal, and enduring with patience and not with petulance whatever such a God is pleased to impose.

Against such a God it is that we have been found in arms. O "tell it not in Gath." Under the weight of all these obligations we have risen up to oppose unbounded love. Alas we knew not what we did. In vain might our tears and blood be applied to efface stains so ignominious

and deep. Well may we go softly all our years in the bitterness of our soul. Let pride never again appear in natures capable of this. Let humility and brokenness of heart mark our future lives; and in sympathy with the publican let us smite on our guilty breasts and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

And since our crimes are of so deep a die that nothing but atoning blood can wash them out, and since such infinite pains have been taken to provide a Saviour for us,—a Saviour every way suited to our wants; let us gratefully seize the offered salvation and cast ourselves on him as the only ground of hope. And then, "though" our "sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool."

Ah sinners, how long will you slight such endearing love and reject such heaven—astonishing mercy? How long shall infinite tenderness be grieved at your ingratitude? Why will you treat with abuse that excellence which angels adore? Why will you tread under foot that love which dissolves all heaven? When will you at length be wise, and for once, after so long a time, act like ingenuous creatures? Let the goodness of God lead us all to repentance, and let us spend our days in making mention of the loving kindnesses of the Lord, and in preparing to unite with the redeemed in singing, "Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing."

Now "unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

## **SERMON III**

ADAM OUR FEDERAL HEAD

Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. ROM. 5:12–19

This is the only passage in the Bible which draws such a complete parallel between Adam and Christ; and therefore the extent of the parallel is to be learned from this passage chiefly. This is, I believe, the only passage which clearly states that the condemnation of mankind to temporal death, carries in it full evidence of their condemnation to spiritual and eternal death. It is the only passage which teaches that the posterity of Adam are, in any sense, condemned to eternal death for his sin. Not that any are condemned before they are personally sinners and deserving of condemnation on their own account: but a race of infants, whom the omniscient eye sees to be worthy of eternal death, but whose hearts cannot be expressed by their own conduct so as to become the declared ground of condemnation, are publicly condemned, not for the wickedness of Adam's heart, but for an outward act of his, which, by fixing, disclosed their hearts as much as any act of their own could have

done. The only points that we shall have to leave among the hidden things of God, are, that infants are allowed to come into the world depraved, either on account of Adam's sin or otherwise, and that they are condemned to eternal death for their own depravity.

Before entering on the consideration of the text, I wish to bring up what information I can gather, on the general subject, from other parts of Scripture. I will therefore divide the labor into two parts, and will,

I. Present the light which other parts of the Bible cast on this general subject.

II. Consider the federal headship treated of in the text.

I. I will present the light which other parts of the Bible cast on this general subject.

1. Several things which God originally said of Adam and to Adam, but which had no immediate connexion with the covenant made with him, were obviously meant of his whole posterity. For instance: "God said, Let us make man in our image,—and let them have dominion over—all the earth.—And he said" to the first created pair "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it."

2. It was said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." He ate, and incurred all the evil which sin deserves; viz: death spiritual, (or abandonment to confirmed and total depravity,) death temporal, and death eternal.

3. In consequence of the plan of grace which was immediately introduced, no other sentence was formally and expressly pronounced on Adam than condemnation to temporal pain and death. This sentence however was intended publicly to denote a just exposure to spiritual and eternal death.



4. In this sentence of condemnation to temporal pain and death, both Scripture and experience show that the posterity of Adam share. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." Who does not see that this sentence was pronounced on the whole human family, by being pronounced on Adam their federal head? By this sentence it was "appointed unto men" in general "once to die." That the transgression of Adam and Eve entailed on their posterity the temporal calamities contained in this sentence, is taken for granted in Paul's first Epistle to Timothy.\* In his first Epistle to the Corinthians, he draws a parallel between Adam and Christ, so far as relates to their respective influence on the body; saying that "as in Adam all die" a natural death, "even so in Christ shall all be made alive," or delivered from natural death in the resurrection.† He states also in the same chapter,‡ that "as we have," in the fashion of our bodies, "borne the image of the earthy," or the first Adam, so in the resurrection the bodies of the saints will "bear the image of the heavenly," who is expressly called "the last Adam."

That the posterity of Adam share in this condemnation of their federal head to temporal death, our text most explicitly asserts. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."

This passage plainly proves also that condemnation to temporal death evinces the existence of personal sin; and a single sin entitles to spiritual and eternal death. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

5. It abundantly appears, independently of our text, that all mankind derive depravity from Adam, who after the fall begat children "in his own likeness." The Scriptures clearly teach that men by nature are universally and totally depraved, and that this depravity is hereditary and traceable to the first pair as the source." "I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" "Lo this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." Here the original righteousness inherent in our first parents, and the sins of successive generations, are considered the original righteousness and sins of the species; which shows that the species lost their original righteousness and fell by the fall of Adam. The Scriptures teach us the necessity of being "born again," of being "created in Christ Jesus;" which imply that our first birth and creation introduced us into a state of depravity.

6. It appears, independently of our text, that all men are "by nature the children of wrath." Infants then are the children of wrath. This, you say, is punishing them for the nature which God created; and you add, that a nature cannot be sinful, because it is physical and not moral. But Dugald Stewart very properly speaks of "the physical and moral laws of nature." One of the definitions of nature given by Johnson is, "disposition of mind." If nature is considered the antecedent and cause of exercises, it is indeed difficult to be explained, whether the exercises are physical or moral. What that is in the lion before he hungers for flesh, which leads him to desire flesh, and flesh rather than grass, we no more can tell, than what it is in the infant that leads to depraved exercises. And yet there is a meaning when we speak of the nature of a new yeaned lamb as

differing from that of a lion just brought forth. Is that nature the mere mode of exercise, and not the cause? When we say, it is the nature of the horse to eat grass and of the lion to eat flesh, the word means, born with a constitution which inclines unfailingly to grass or flesh. The difference in the two natures in this case perhaps wholly grows out of a material constitution and depends on the laws of matter. But is there nothing in the soul anterior, in the order of nature, to exercise? Yes, the whole that we mean by soul is anterior, just as the whole that we mean by man is anterior to his action. And is there nothing in the disposition which is anterior and causal? When we say, It is the disposition of a bad man to interfere with the rights of others, do we not refer to something anterior to the interference, and something distinct from exercises, and which may be supposed to exist when he is asleep? Do we refer merely to the stated mode of operation? Have we not the same evidence of a causal disposition, differing in different men, that we have of a causal nature differing in the young lamb and lion? But still what there is in the infant, with its want of light, that is sinful, is more than we can tell. It certainly has self-love. Prick it, and its crying tells you that it hates pain. Take away the breast, and its crying tells you that it loves pleasure. How far it is capable of loving God or man, so as to prevent self-love from running into selfishness, I will not pronounce. God said to Jeremiah, "Before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee." As soon as Mary saluted Elizabeth, "the babe" of the latter, (John the baptist,) "leaped in" her "womb for joy." Now can you be sure that there was nothing in the infant Jeremiah or John or Jesus, different from what was found in the infant Cain and Judas and Herod? Our brethren on the other side admit that the child is sure to run into sin as soon as it is capable of moral feelings. For before it has had one feeling it is sure to exercise self-love, which in the absence of better feelings will of course become selfishness. Abandoned of the Spirit, it is born therefore with a nature sure to sin and to do nothing but sin. Is not this aptitude wrong? Is there nothing to be abhorred in the thief or murderer when he is asleep? If a creature is prepared and sure to hate God as soon as God is seen, can we be certain that God cannot justly throw that creature away as

worthless and guilty, without giving him, in this world, an opportunity to increase his guilt by seeing him? Without revelation we might deny the justice of this; but when God has proclaimed the justice of sending infants to hell, we must not be confident of any such thing. Still it is a mystery.

Do you say, this fastening of blame to the nature is making God the author of sin? All that he does, suppose, in forming this nature, is to create and support the faculties and merely to withhold the Spirit. There is no need of putting sin in. Withhold the influence that produces supreme love to God, and I love myself supremely, and am totally depraved. If the captain is dead the lieutenant commands of course without a new election.

But whatever mystery hangs about the moral state of the infant mind, one thing is certain: none of the posterity of Adam are saved but by Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." But if infants are saved by Christ, they might justly be sent to hell. Here I plant my foot. Do you say that they have no part in Christ, and that those who die in infancy are neither saved by him nor sent to hell, but are annihilated? Take care what you say. "And they brought young children to him that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of God." If your infant children need not a Saviour why bring them to him in baptism? and if they are not polluted, why wash them with water? Now if infants are saved by Christ, they are saved by grace and not by justice. Justice did not compel God to provide a Saviour; which would be true if any who are saved by Christ are saved by justice. But all who are saved by grace might be sent to hell by justice. If I lay on your table a sum of money, it cannot be both a present and the payment of a debt. One idea necessarily excludes the other. If God had not provided a Saviour, all Adam's race would have gone to hell, however short or long their stay on earth; and this

would have been known to be the destiny of the infant in the cradle. Surely then justice has not prevented this.

On the whole we must conclude that infants might justly be sent to hell. We do not come to this conclusion from reason, but from the revelation of God. Whatever our blinded reason may say about so mysterious a matter, we must bow in submission to the decision of God.

Now do not go away and say that I have preached that there are infants in hell of a span long. I am not sure that I have a right to offer, or even to form, an opinion on this subject. It may be human weakness, but I cannot help hoping that all infants will be saved, notwithstanding what I am forced to say about the requisitions of justice. And I found the hope on two considerations. First, the immediate object of punishment is to convince others that if they sin they must suffer: but infants cannot be impressed with this truth by the punishment of infants and adults are sufficiently impressed by the punishment of adults. The punishment therefore does not appear to be so absolutely necessary as in other cases. Secondly, by appointing a day for the "revelation of the righteous judgment of God," he seems desirous to show creatures the reasonableness of his measures: and it now seems as if it would be easier to make this impression on creation if he did not make creatures and send them to hell before they knew their right hand from their left.

II. I am to consider the federal headship treated of in the text.

There is no intimation in the Bible that we are condemned for Adam's heart. In consequence of the union of character established between him and his posterity by what may be called the constitution of nature, by means of which his outward act indicated their temper as much as his own; that act is made the ground of their public condemnation, as though it had been their own act; for it really manifested their temper as though it had been their own. This, if true, proves at once two things; first, Adam's federal headship;

secondly, the real condemnation of his whole infant race to temporal, spiritual, and eternal death, on account of the depravity of their hearts, manifested by this public act of their federal head.

It is declared in our text that "through the offence of one many be dead," (that is, condemned to the complicated death which in the next chapter is put for "the wages of sin;") that "by one" man "that sinned—the judgment was by one" offence "to condemnation;" that "by one man's offence death," (the same complicated death,) "reigned by one;" that "by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation," even as "by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life;" that "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners," even as "by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

The parallel between the first and "last Adam" is not perfect in all respects. By our connexion with the first Adam we are condemned for one sin, "but the free gift is of many offences unto justification." In the first case, the ground of condemnation was an outward act, in the latter case the righteousness by which we are justified went through the whole heart and life. In the first case we personally deserve the condemnation we receive, in the latter case we deserve nothing. But the following are the points of resemblance.

1. By a covenant transaction between the Father and Son, called the covenant of redemption, the seed of Christ were from eternity elected or appointed to a state of justification. To comport with this, the posterity of Adam, in consequence of a covenant transaction between God and their federal head, were, before they were born, appointed to a state of condemnation.

2. The seed of Christ, though previously elected, are not actually justified before they become his seed by regeneration. The doctrine of justification from eternity is generally and justly exploded. To comport with this, the posterity of Adam, though previously appointed to a state of condemnation, are not actually condemned

until they exist his seed, and therefore not until they are "shapen in iniquity" and conceived "in sin." The seed of Christ were not all justified as early as his obedience was performed, nor as early as he himself was justified by being raised from the dead. And the posterity of Adam were not condemned as early as his offence was committed, nor as early as he himself was condemned.

3. The first holy bias which is given to the seed of Christ in regeneration, is not the effect but the antecedent of their justification; for they are "justified by faith" already in exercise. To comport with this, the first evil bias which the posterity of Adam feel, is not the effect but the antecedent of their condemnation. The condemnation spoken of in the text was not a sentence dooming them to be "shapen in iniquity" and conceived "in sin." Their first evil bias is not the effect of their condemnation, but the effect of the constitution of nature which God established in his covenant transaction with Adam; by which it was fixed that all the posterity of Adam, as soon as they should exist, would resemble him in moral character, whether he stood or fell. This President Edwards calls a constituted union of moral character, which he illustrates by a constituted union of nature between the root and branches of a tree, and between the head and members of the body.

That this constituted union of moral character is wholly different from a sentence of condemnation, appears from its having been settled before any condemnation was merited. Before the fall it was established by the constitution of God that the holiness of Adam if he stood, and the sin of Adam if he fell, should be conveyed to his posterity by natural generation. When he fell, his whole system became polluted; and he propagated the pollution by the same established constitution of nature by which an acorn produces an oak, and a lion produces a young lion wholly like himself in shape and disposition. This is the settled course of nature: but a judicial sentence of condemnation is quite a different thing. None ever called the constitution by which the branches of a thorn bush partake of the nature of the root, a condemnation of the branches.

Thus it appears that the first evil bias in the individuals of Adam's race is no part of the evil to which they are condemned, but the effect of a constitution which runs through every department of nature.

4. The seed of Christ are justified as fully and as extensively as Christ himself was; being entitled to a deliverance from the power of temporal death in the resurrection,—being secured in a course of persevering holiness until it is completed in everlasting spiritual life,—and being unchangeably entitled to eternal life. To comport with this, the posterity of Adam are condemned as fully and as extensively as Adam himself was. He was not condemned to the first sin; but when he had committed that sin, he was condemned to an abandonment to total depravity, which was spiritual death: he was condemned also to death temporal and death eternal. In like manner his posterity, though they are not condemned to the first evil bias, yet as soon as they derive their polluted existence from Adam, are condemned to established and total depravity or spiritual death, and also to temporal and eternal death.

5. The essential condition on which the seed of Christ share in his justification, is that they resemble him in the temper of their hearts. Indeed it is such a union of temper that constitutes them his seed. To comport with this, it is the essential condition on which the posterity of Adam share in his condemnation, that they resemble him in the temper of their hearts. Indeed without such a union of temper they are not his posterity in the covenant sense.

The new birth and union of heart to Christ are the two things which constitute men the seed of Christ; and these two things are inseparable; for the new birth lays a sure foundation for immediate union of heart to Christ. To comport with this, the first birth, or conception, and union of heart to Adam, are the two things which constitute men the posterity of Adam; and these two things are inseparable; for the first birth, or conception, uniformly lays a foundation for immediate union of heart to Adam.



Thus far the parallel between the two federal heads. On the whole, it appears that Adam himself was publicly condemned, not for his wicked heart, but for his outward act; yet he was condemned for that outward act because it was the index of his heart; for had he performed it in a paroxysm of madness, he would not have been condemned for it. The same in all respects may be said of his infant posterity. The public sentence against them is not expressly grounded on their wicked hearts, but on that outward act of their federal head which fixed and revealed their temper. But had it not manifested their hearts, no sentence against them would have been grounded on it.

This point may be further illustrated by supposing a flourishing tree with many branches. The tree is now wholesome and good, but is known to be liable to become poisonous; and it is known that in case of such a change, the root will first imbibe the poison, and in the twinkling of an eye will communicate it to all the branches. At the moment the root imbibes the poison which changes the whole tree, the root alone sends forth a nauseous exhalation, distinctly perceptible by the senses; and this exhalation from the root is the only evidence to men of the change of the branches from a wholesome to a poisonous nature. The spectators condemn the whole tree on account of that exhalation from the root, and pluck it up, root and branch, and cast it into the fire. Why were the branches condemned and burnt on account of an exhalation from the root? Because the exhalation was as much an evidence of their poison as though it had proceeded from them.

In this view of the subject I am supported by the more general voice of Calvinistic divines ever since the Reformation. It has been universally held by the divines of the Genevan school, the head quarters of Calvinism, (according to the testimony of Stapferus, an eminent divine of the same country,) that infants are not condemned independently of the pollution of their nature. And Stapferus himself bitterly complains that the enemies of Calvinists accuse them of asserting the imputation of Adam's sin to infants while they are

viewed in themselves as innocent. Now if any difficulty, as to the mere justice of their condemnation, is relieved by bringing in their depravity, it must be because they personally deserve condemnation. If their depravity does not deserve condemnation, I see not that any difficulty is relieved, in regard to mere justice, by bringing it into account.

Before I dismiss this subject I will add the following remarks.

1. If the foregoing representation is true, it is not correct to say that infants are born into the world with a double guilt, one part consisting in Adam's sin and the other in their own depravity. As well might you say that the personal guilt of Adam is double, one part consisting in the outward act and the other in the consent of his heart.

2. If the foregoing representation is true, it is not correct to say that infants deserve eternal death or any death for the sin of Adam singly considered and independent of their own depravity. Adam himself did not deserve condemnation for his outward act independently of the heart from which it proceeded. And had his posterity themselves eaten of the forbidden fruit, they would not have deserved condemnation for that act independently of their depraved hearts,—for example, had they done it in a paroxysm of madness.

3. We may now answer the question which is sometimes proposed, whether there is infinite guilt attached to Adam's sin imputed. I say, yes, in the same sense in which there is any guilt attached to Adam's sin imputed. The question amounts to this: are infants condemned to eternal death, as well as to temporal death, for Adam's sin? This question has been already answered in the affirmative. But if the question be, Is there infinite guilt attached to Adam's sin imputed, independently of the depravity of his posterity; I say, No: for Adam's sin is not imputed, in any sense or degree, independently of their depravity; any more than any other external act is imputed where it is known to be no expression of the heart. You might as well inquire

whether killing a man has infinite guilt attached to it independently of the temper which it expressed.

4. If the foregoing representation is true, it will completely vindicate the character of God in condemning a world of infants for the sin of their federal head. For I think it will follow from this representation, that mankind are treated no more severely than they might justly have been treated if Adam had not been their federal head. There are two things which befall them in consequence of their connexion with Adam. First, in consequence of the constituted union of character between them and him, they are born depraved; secondly, Adam's act which fixed and discovered the depravity of their hearts, is put in the room of an outward act of their own, and is made the public ground of their condemnation, as being the index of their wicked hearts. Now I think that they might have been born depraved, and might have been condemned as soon as born, had there been no federal head.

First, without a federal head, I see not why they might not justly have been left to sink into depravity as early as they now do. Why would not this have been as just as the leaving of the holy angels to fall, or the leaving of the holy Adam to fall? Abandonment to sin immediately after birth or conception, certainly appears no harder than abandonment to sin immediately after a course of holy dispositions and actions. That holiness which reigned in the angels and in the soul of Adam the moment before the first sin entered, did not merit such a desertion. They were not deserted therefore by way of punishment, but by a sovereign act of God. And the abandonment of infants to the first evil bias is not the consequence of their condemnation, but antecedent to it, and therefore cannot be viewed in the light of a punishment. And whatever is not a punishment, might justly have been brought upon them had there been no previous sin in the universe. The union of their character with that of Adam was no token of God's displeasure; for that union was constituted before Adam sinned. The fall of infants therefore, equally with that of the angels and of Adam, must be resolved into the

sovereign constitution of God. Though wisdom has seen fit to make the depravity of infants the consequence of their connexion with a federal head, yet for aught that appears, justice might have suffered it without any such connexion.

Secondly, if infants might have been justly born depraved without a federal head, certainly they might have been justly condemned for their depravity without a federal head. As it now is, they are not condemned for the sin of Adam without being personally deserving of condemnation on their own account in the sight of God. And had God been pleased to act before creatures without evidence of his justice, he might have grounded their public condemnation on the mere depravity of their hearts. It cannot be pretended that the Searcher of hearts is obliged in justice to ground the condemnation of sinners on visible conduct. All the end that seems to be proposed in bringing in the outward conduct of Adam as the ground of publicly condemning his infant race, is that their condemnation may rest on visible conduct. But it is not a necessary act of justice, it is a mere act of goodness and of condescension to the weakness of creatures, to rest their condemnation on visible conduct. The bringing in of Adam's act as the public ground of condemning depraved infants, (who are themselves worthy of condemnation in the sight of God,) is, therefore, notwithstanding all the cry that has been raised against it, a mere act of goodness and of condescension to the weakness of creatures,—intended also, as I suppose, to open and illustrate that federal course which was to be pursued in the case of "the last Adam." It is only condemning sinful creatures on a public and visible ground, who were entitled to condemnation for the hidden depravity of their hearts.

I think it appears therefore that mankind are treated no worse than they might justly have been treated if Adam had not been their federal head. And I am persuaded that not only justice but goodness appears in that constitution which God made for the human race. And when we consider it as a glorious preparation for the work and exhibition of "the last Adam," we have reason to conclude that

heaven will forever ring with acknowledgments of that federal system for our world, whose foundation was laid in Eden, and whose top reaches to Mount Calvary and to the heights of the Lamb enthroned.

## **SERMON IV**

### **THE ABOMINABLE NATURE OF SIN**

Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, O do not this abominable thing that I hate. - JER. 44:4

It is impossible for any man to form an exaggerated opinion of his own guilt. This is evident from a single consideration. Every sin deserves eternal death, according to the plain decision of the divine law. But no finite mind can comprehend, much less overrate, that guilt which deserves everlasting burnings. We may confine our views too much to sin, and exclude a sense of mercy, and thus sink into gloom. This is a fault. But no man can possibly overrate his guilt. Here he may give full latitude to his convictions and still fall infinitely short of the mark. To these reflections I am led by that pathetic burst of entreaty and indignation which appears in the text. God had long labored with the Jewish nation, and they had turned a deaf ear to all his entreaties. At length he sent Nebuchadnezzar against them, who destroyed their temple and cities, and carried the mass of the people to Babylon. The few that were left took Jeremiah and removed with him to Egypt. There the prophet received a commission from heaven to renew his expostulations with that stubborn people, and to call their attention once more to the reasons of the divine conduct towards them. After charging them in the name of the Lord with their sins, particularly their idolatry, he subjoins the words which I have read: "Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants

the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, O do not this abominable thing that I hate." By the abominable thing was meant idolatry; but the same may be said of every sin.

The doctrine then which we may draw from the text is this, that sin is the abominable thing which God hates. It will be my object to illustrate and apply this doctrine. That sin is abominable to God appears,

I. From the nature of things.

II. From the expressions he has made of that abhorrence.

I. From the nature of things. Sin is directly opposed to all the wishes and designs of God. "God is love." The object which he pursues with infinite desire, and indeed his only object, is to raise an immense kingdom of creatures to the highest eternal happiness, and to enjoy himself the blessedness which he imparts. In order for this they must possess the same love that he does, and be formed into an orderly kingdom, owning him for their Head and submitting affectionately to his dominion. To accomplish these ends he has issued a law, requiring them to love him with all the heart and their neighbor as themselves, and to express this temper in all their words and actions. The particular forms of conduct which are calculated to promote their mutual happiness, and which are therefore expressive of love, are marked out in the details of his law, whose grand object it is to secure a united, harmonious, and happy kingdom. He has left nothing unforbidden which is contrary to the good of the universe, and has tolerated no hostile principle by silence. His law of course is the universal standard of right.

Now sin consists in that dissociating principle which sets up a private interest against the public good. It splits up the universe into contending units; and that which was a kingdom of love and blessedness is now a hell. Though the social affections may sometimes set up the interest of a private circle in opposition to the

public good, the chief thing that is arrayed against the universe is self-interest. The grand root of sin is inordinate self-love. Out of this arises pride and all those malignant passions which set themselves to defend our own name or estate. Out of this arises that undue regard to personal gratification which shows itself in the idolatrous love of the world,—which shows itself in all those indulgencies which imbrute the man,—which shows itself in all the crimes committed against society. Out of this arises the strenuous opposition which the carnal heart makes to the divine law, and all the enmity which on that account it feels towards God. In short, out of selfishness, and other affections which brood over a limited interest, arise all those malignant passions which hurry men and devils into war against heaven, and constitute all the sin of earth and hell. Sin is thus the struggle of a private interest against the public good; and because it meets with opposition from God, it becomes his malignant enemy. It completely disjoins the universe, and, when it is mere selfishness, it arms each man against all other beings. In every motion it breaks in upon the order which the divine law has established. It cannot be sin without violating that order; for the very definition of sin is, that it is "the transgression of the law." Sin and transgression are synonymous terms. As nothing is morally good which does not conform to the divine law, so nothing is morally evil which does not violate that system of precepts.

This being the nature of sin, it is manifestly the enemy of public order and happiness, and therefore infinitely offensive to the God of love, and contrary to all that he has prescribed for the happiness of his kingdom, and to all the wishes and designs of his benevolence. As the Friend and Guardian of the universe, he must of course abhor and proscribe and punish sin. He must pursue it with infinite indignation as the disturber of the peace of his kingdom, the traitor and conspirator against his government, the implacable foe of every thing dear to his heart. The benevolent Father of the universe cannot but hate such an enemy with infinite detestation. It is love that abominates it, and infinite love must hold it in infinite abhorrence.

Sin not only disturbs the public peace by being itself the death of happiness,—not only by rebelling against God in the character of a Lawgiver,—but it opposes him in all the relations in which he acts for the good of his creatures. Has he created a world and assumed the relation of a Father? Sin refuses to acknowledge him as a Parent. Has he taken upon himself the office of providential Governor? Sin would take the management of the world out of his hands. Has he undertaken the work of a Saviour? Sin refuses to receive him in that character. In whatever office he acts for the happiness of his creatures, sin sets itself to oppose him. He cannot make a motion to gratify his love, but sin instantly moves to resist his purpose. Can it be otherwise than that he should hate such an enemy with the whole strength of his nature? That this is the case I am to show,

II. From the expressions which he has made of this abhorrence.

1. In the penalty which he has annexed to his law. This is nothing less than an eternal exclusion from all good and the eternal endurance of all evil. "The wages of sin is death." This death is explained to be the endurance of eternal and unutterable torments. This endless and therefore infinite evil is to be regarded as the exact measure of God's abhorrence of sin. The threat of this infliction is not the effusion of a transient feeling; it is with great solemnity incorporated with the public law of his empire; which we are taught to regard, not only as the great standard of right, but as the deliberate and unchangeable expression of his heart: and we are assured that "heaven and earth shall pass" away before "one jot or one tittle" of that law shall fail.

2. In his providential government.

When the angels sinned, those eldest sons of God, not all his love for his first born sons, not all the dignity of their nature, could save them. He hurled them from heaven and locked them up in the prison of eternal despair. When our first parents sinned, he turned them out of Eden, turned this beautiful world into a wilderness of thorns, deposited his curse in the ground, lodged it in the blood of man, and



entailed upon hundreds of generations sorrow and disease and death. When the earth became filled with violence, he loathed it, and, (to use a strong eastern figure,) "repented—that he had made man," and he swept the world with a flood. When the inhabitants of the vale of Siddim had corrupted their ways beyond endurance, he rained fire from heaven upon them and hid the very ground which they had polluted under the waters of the Dead Sea. When Egypt rebelled, he lashed her with ten successive plagues, and at last buried her king and ail her glory in a watery grave. When Israel rebelled in the wilderness, did he spare the favorite race whom he had gone down into Egypt to redeem? At one time he brought upon them the heathen, then fiery serpents. Now fire from heaven devoured them, then the ground opened and swallowed them up; and at last he swore by his holiness that, with two exceptions, all the adults should drop their carcasses in the wilderness. During the fifteen centuries that the posterity of Abraham possessed the promised land, his providence was almost a constant remembrancer of his hatred of sin. Though they were his beloved family, whenever they openly sinned he would wound them "with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one." He often gave them into the hands of the heathen. He blotted out the name of ten of the tribes from under heaven. He sent the rest to Babylon. He gave them at last into the hands of the Romans, who strewed their native mountains with their bones, and drove out the rest to wander as vagabonds through the world.

It was the anger of God against sin which destroyed Ninevah and Babylon and Tyre, and Edom and Moab and the Philistines. It is this which has covered the earth with blood and turned it into one vast prison-house in which little else is heard but the groanings of the prisoners. There never was a pain that was not caused by sin. Collect all the sufferings of six thousand years, and the whole is but a faint expression of God's indignation against sin. The rear of all is brought up by death. See that beauteous frame dissolved,—that masterpiece of divine art,—that mechanism which seemed intended to lodge a deathless angel. See the agonies of dissolving nature. See the offensive mass a few days after. And is the glory of man reduced to

this? Has sin thus unmade the noblest work of God? The grave yards, the vaults stored with human bones, the ashes of a hundred generations, proclaim the anger of God against sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." In every death you see a criminal executed according to the sentence of the divine law. Here mortal eyes lose sight of the object and faith must begin her vision. The providence of God extends to the eternal world. There lie the implements of his justice. There are collected all his magazines. While wrath sleeps in this world, sinners dream that God is "altogether such a one as" themselves. That is the world to correct all mistakes. As sure as God is true, he will put sinners into an eternal hell. He will lay upon them a punishment exactly proportioned to their guilt; and not one sin of thought, word, or deed shall escape. Sins which were long forgotten by them, will be found to have been laid up in the repositories of his memory; and what they thought was overlooked, will be seen to have been uniformly regarded with infinite abhorrence. To each sin will be attached its proper degree of punishment, and each degree will run parallel with eternity. The most minute transgression will be loaded with an endless curse. Eternal providence, like the divine law, will be found an infinite enemy of every sin. What wrath against sin must that be, which can impel the infinitely tender Father to resign the souls which he has made to everlasting burnings? He has not a particle of resentment against their persons. His love reaches after their happiness with unbounded desire. Nothing but hatred of sin can force the dreadful execution. O the amazing strength of that abhorrence which can accomplish all this! What overwhelming views will they then have of his implacable, eternal, omnipotent displeasure against sin. When they shall be brought out of their graves and arranged at his bar; when the frowns of God shall convulse the universe; then shall they know that he was not trifling with them when he forbade sin,—when he raised the threatening voice,—when for so many ages he uttered the vehement cry, "O do not this abominable thing that I hate."

But there is one exhibition of his displeasure against sin which is more amazing than all the rest. When his compassions yearned over a dying world and had infinite longings for their relief, he would not pardon one of their sins unless his beloved Son, in whom he took infinite delight, would descend from a God to a servant and die like a malefactor on the torturing cross, to convince the universe that he would support the authority of the law by executing its penalty on future offenders. And when his obedient Son had presented himself in the form of a servant, and brought the Father's heart to the solemn test, whether he would strike at sin through the bleeding heart of his own Son, he drew his sword,—he smote the monster though laid on one so dear,—and the monster and his only Son died in one day. And if he spared not his own Son, thinkest thou, O sinner, that he will spare thee? If these things were done "in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

It becomes then a question of solemn import, Who are sinners? Often has this question been discussed in our presence, when it excited but little interest. But if such are the feelings of God towards sin, the question is too infinitely important to be turned aside. Who then are sinners? To this question the Scriptures have given a decided answer: "There is not a just man upon the earth that doth good and sinneth not." "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Not only so, but all men by nature, so far as they are influenced by moral feelings, are under the entire dominion of sin. Through all their souls God sees not one trace of love to him or holy love to man. Except so far as they are restrained by conscience and the social affections, and by other things intended to fit them to live together in society, they are entirely governed by a debasing selfishness, that, as soon as these restraints are taken off, stands ready to sacrifice the universe to serve a private end. "God saw—that every imagination of the thoughts of" man's "heart was only evil continually." "The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness,—but wounds and bruises and

putrefying sores." And as is the fountain so are the streams. So far as the words and actions of the natural man are of a moral nature, they are nothing but sin. "The plowing of the wicked is sin." The very "sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." Now then we may understand what feelings God has towards impenitent men. He regards them, so far as he contemplates them as moral beings, as one entire mass of pollution, which his heart abhors infinitely more than we do the most filthy viper. If the sinner could have a full view of the feelings which God has towards his sins, he would die as though ten thousand thunders burst upon his head. Sinner, if God hates one sin with infinite detestation, how does he feel towards you, who have been constantly sinning for so many years? Not a waking moment has passed in which you have not transgressed that law which says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,—and—thy neighbor as thyself." His eyes have followed you into every corner. He has watched you as constantly as though he had no other object of attention. All the sins of your life are this moment spread out before him, as though they had all been committed to-day. They appear to him like mountains piled on mountains, reaching to the very heavens and crying for vengeance. This enormous weight of guilt is crushing you to the lowest hell, while you are at ease and blessing yourselves that you are not thieves or murderers.

What a wonder that any of us are this side of eternal despair! Considering the abhorrence which God has always felt towards our natural character; considering that there has been nothing in us by nature to give him pleasure, but every thing to give him disgust; how astonishing that he has preserved us so long, and doubly astonishing that he has fed and clothed us, and sent us Bibles and sabbaths and the Holy Spirit, and sent his Son into the world to die for our salvation. O "the breadth and length and depth and height" of the love of God "which passeth knowledge."

What abundant cause have we for humility and self-loathing. What reason to lay our hands on our mouths and our mouths in the dust,—to weep and mourn and break our hearts. How strange to see such

polluted worms take airs of self-importance, and erect themselves into attitudes of conscious worth. Dust and ashes should rather be their covering, and the rending sigh of a breaking heart their only language.

And what would have become of us had not the Son of God left the heaven of his glory "to seek and to save that which was lost"? We wanted one not merely to teach us lessons of morality and to spread before us a holy example, but to come down into our dungeon, to strike off the chains from wretched prisoners and "to loose those that" were "appointed to death." We wanted one to take our place and die before the gates of our prison, to prevent the law from taking its course upon us. We needed one whose death should do as much to uphold the authority of the law as the eternal destruction of Adam's race would have done. We wanted a Saviour absolutely divine. Wrap yourself up in a superficial morality and call it a coat of mail; I will hide myself in the righteousness of my Saviour. Those veins bled balm to heal my wounds. Those sighs dispelled the clouds which were ready to burst on me. That final groan completely drained the cup of wrath prepared for us. Let others push aside a Saviour to show their own fair form; I will wrap me in the garment which he has prepared, and die with my eye fixed upon his cross. Let my last words be those which trembled on the lips of the dying martyrs: None but Christ, none but Christ.

Poor impenitent sinners, covered over with pollution, condemned and abhorred of God, here is your only remedy. Take this away and all hope expires. You lie under an infinite load of guilt; you cannot atone for one sin; you must have this Saviour or perish forever. Why then, under the weight of all this guilt, do you reject the Saviour? The heavenly invitation calls you to his arms, and yet you refuse. For so many years has God been pleading with you, "O do not this abominable thing that I hate." It is affecting to hear the great God thus plead with worms. And it is greatly affecting to see those worms reject his entreaties. This rejection is infinitely offensive to God. It is a direct rejection of him. It is the blackest ingratitude. It is a most

profane resistance of all the light he has shed. On these accounts the Jews were more severely punished than any other nation, and in the day of judgment will find it "more tolerable for—Sodom and Gomorrah" than for them. Do not act over again the rebellion of the Jews. Remember that it is written, "Because I—called and ye refused, —I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh." "Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." To-day. This and not to-morrow is the time fixed by heaven. Infinite rebellion and guilt attend upon delay. Infinite danger and folly accompany delay. If ever you wish for salvation, seize the offered blessing now. You need it as much now as you ever will. It is as easy to obtain it now as it ever will be. God gives you no cause for delay. Come, for "all things are ready." Say not that you cannot. If there is any deficiency in yourselves, it is only for you to cast yourselves on God. Go and rest yourselves wholly on him for strength. The more you feel your own weakness, the more you should rely on him. If you do not practise this reliance, you do not fully feel your own weakness, and this plea is only an excuse. Would to God that you felt your own utter insufficiency, and then you would take hold of his strength and do the work at once. There is no reason for delay. Just relax your grasp from every other object and fall into the arms of a Saviour. Do it. now. The eyes of God are upon you. O let him see it done. Let him see it done before he rouses his wrath and swears, Ye shall not see my rest.

## **SERMON V**

### **THE WORTH OF THE SOUL**

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? - MAT. 16:26

There is in man an immaterial soul, distinct from the clay which composes his body; a spiritual substance that thinks and reasons, chooses and refuses, loves and hates; and this conscious being, not depending for its existence on the body, will survive in a separate state when the body shall be dissolved. Reason assents to this when it is discovered; and although reason could not have made the discovery, yet the separate existence of the soul is clearly revealed in that Gospel which has brought life and immortality to light. Every believer in revelation must, therefore, perceive it to be the chief interest of man to secure the happiness of his soul in a future and eternal state. And those who believe in the necessity of a change of heart and of a thorough religion, will not deny that there is a lamentable and surprising degree of inattention to the soul among the greater part of mankind; an inattention which, where it continues, must prove eternally fatal. Such will not impute it to severity, if the ministers of the Gospel, with the most heart-felt solicitude, endeavor to awaken their brethren, their flesh and blood, from such a destructive lethargy. The most impassioned calls will not be deemed too vehement in such a cause.

I cannot hope, my dear hearers, to speak to you with effect, unless you firmly believe in an eternity of rewards and punishments. If this be denied, I shall not carry you along with me as I pursue the subject. And because I may have to break company with some here whom I would not leave behind, I will stop a little and plead with them. God grant that it be not a parting leave.

If you doubt a future state, tell me, for what end were the human race created? For happiness? this none attains to the extent of his capacity in the present life, and many are wretched from the cradle to the grave. For the glory of God? this end is not answered if there be no future state: for here virtue is often oppressed while vice triumphs. Without a state of more equal rewards and punishments, the human race would bring a reproach on the righteous Governor of the world. And consider, I pray you, that you cannot bring a future state into doubt until you have destroyed the evidence on which

divine revelation rests;—the testimony of miracles and prophecies,—the standing testimony of the Jewish nation,—the evidence derived from the unity of design, the holy precepts, and all the vestiges of divinity impressed on the sacred pages; a task which the wisest and best men would die before they would attempt, and which the subtlest enemies of revelation have never been able to accomplish. To risk your immortal all on the performance of such a task! how much better to risk it on the blood of the Lamb of God. Do you believe in a future state, but not future punishment? still the things of eternity and not the world ought to engross your chief attention. Animating prospects of worldly good can prevail to draw your attention from the present moment; how much more should a prospect of immortal happiness! Are you sincere in believing yourselves the heirs of the eternal glories of heaven, and yet so seldom think of futurity, and so deeply affected with the trifles, the joys and disappointments of a moment? Perhaps you believe in future but not in eternal punishment. Well, what would it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul for ages of ages in hell? To avoid one year's imprisonment on earth, you would do and suffer much. To escape then this dreadful punishment after death, (even if it be not endless,) with what anxiety ought you to examine the conditions of pardon, your own character, and labor to make your peace with God. Or have you the unnatural cruelty to disinherit your future selves of all affection, and having followed yourselves with concern through every period to the grave, to bury there with your bodies all self-regard? Know ye, my beloved friends, that your future selves will be these same conscious beings whose sensations are so interesting to you at present? These same minds, with the same personal consciousness, will be in heaven or hell. But if you will not be persuaded, I will turn to others who do believe in all the realities of a future state which the Scriptures disclose. To you, my more hopeful hearers, I say, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" That you should want persuasion to value the salvation of the soul above the present world, is among those wonders which want a name. What can be the cause of this? Doubtless the more remote cause is simple aversion to God



and divine things; but the proximate cause is worldly attachment and care. The profits, pleasures, and honors of the present life so fill the eye, that the true interest of the soul is not discerned. Were all these things away, the mind, ever restless in pursuit of something, would more readily bend forward to investigate eternal objects. Suffer me then to resist these dangerous seducers by urging the solemn aphorism of Him who knew the value of the soul: "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The superior value of the soul will appear from the following considerations:

1. From its essence and capacities. The body is composed of dust, like the bodies of other animals. All the treasures of the world are made of dust. But the soul was infused by the breath of God. While the body is fitted for the lower animal functions, and governed by laws common to the animal tribes, the soul is endowed with the moral faculty, which renders it the subject of the dignified and awful government of Jehovah. It is aggrandized with capacities to serve and glorify God, to be useful to men, to relieve the afflicted, and to manage the concerns of nations. It is capable of the heavenly exercises of love, pity, and mercy. The extent of its capacities is amazing. What numberless and surprising inventions for the benefit and ornament of society has it made; what progress in the knowledge of the arts and sciences—in exploring the secrets of the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms. It has searched out the bowels of the earth. It has wandered among the stars to calculate their laws and order. It has followed the comets in their immense excursions. It has been found capacious enough to take in the contemplation of world upon world, and system upon system, spread through the regions of boundless space. Its motions are so rapid that it can rove from star to star, and from world to world, in a moment. No fetters can bind it, no bounds contain it. It is capable of exerting itself like an angel in the employments of the heavenly world; contemplating God, expatiating through his works, and assisting in the anthems of

celestial worship. That such a stupendous emanation of divinity should be thrown into ruins—the use of all these godlike faculties be worse than lost, and forever devoted to malice and blasphemy,—so much would not be lost should the material universe fall into one general wreck.

Vast capacities has the soul for happiness and misery. I appeal to those who are acquainted with the pleasures and pains of the mind. No delights which depend on the senses can compare with the serene pleasures of a contented soul, much less with the raptures of a transported soul. And no pains which the body feels can equal the agonies of a troubled spirit. The capacity of the soul for happiness and misery will be greatly enlarged at death. It will then be an angel in bliss or a devil in misery;—rapt in pleasure which no mortal heart can conceive, or laboring with throes and agonies which the imaginations of this infant world are too feeble to paint.

The happiness which appertains to the soul is far the most noble in its kind. How diminutive is the happiness, (if it be worthy of the name,) that can be gathered from the briars and brambles of this wilderness. What are the pleasures of sense, but the half-enjoyed pleasures of the brute? What are the pleasures of the imagination, but Utopian visions? What the pleasures of honor, but palpitating pains? What the pleasures of riches, but the morose perplexities of care? What are the pleasures of friendship, but pleasures of the soul? Nothing is worthy of the name of happiness but that which has its seat peculiarly in the mind. And then how sublime is intellectual delight. In contemplating the dignified happiness of a Newton or a Franklin, we are awed into reverence, and assent that intellectual bliss rises high and out of sight of the low pleasures of the epicure, and feel an instinctive conviction that such happiness ennobles and exalts. But if the happiness of the philosopher so far transcends, what does the happiness of the christian? If to contemplate the sun and moon produces a delight full of dignity, what does the contemplation of Him who spoke these orbs into being? The soul alone is capable of enjoying God; and the small portion of this

delight which is allotted to christians here, is by far the most sublime happiness of the present life. But who can conceive the bliss, the dignified and God-like bliss, which their souls will enjoy in heaven! having free access to the infinite God,—diving into the ocean of his exhaustless glory,—swallowed up in the overflowings of his love,—reposing among the tendernesses of his bosom,—towering in the dignity of spirits,—climbing the regions of light and life, the companions of Seraphim and Cherubim,—the very sons of God, and heirs of all the riches and joys of the universe? What is the world to this? "Its pomp, its pleasures, and its nonsense all?"

II. The superior value of the soul appears from the amazing respect that has been paid to it. Man must have been a very important being in the estimation of God, or he would not have built this beautiful and stupendous world for his habitation. But was it for the body that this planet was erected, or was chief respect had to the soul? It was not built for the dust, but for the immortal part; not for man as a mere animal, but for man as a subject of moral government,—for a nursery in which to foster his infant faculties for the employments of a vigorous and eternal manhood. It is for the life and growth of the soul that the valleys spread out their bosoms,—that the mountains lift up their heads towards heaven,—that ocean, with its million waves, laves the shore,—that serpent, fish, and bird were formed, "and the cattle upon a thousand hills." It was to light the soul in its way to glory that the sun and moon were hung out of heaven. 'Tis for its "sake all nature stands and stars their courses move." Amazing thought! Where am I? Methinks the sun, moon, and stars look down tremblingly to observe its fate. All nature seems to sit in solemn silence, looking out of all her eyes, to watch the destinies of the soul.

But no respect which has been paid to the soul puts so vast an estimate upon it as the price that was paid for its redemption. What must have been the valuation of the soul in heaven, when that God before whom all nations are as the "dust of the balance," became an infant in the manger of Bethlehem, sweat blood in Gethsemane, was beaten and spit upon in the judgment hall, and expired on the ragged

irons? Every groan of Calvary pronounced the worth of the soul to be greater than ten thousand material worlds. The Son of God would not have given his life to redeem the whole material universe from ruin. He would not have shed a drop of his blood to save this world with all its lumber from the flames. He will of choice give it to the flames when its use to the soul of man shall be ended. And yet he shed all his blood to save the soul.

God has discovered his high regard for the soul by the pains he has taken to give a written revelation to the world, to establish and preserve a church and houses of worship, to institute sabbaths and sacraments and a Gospel ministry, and by all the labors and calls of six thousand years. The body may be cast upon a dunghill and eaten by worms, and God regards it not; but in the day that the animal part is committed to the loathsome grave, he takes special care that this noble particle of himself shall not enter among the dead, but raps it away to the region of spirits.

Angels also discover their high regard for the soul, by leaving the realms of glory to consume their time upon this distant planet by daily ministrations for its salvation. Should a company of the greatest men in Europe cross the Atlantic to manage a certain business, the world would be looking after them, and would conclude that the interest they came to manage was of vast importance. What then shall we think of the soul? that "for whose guard the angel bands come flying from above?"

Heaven and earth, God, angels, and good men are engaged to deliver the soul. And this is not all; hell is in motion to oppose its deliverance. Myriads of principalities and powers are leagued against it. "How great must be the value of the soul," says one, "when three worlds are thus contending for it." Would three worlds, I ask, thus contend for this little particle of dust called earth? No, but they will contend for the soul of man.

III. What completes the value of the soul is its immortality, and perhaps eternal progression. This life is but the threshold of our existence,—a breath; we gasp once here and live forever. If we owned the whole world it could not attend us a step beyond the grave; but if we once obtain the heavenly inheritance, we shall carry it with us down through the revolving ages of eternity. If want and affliction beset us here, death will soon close the distress; but if we lose our soul the loss will be forever. This is that last death which death itself cannot destroy. The fashion of this world passes away; the earth will soon grow crazy with age; the sun itself shall wax dim in its orbit; the stars shall fall like the leaves of autumn; but the deathless soul shall survive the wreck of worlds. And when another period, as long as the world's age, shall have passed, and as many such periods as there were moments in the first, the soul will have just begun its course. To stand on some eminence like Pisgah and look away into eternity, O what a prospect rushes on the eye! Let imagination spread all her pinions and swiftly pursue the flying soul, through ages of joy enough to dissolve mortal flesh,—and keep on wing and still pursue, through periods which human numbers cannot calculate—until the fancy has got so far from home as hardly to be recalled;—it must still return and leave the flying soul to explore ages after ages,—a boundless eternity of inexpressible bliss. And when it returns to earth, how it sickens at worldly glory, and calls mortal life a blank, a point, no time at all.

Let it stretch its wings again, and follow the excruciated soul through ages of unutterable endurance—through fire intense enough to melt down all the planets. One period after another passes by it as it flies,—until it looks back on the first million of years as on a speck in the horizon, and still it hears the tormented soul exclaim, "My agony is just begun." God of mercy, preserve this assembly from this eternity of pain!

Our fainting minds will be overwhelmed with the value of the soul if we admit its eternal progression. It is so difficult to conceive of one's living forever in heaven without acquiring any new ideas, or any

deeper impressions from ideas already received, that it is generally believed that holy creatures will forever grow in capacity and enjoyment. And there are certainly passages of Scripture which favor this opinion. I shall venture no assertion on this point; but taking the thing for granted at present, what an august being will a human soul become! Observe its progress in the present life and the dignity which it here accumulates. Yesterday it was a babe weeping in its mother's arms;—to-day it is a child and we chide it;—to-morrow it is a philosopher and we revere him. Let this progress be extended to a million of years, and how great has that creature become. A thousand times more difference between him and a Newton, than between a Newton and an infant. Mark that miniature of man just opening its eyes on the light; yet that minim of being contains a soul which will one day outstrip the ranges of the widest imagination. That spark will grow to the flame of a seraph; that thinking thing will fly through heaven. Observe that poor christain doomed to hard labor, covered with sweat and dust. The world sweeps by him without deeming him worthy of a look, and considers him only an animal. Yet that same poor man will soon be greater than a nation combined. While carrying burdens on his bending shoulders, (ye know him not,) he is an angel in disguise: the reverse of the stage, where a poor man acts the king, but passing behind the curtain dwindles to a pauper; for here a king acts the pauper, and as soon as the curtain falls ascends his throne. See that mingled throng in the streets, fluttering about like insects in the summer's sun,—the reputed creatures of a day. How little is it considered that every one of that number, and of those human shapes in the filthy dungeon, is destined to eternal progression, and will one day be greater than kings in glory or equally great in misery. Fix your eyes a little upon that throng, and silently mark whither they will go when they disperse. I follow one with my eyes to his secret apartment: I see the shiverings of death stealing upon him; the tears of mourners fill the room; the soul bursts its cerement, and is an angel now: wings are lent it, and I trace it soaring through the regions of light. I follow it in its course of endless progression until it has become greater than Gabriel was. I pursue till it has become greater than the whole human race were in

this infant world,—till it has become greater than all the angels together were when it left the body: and I leave it still progressing towards God, approximating towards his infinite dimensions,—a point at an immeasurable distance, but at which it is eternally stretching away. We are lost, we are swallowed up in the boundless prospect.

Upon the principle of eternal progression, (however slow that progression may be,) these are the destinies of the feeblest soul that ever enters heaven.

I return to the street. I follow another of the crowd through his round of dissipation,—through many serious thoughts, many broken resolutions,—until I trace him to a dying bed. His soul is forced from the body amidst the agonies of distracted friends, and, staring with wild affright, is dragged to the mouth of the pit and plunged into hell. And is not this enough? Good God, is not this enough? Must it still proceed from bad to worse? This is believed by many from the very nature of the soul, and from hell's being called a "bottomless pit," in which, as the figure seems to import, one may sink forever deeper and deeper in misery without finding a bottom. It is also alleged that the same unchangeable purity that required the punishment of sins committed in the body, will equally require an increase of misery to provide a punishment for all the rage and wickedness of hell. That the punishment will be endless is certain, but whether it will be progressive I will not venture to assert. But the thing being once admitted, consequences result enough to shake a world. Then the time will come when the smallest soul in hell will contain more misery than Satan now does;—time will come when the smallest soul in hell will endure more in one hour than has been endured on earth by all nations since the creation. And further still,—it is too awful to proceed. O what a God is that which lives from eternity to eternity! O what a redemption did Christ come to accomplish, from this eternity of pain to this immortality of glory! O what a soul has man! Surely it was worth being redeemed by the blood of the Son of God. Surely it

is worth being saved by a life of self-denial and prayer. What can be too much to give in exchange for the soul?

How solemnly important do sabbaths now appear, and time, and the Bible, and every thing which relates to the soul's salvation. The sun, moon, and stars appear solemn in shining; the earth, the concave, and all nature seem to borrow the solemnity of eternity; and this world appears only the cradle in which souls yet in swaddling bands are rocked for immortality.

Heir of immortality, bow before thine own majesty. Debase not thyself by sordid actions. A royal infant, while in his nurse's arms, though unconscious of his dignity, is yet born to sway the sceptre and fate of nations, and should be trained up in habits according with his august destinies. Whilst thou art pursuing every idle phantom, thou forgettest the dignity of thy nature and the infinite grandeur of thy destinies. But thou wast born for great things. Those eyes were formed to see great things, and that soul to experience amazing sensations. Man, thou hast a world in thyself. Child of death, thou hast a concealed treasure in thy bosom, (alas too concealed,) which the exhausted Indies could not purchase. Crowns and kingdoms sink to nothing before it. It is worth more than the sun, moon, and stars, if the sun were gold and every star a ruby. If from the birth-day of this earth omnipotence had been exerted to create as many worlds in a moment as there are dusts in this, and all these worlds were gold and diamonds, and possession to be given for eternity, they would all be like filth of the street to the value of thy soul. And wilt thou live and die ignorant of the treasure thou possessest? Wilt thou squander it all for toys and be an everlasting bankrupt? When thou shalt carry back thy soul to Him who gave thee the talent, fair and glorious, to improve for him, and to return still more fair and glorious, and shalt present it such a ruinous mass, what will the Judge say to thee? If they must perish who murder the body, what a death of deaths is due to those who murder the soul. Less vile would it be, were the soul out of the question, to destroy the bodies of a whole nation. This vast, this magnificent soul of man! Were there no God to sin against, I had



almost said, it would deserve eternal damnation to sin against such a soul.

Ah sinner, this soul of thine is on the point of being lost forever, and immense difficulties lie in the way of saving it. Up, without delay, and see what can be done. Surely the infinite treasure is worth one mighty effort to save it.

Should you reign universal emperor of this lower world for three score years and ten, and then sink into eternal misery, what an infinite loser would you be. What solace would the world be to you after your soul was lost? All the streams and oceans you had commanded would not afford you a drop of water to cool your tongue; but the remembrance of past prosperity would only aggravate present disease. The wealth of Xerxes and Cræsus now avails them not; it is no comfort to Alexander that he conquered the world: nor is Nero profited by a name to live after he is dead.

But if to exchange the soul for a world would be a senseless bargain, how worse than mad to sacrifice it for a toy. No sinner obtains the whole world at last, and most that lose their souls receive but a small pittance in return. How many are selling their deathless souls for some paltry sum extorted by oppression, for the momentary pleasure of the brute, for the intoxicating bowl, for the dark delight of marring another's fame, for the useless diversion of profaning the name of God, for a toy,—a nothing when nothing is offered,—a nothing always,—and less than nothing. For nothing more is gained than though the soul were saved, and all the present delights of religion are lost. This great mart, the world, is full of distracted men, hurrying from place to place to barter their souls for less, far less than nothing. They sell them now for naught, but time will come when they would give ten thousand worlds to redeem them back again. But then it will be too late. For what can a man in hell "give in exchange for his soul?"

My dear hearers, my heart is distressed with the apprehension that some of you will lose your souls. Indeed, I expect nothing else. You are hearing these solemn truths perhaps with indifference, if not with disgust. You will go careless from the house of God. You will think little of what you have heard until a dying day. But then perhaps these truths will meet you again. You need not then be told of the worth of the soul. Perhaps the pangs of dissolving nature will be your least distress. You may then remember this day, and mourn that the warnings of anxious love were unheeded. I can do no more than entreat you, and I do entreat you with the most heart-felt regard. And if you are offended at this freedom, I ask but one more privilege,—to weep and pray for you in secret, and to cry in the midnight hour, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"

## **SERMON VI**

### **TOKENS OF PERDITION**

Now learn a parable of the fig tree. When his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. - MAT. 24:32, 33

Our Saviour had been foretelling the signs which should precede his coming in the destruction of Jerusalem and his coming at the end of the world. As the tender branch and early leaves of the fig tree betoken the approach of summer, so these predicted harbingers would betoken, in their seasons, the judgment upon Jerusalem and the judgment of the great day. Corresponding with these two judgments are two which every wicked man must meet; one at death

and the other at the second coming of Christ: and corresponding with these signs are the symptoms which are found on individual sinners of these approaching judgments. There are certain appearances in relation to particular men which may be plainly set down as Tokens of Perdition; which as manifestly forebode destruction as early fig leaves foretel approaching summer. The summer may be prevented by a special interposition of God, and so may this destruction.

In general it may be observed that a state of impenitence and unbelief is a portentous symptom of approaching ruin; much in the same way that the condemnation and imprisonment of a criminal are signs of his approaching execution. Every unbeliever is now under sentence of death, and is imprisoned in the body to await the day of execution. "He that believeth not is condemned already." This, one would think, is a state sufficiently alarming to rouse every impenitent sinner not actually distracted. But there are still more fearful symptoms, which may be emphatically styled The Tokens of Perdition. Some of these I will endeavor to select and arrange. And O may that Spirit whose province it is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, apply them to your hearts! The day of judgment is before us all,—is just at the door. We shall soon be translated from earthly temples to one of the two great apartments of eternity. Everlasting ages of happiness or misery are before us all. And while our destiny lingers, we are permitted to meet once more in the house of God, to confer together on these amazing revolutions of ages. We are met in an assembly which will be reviewed from that world with unspeakable interest after yonder sun has ceased to shine. By all the anxiety of one who must shortly meet you at the bar of Christ,—by all the tenderness of a pastor who wishes to spend eternal years with you in love and happiness, I entreat you to lend me your whole attention.

The first token of perdition which I shall mention is vicious habits; such as profane swearing, drunkenness, uncleanness, associating with loose company and the like. This is the broad road to perdition.

These habits bespeak one already far advanced in the course to ruin. They prove a conscience seared as with a hot iron. They are alarming symptoms of a soul abandoned of God. They are the most perfect process that could be invented to harden the heart and to grieve the spirit away forever. They remove the sinner to the greatest possible distance from all the means instituted for his salvation. They betoken a rapid approach to that moment when the measure of his iniquity shall be full, and are every hour bringing him more directly under that fearful sentence, The wicked "shall not live out half their days." They are the best chosen means to provoke the wrath of heaven, and to seal and hasten and aggravate the sinner's ruin. That is a course from which few return. It is rare that a person settled in these habits gives evidence of becoming a real christian. Where one does this, millions proceed from bad to worse until they plunge into eternal death. The commencement of such a course therefore, shows as strong a probability of perdition, as the commencement of a consumption does of death. They are gone, eternally gone, unless they are plucked as brands from the burning.

The next token of perdition which I shall mention is a resort to infidelity or universalism to relieve the mind from presentiments of a judgment to come. None are capable of thus running away from the light of truth and taking shelter in impenetrable darkness, but those who for the present are abandoned of God. We read of some who are given over to a "strong delusion" to "believe a lie that they" may "be damned." Such a plunge into darkness shows a resolute determination to hide one's self from the light. And when men have thus immured themselves in cells which exclude the light of heaven, no motives to seek salvation can reach them. Now and then one of their number is reclaimed by the invincible grace of God; but by far the greater part, (judging from the outward indications of character,) die in their sins. The first approach to these cardinal errors therefore, betrays as violent symptoms of eternal destruction, as the first attack of a raging fever does of approaching death.

Much the same may be said of a denial of the proper divinity of Christ, and a denial of total depravity and regeneration. These, as they tend with all their influence to prevent a change of heart and faith in a divine Redeemer, tend as directly to destruction as a determined abstinence from food does to death.

The next token of perdition which I shall mention is that display of character which betrays a false hope and a false profession. I believe there is no instance recorded in the Bible of a sinner's being rescued from a false hope, unless it was founded on the belief of a false religion. In the short period which I have had to make my observations, I recollect very few instances of persons apparently renewed after they had settled down for years upon a false hope, and with that hope had joined the church. Indeed I remember but one. We read of tares; we read of foolish virgins; but we never read of their conversion. A false hope, fortified by a false profession, is the most effectual battery against the artillery of the Gospel. The truths of the divine word are turned off to others. Speaking after the manner of men, I would rather undertake to convince ten infidels, than to demolish one false hope intrenched behind the pale of the Church. It is easy to shake the hope of the humble christian, who has learned the deceitfulness of his own heart, and is always prone to distrust himself; but to tear away the confidence of one who, instead of making God his hope, makes hope his god, this is a task too mighty for an arm of flesh. A thousand to one that hypocrites in the Church will die hypocrites still.

This being the case, every display of character which bespeaks a false hope and a false profession must be numbered among the strong tokens of perdition; such as hatred of the truth; hatred of pungent, searching, soul-humbling preaching; unwillingness to see displayed those parts of the divine character and government which are most grating to the carnal heart; a proud, worldly spirit, that refuses to come out from the world and take up the cross and lean on God, and in religious intercourse, to adopt the simplicity and humility of a

little child. All these, when found predominant in a profession, must be put down as strong tokens of perdition.

Another token of perdition is the approach of age without religion. So far as man can judge by outward conduct and professions, collected and compared from generation to generation, we have reason to believe that the greater part of the elect are called in under the age of twenty, and that few are called in after the middle of life, and next to none in advanced age. As then a man approaches to thirty, and reaches on to forty in an unregenerated state, the tokens of perdition are thickening upon him every year; and by the time he has arrived at fifty, they are as thick as the hairs of his head. In estimating the chances of one who has reached the middle of life in a state of unregeneracy, we must ask what proportion of the last generation who had lived to that age in sin, ever gave evidence of being born again. Did one in ten? Did one in fifty? Did one in a hundred? These questions, fairly examined, would disclose dangers clustering around fifty, around forty, and even around thirty, which I am afraid to number: but should they be numbered by a messenger from heaven, every sinner in the middle of life would, I believe, start and tremble little less than at the judgment of the great day.

Another token of perdition is a state of carnal security. If men were asleep in a burning house and all attempts to awaken them had failed, you would think them violently exposed. When you see men lying under a sentence of death,—of death eternal,—wafted on to judgment by the silent tide of time, and fast asleep, what can you expect for them but inevitable destruction? By far the greater part of those who in past ages were caught in this state of slumber, apparently never awoke till they awoke in eternity. From all we see around us, we know that the longer they sleep the sounder they sleep. The man therefore who is now sunk in carnal security, is much more likely to sink lower and lower till he dies, than ever to awake. At least there is not a single symptom in his favor. We know it is God's method, when he intends to bring a sinner home, first to rouse him to anxious exertion. But this man shows no sign of such an

influence upon him. God has gone to others and let him alone, and has given no intimation that he will ever return to him. There is not one symptom that this man is ever to be saved. Other men take the kingdom of heaven by violence, but this man is fast asleep. So much is to be done and he has never yet roused to his work. When is this mighty task to be performed? When are the world, the flesh, and the devil to be subdued? Months and years are passing away, and the man has never yet begun his work. Death and judgment are at the door, and the man is fast asleep,—and is sinking deeper and deeper in slumber. If this is not a token of perdition, where will you find one this side of perdition itself?

Connected with this are two or three other tokens worthy of a distinct enumeration. Among these may be reckoned a satisfaction with worldly good,—a resting in the creature for enjoyment,—a contentment with the world for a portion. No sooner had the rich worldling said, "Soul, take thine ease; thou hast much goods laid up for many years;" than the word came, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Another of these symptoms is a loose and presumptuous confidence in God's mercy: not the confidence of a universalist, but a sort of general, indefinite reliance on divine mercy which shields the soul from fear while slumbering over its guilt. This is one of those strong links which bind the soul to death. Another of these symptoms is an increase in hardness as men increase in years. When men find that they can attend funerals and hear sermons with less solemnity than they formerly did,—that they can neglect duty with less compunction,—they may write it down that they have spent all their lives in growing more and more ripe for ruin. And what can be a more fearful token of perdition?

Another token of perdition is the profanation of the sabbath and the neglect of the means of grace. The profanation of the sabbath in its more flagrant forms, might indeed have been numbered among those vicious habits which form the very vestibule of perdition. No one vice is more destructive; uniting in it the sin of high-handed disobedience, and the folly of casting away all the means of salvation.

The men who wholly neglect the sanctuary and spend the day in riding or in sports, are about as far gone on the road to perdition as the culprits in your dungeons. But there is a class of more decent people, who, though not so certainly lost, still bear upon them this token of perdition. The solemn consecration of all the hours of the sabbath to hearing, reading, meditation, and prayer, comprehends the use of the greater part of the means of salvation; and if this part is omitted the rest will mostly be neglected. And if means are neglected, the soul will be lost. If means are not generally and solemnly and thoroughly used, it is in vain to appear now and then in the house of God; the soul must still be lost. Those then who attend at the hours of public worship, but spend the rest of the day in reading newspapers, talking about the world, making visits or posting their books, bear about them evident tokens of perdition. They show that their attendance in the sanctuary had no influence on their minds, and that they are at least as bad as though they had staid at home. Those also who visit the house of God but once a day, and spend the rest of the time in sleep or amusements or in doing nothing, bear still more evident tokens of perdition. Their absence in the afternoon proves that the morning attendance did them no good, and that they are in no better but in a worse case than those who have no means at all. Not widely different are the remarks to be made on those who come to the house of God to sleep. Two observations will comprehend the circumstances of their case. The first is, that they show full well that means have hitherto done them no good. The second is, that means are never likely to benefit them in future. If ever the arrows of truth reach their hearts, it is likely to be in the sanctuary: but how can the arrows of truth reach them while they sleep? The hours which they spend in the house of God may be called the crisis of their fate; and that crisis they sleep away. Good men may have occasional infirmities of this nature, but I speak of those who have formed this indecency into a habit, and as regularly sleep as they appear in the sanctuary. I have attempted to look on all sides of the position I am about to advance, and I utter it with the most serious deliberation: these people must break this habit or lose



their souls. The habit then, while it lasts, is a fearful token of perdition.

There is one token which falls under this general class to which I wish to draw your particular attention. I mean the neglect of prayer. Who does not see that this is the direct course to perdition? Since the days of Adam, who that could pronounce the name of God ever went to heaven without prayer? Who can think of receiving eternal life if he will not so much as ask for it? Who can think himself prepared to enjoy the presence of God, while driven from prayer by aversion to that very presence? Who can expect to receive an infinite gift from that God whom he thus hates and disobeys? Continuing thus, he is lost as sure as there is a God in heaven. The man then who neglects prayer, is covered from head to foot with the tokens of perdition.

Another token of perdition is a contention against the truth and a demand of the prophets to prophesy smooth things. If there is any thing which can instrumentally save lost sinners, it is the plain simple truth as it lies in God's word, without varnish or disguise. If men will not allow this to be presented to them in all its length and breadth, they will not allow themselves to be saved. They lock in its scabbard the only sword that can pierce their hearts. They refuse to be approached with the only antidote to the poison which corrodes their veins. If they can succeed; if they can convince ministers that it is better to obey men than God; if they can find preachers more influenced by selfishness than pity; then indeed they will have their desire and inherit the death they seek. At any rate this is a most portentous symptom. When the disheartened patient refuses to take medicine, or any thing but poison, why he must die. When men firmly resolve that they will not have the whole naked truth, and authoritatively demand smoother things, it looks like a desperate purpose; it looks like a determination to take the plunge. It bears upon its forehead the broad, burnished mark of perdition.

Another token of perdition is the rejection of many calls. It has been said from heaven, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man;" and,

"He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." The man then who has long sat under the sound of the Gospel without obeying the truth, bears about him an evident token of perdition. The man who has often been called by affliction, and still holds out against God, shows an evident token of perdition. But of all men, the man who in former months or years was awakened by the divine Spirit and has relapsed into stupidity, bears the strongest token of perdition. For I read, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened,—and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." Before he received that special call, methinks a voice said, "Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" And another voice said, "Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." That experiment was made; that special cultivation was applied in the very motions of the Spirit which he resisted; and now perhaps he is sealed over, like the fig tree by the way side, to perpetual barrenness, and left to grow drier and drier to feed a fiercer flame; resigned by mercy itself into the hands of justice, with this sentence, "Then—thou shalt cut it down." Of all men this man bears the strongest marks of being abandoned to perdition.

Although I have enumerated these tokens distinctly, I am aware that in many instances they cluster. Half a dozen of them may be found on the same man; all may be found on some. Let us see how many of them my impenitent hearers can find upon themselves. Vicious habits,—lingering notions of infidelity or universalism or other soothing errors,—indications of false hopes and false professions,—unsanctified age,—carnal security,—a satisfaction with worldly good,—a loose, presumptuous confidence in divine mercy,—increasing hardness,—profanation of the Sabbath,—neglect of God's house or

attendance half a day,—sleeping at church,—neglect of prayer,—contention against the truth and a demand for smooth preaching,—the rejection of many calls,—and lastly, a relapse into stupidity after being awakened by the Spirit of God. If to bear one of these tokens is so alarming, how ought a man to feel who finds upon himself the greater part of them all? My dear hearer, how many of these marks of death do you find upon yourself? Can you not now see that for a long time "gray hairs" have been here and there upon you and you knew it not? One of these marks is more alarming than that which was stamped upon Cain. In what language then shall I address the man on whom six or eight of them cluster? If I saw upon you six or eight of the most decisive symptoms of approaching death, I should give you up for lost: must I do it now? Your danger is doubtless unspeakable. It is impossible not to see that the chances are far greater against you than for you. I know that the power and mercy of God are great: that furnishes a gleam of hope: but then we have not been accustomed to see that power exerted in many instances equally alarming. What God will do we cannot tell; but when we consider your case in itself we almost despair. Six or eight decisive tokens of perdition clustering on the same person, and that person asleep! Is he distracted or is he dead? Had I an angel's voice I could not paint the madness. Going on to the bar of God; going on to meet omnipotent purity,—to meet all the justice and power in the universe! going on under guilt enough to sink a world, and under an actual sentence of death! going on under six or eight of the most formidable tokens of perdition! Struck with death, with eternal death already, and six or eight of its most decisive symptoms upon you, and you asleep! I leave you there as a monument for affected angels to gaze at, to tremble over, and weep.

# SERMON VII

## THE HEATH IN THE DESERT

Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. - JER. 17:5, 6

The Jews had withdrawn their dependance from God and looked for protection to themselves and the auxiliary powers of Egypt. The consequence was that they were delivered into the hands of the Babylonians to be desolated and destroyed. To this our text had primary reference. But it was intended to apply to men in every age. Instances are never wanting of those who put their trust in man and whose hearts depart from the Lord; and they are always like the heath in the desert.

We find two definitions given of a heath. It is a shrub which grows in barren places; and the name is applied to the extended plains of the Arabian desert, which are covered with barren sand, with here and there a few unsightly shrubs. This inhospitable desert, except at the equinoxes, is seldom visited with rain; and the few vegetables it produces barely subsist by the refreshment afforded by the nightly dews. From this neighboring country many images were borrowed to illustrate the subjects and adorn the writings of the prophets. It is not material in which sense the word is understood in the text. It well illustrates the meaning in either sense. Those barren deserts, equally with the languishing shrubs which they produce, do not see when good cometh. Showers may fall on the mountains of Canaan, but neither the sand of the desert nor the parched shrubs imbibe the refreshing moisture. But I choose to consider the allusion as made to the sandy plains. While the trees of Canaan spread out their roots by

the rivers and the dew lies all night upon their branches; while the bosom of God's vineyard receives the rains of heaven, and like a well watered garden, sends forth its pleasant fruits,—the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys;—while the eye, perched on Pisgah, is filled with the luxuriant scene, spread over the holy mountains, and sees grouped together, in sweet confusion, gardens of myrrh, orchards of pomegranates, and trees of frankincense; the desolate wastes of the Arabian heaths, doomed to eternal deformity and barrenness, never see when good cometh.

We may now look on the text with perhaps increased interest. "Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited."

Let us first ascertain against whom so vehement a curse is denounced, and then trace the resemblance between them and the heath in the desert.

The persons alluded to are those who disclaim dependance on God and whose hearts of course depart from him. Idolaters of every kind, avowed infidels, and all the openly profane, obviously fall under this description. But I shall rather select three classes otherwise defined, believing that what is said of them will better apply to my hearers than observations pointed at infidelity or open vice.

1. Those fall under this condemnation who, though outwardly decent, have no realizing sense that they are utterly dependant on God for happiness, and that all true happiness consists in the enjoyment of him; who consequently spend their life in searching for happiness among the lumber of worldly objects; whose secret influencing feeling is that they are independent of God, that if they can collect such an amount of wealth and honor they can be happy without asking leave of him, and who are so occupied in these pursuits as

scarcely to think of him from day to day. Such people act in many respects as though there was no God who is constantly supporting their lives,—no God on whom they are in all points dependant,—no God whose eyes search them through and through,—no God who will call them to a strict and awful account for the misimprovement of their talents and privileges, for their infinite ingratitude and abuse of his patience. They plainly trust in other things for happiness, and think that if they can gain the world they can be happy without asking leave of God. One consideration proves it true. They do not ask leave of God to be happy. In the morning they are so anxious to hurry into the business of the day where they think their happiness lies, that they do not assemble their families and humbly ask leave of God to be happy that day. They do not even make this petition in their closets. And is it not plain that their secret influencing feeling is they need not ask this leave of him?

The prayerless, the stupid, and the worldly are therefore of the number who inherit the curse denounced in the text.

2. There is another class of men who fall under this condemnation. They are not indeed stupid and prayerless, but anxious and constant in the use of means, thinking that now they are making progress towards heaven. But what destroys the value of all their endeavors is, that they put their trust in man and make flesh their arm. They look for relief to ministers and christians, to their own reformation, prayers, and good resolutions. By present strictness and devotion they hope to make amends for past offences, and by the fervor of their cries to inspire God with mercy. And when they have been a little more engaged than usual, they flatter themselves that now his resentments are in some measure disarmed. Neglecting to fix all their dependance on Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as the sole Author of a gracious salvation, they are still under the curse denounced against those who make flesh their arm; and instead of advancing nearer to God, their hearts are constantly departing from him. Mistaken souls! they are much farther from the kingdom of heaven than they imagine. They have indeed some little sense of sin, but they

have no adequate impression of the amazing pollution of their hearts,—that from the crown to the foot there is no soundness, but one entire mass of corruption. And they are not overwhelmed with astonishment that so much selfishness, pride, and idolatry, so much unbelief and hatred of God, so much ingratitude and stupidity, so much neglect of prayer and profanation of the sabbath, should be kept, by long suffering mercy, so long out of hell. They do by no means see the full extent of their ruin, and therefore do not feel that they are utterly undone, helpless and hopeless in themselves, and unsusceptible of deliverance from the infinite depths of their misery but by almighty grace. Could they once obtain a clear view of their awful depravity, they would renounce every thought of doing anything to help themselves, or that all created power would help them, and would lie on their faces in sackcloth and ashes, and think of nothing but to cry, day and night, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Let them once see themselves as God sees them, and they would no longer be but half in earnest, divided between salvation and the world. They would feel that matters have come to a most urgent crisis, that there is no more time to be lost, and would cast themselves in haste upon the Saviour as the only hope of sinners. But as they now are, they are bending under the ponderous curse denounced against those who put their trust in man and whose hearts depart from the Lord.

3. There is still another class under this curse. They are not neglectful of religious forms; they are not awakened by the Spirit of God. They are chained to death by a false hope. Some of them are in the Church, some are out; but whether out or in, they are depending on a form of godliness without the power. Punctual as others perhaps in their attendance on ordinances, they are never roused to strong desires and efforts for the Redeemer's kingdom. Though "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him," yet he comes to build up Zion without telling them. Though he comes in answer to the prayers of his people, they must know it is not in answer to theirs. Though at such a season the children of God have groanings which cannot be uttered, they, except a little animal sympathy, remain as cold as ever.

They sleep "in harvest," and therefore have the decisive mark of a "son that causeth shame." Such a season as this is the grand test to discover false hopes. The wise and foolish virgins slept together undistinguished till the bridegroom came. Never till the wheat grew were the tares known; "but when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also."

This is represented as a very numerous class even in the Church of Christ. "Five—were wise and five were foolish."

Having thus found three classes who fall under the sentence of the text, I will search no farther for objects of the curse, but will proceed to show how these resemble the heath in the desert. I will still consider the three classes distinctly.

First, of the prayerless, the stupid, and the worldly. These resemble the heath,

1. In their barrenness and deformity. Their Creator gave them abundant powers to bring forth fruit. He has cultivated them by the selectest means; by his word and ordinances, by "precept upon precept, line upon line," by his sabbaths and a preached Gospel, by his long and pleading calls, by the often repeated influences of his Spirit; until he can appeal to heaven and earth, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" And after all his pains, and notwithstanding his undeniable claims to the fruits of his own vineyard, when he comes year after year seeking fruit therein, he finds it only a barren heath, yielding nothing to recompense his pains. Nothing? aye worse than nothing,—a crop of misshapen shrubs which only offend the sight and render the heath still more forlorn. When he looked for fruit it brought forth wild fruit,—the grapes of Sodom and the clusters of Gomorrah. Instead of consecrating their powers to God which is their reasonable service, they devote them to rebellion. Instead of blessing him for their existence and all his hourly mercies, they cherish enmity against him. Though he created the world and furnished it and placed them



in it on purpose to serve him, and has supported them so many years that they might live and labor for him; though he has redeemed them from eternal death to give them still an opportunity to serve him; though he has so long kept them out of hell on the express condition that they should devote their lengthened lives to his service, and has waited upon them and labored with them for so many years, under so many discouragements, to see if at length they would not feel some ingenuous compunctions and return to his service; yet, to the shame of all creation, they refuse to serve him still. Their lives are wholly taken up in dishonoring him. What visage is not covered with shame and what heart is not filled with grief at sight of such unfeeling depravity?

2. They resemble the heath in that they are desolate, forsaken, and unblest. The desert is uncheered by any of those pleasant scenes which fill the vales of Canaan with gladness. No voice of joy or song is heard on the heath. While those who wait on God are refreshed like Eden after rain, when she sends forth her fragrance as from a thousand altars of incense; these, like sandy deserts, are the seats only of desolation and wo. "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." "The way of transgressors is hard," "and the way of peace have they not known." But the ways of wisdom "are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace." "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them;" "and in keeping of" it "there is great reward." It is a just decree of heaven that those who consume their lives in sin should consume them in sorrow,—that those who resemble the heath in deformity and barrenness, should resemble it in desolation and wo.

3. In times of special refreshment in Canaan the heath knows not "when good cometh." While the holy land is wet with drops from the yearning eye of heaven, and sends forth leaves of the palmtree and clusters of the vine, the Arabian deserts, fated to be parched with everlasting drought, remain as desolate as before. This feature of resemblance is deeply affecting in such a day as this. While showers

of grace are watering the rest of the land and calling forth fruits from every rood of holy ground, these barren sands know not when good cometh. While Jesus of Nazareth is passing by and some are as solemn as eternity, these can go jocundly along to their labors and diversions, and, Gallio-like, care for none of these things. While others with anxious tears are entreating to know what they shall do to be saved, these, as though they had no souls, are locking themselves up from thought and burying themselves in business and pleasure. Perhaps God comes near them and plucks some from ruin before their eyes. Perhaps he enters their houses and takes one from their table and another from their bed; but they, as though locked fast in the slumbers of eternal death, take little notice of what is passing. Instead of seizing the golden moment of calling upon God while he is near, they lose the opportunity, though it is probably the last that they ever will have before they are either in eternity or hardened past recovery. Are not such people distracted? Why do they not arise and call upon God before destruction overwhelms them?

4. The showers which sometimes fall on the Arabian heaths, instead of rendering them fruitful, serve only to promote the growth of the misshapen shrubs which render their deformity still more disfigured. In like manner the influences of heaven, which sometimes fall on this class of men, serve only to stir up their pride and enmity, to call forth a more fatal resistance of the Holy Ghost, to sink them into seven fold stupidity and hardness, and in many instances to seal their eternal doom.

5. It is to be feared that many of these persons resemble the heath in a still more awful respect. The heath can never be made a fruitful field. Whatever showers fall upon it, it still remains a wide, dreary waste of sand. With all my heart I should be glad to hope that none of my hearers answer this description: yet alas is there not too much reason to fear it! God has exhausted means upon them, but in vain. He has called them by his word, by his Spirit, and by his providence. He has torn their friends from their bleeding side and lodged them in the grave. He has laid them upon beds of sickness and brought them

to look death in the face. All has been done that means could do, but all to no purpose. Is there not solemn reason to fear that nothing will ever avail? And even now, in this day of merciful visitation, their pride, and perhaps their malignity, is arrayed against every impression and is fearfully resisting the Holy Ghost; and they are likely to remain inveterate until the season is past and they are perhaps sealed. At any rate there is little probability that they will be called in in stupid times, or that they will both live to see and have a heart to improve another revival. What are such people dreaming about that they do not break from their slumbers, like men awoke in a burning house, and flee for their lives? It is too probable that the ruin of some of them is already sealed, and that while they are looking forward to future conversion, it is settled by a judicial sentence that such an event shall never take place. This may be the case with some who are turning these things off upon others, with little thought that they are the very persons intended. And yet for this self same reason they are likely to be the very persons.

After what has been said it will not be difficult to discover in what respects the second class resemble the heath in the desert. They still retain their false dependencies and their hearts depart from the Lord. All the showers which have fallen on these desolate wastes have only called forth certain weeds into greater luxuriance. The light thrown on the divine character has only increased their enmity. They are sinning against greater knowledge and greater mercy than they ever did before. In these respects they never sinned at so great a rate. While others who have had similar calls are made rich for eternity, these do not see when good cometh. They remain desolate and uncheered by those consolations which gladden the hearts of God's people. And it is but too probable that some of them continuing unfruitful under all cultivation will be doomed, like the heath, to perpetual barrenness.

Some of the awakened may here feel themselves hard pressed and be ready to say, I cannot change my own heart: I do the best I can, and what can I do more? If by the best you can you mean the best that

you are disposed to do, the same is true of the thief and the robber. But if you claim to act up to the full extent of your natural powers, the word of God is against you. That declares that you have eyes but see not, and ears but hear not, and places all your embarrassment in the depravity of your heart,—in just such a heart as prevents the malevolent man from loving his neighbor and the thief from being honest: and if you can thus excuse yourselves, the whole race of sinners in earth and hell will cover themselves with the same plea.

Will you pretend that you do the best you can? the best you can for a single day? How little time do you devote to secret prayer. How many words and actions which you know to be wrong escape you. O could you see the infinite wickedness of your hearts and lives, you would drop all these excuses in a moment and vent your whole soul in the impassioned cry, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." But as it is, you lie under the fearful curse denounced against those who make flesh their arm and whose hearts depart from the Lord. Take in this opiate a little longer and the day of grace will be past, and you must remain like the heath in the desert which never sees when good cometh.

The third class resemble the heath in deformity and barrenness. Though they resort to sacraments and transact with covenants, or at least hope in God's mercy, they never bring forth fruit. Through all their souls the eye of God sees nothing better than sin. They are desolate and without consolation. The influences of heaven fall on others, but they remain the same. In all the bursting glory of a revival, they remain much the same. And so they will remain in all probability till they die and take their place with Judas and with Ananias and Sapphira. O it will be a fearful thing to go down with them from hopes and sacraments and vows. Ten thousand times will you wish that you had been born a heathen, that you had lived an infidel, that you had died like the despairing Voltaire and Hume. Any thing but to go down from a hope in Christ and from the privileges of the christian church.

I know I have been long already, but I cannot stop. Let me come nearer to these three classes and pour upon them my whole soul.

1. I will address myself to those who, wholly buried in the world, cast off fear and restrain prayer. Unhappy men, for one moment examine the ground on which you stand. While you are living thoughtless of your Maker you are altogether in his hands. You are constantly suspended over the burning lake on the palm of the hand of an angry God. You slept there all last night; you lie there to-day: and should he turn his hand you fall to rise no more. While you are dreaming that if you could obtain so much of the world you would have no occasion to ask leave of God to be happy, and while you are practically saying that you have no need of him, but can break your way through and be happy though he be your enemy, think for a moment,—mortal man, what are you about? How easy for him to dash your hopes in ten thousand ways. When you arise in the morning and hurry into the business of the day without calling on his name, thinking that you can find happiness without him, how easy for him to turn his hand and let you down into hell before night. Where is your reason that in your circumstances you can set up for independence? you who every moment need so much done for you. While lying under the wrath of God and in such perishing need of his pardoning grace, surely you have chosen the very worst period in your existence to set up for independence. Under such circumstances what can one mean to think of being happy without asking leave of God? How dare you live another hour without prayer? Hark, how it thunders. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." Does it not move you to hear that God has such feelings towards you and denounces such a curse against you? Do you purpose to wear out life in this fatal search after independent happiness? Can you hope to maintain your ground? It is the fixed determination of the Almighty that you shall not;—that if you will not return and seek happiness of him alone, he will crush you beneath his feet. O that you knew in this your day the things that belong to your peace, before they are hidden from your eyes. While the showers of heaven are falling around you, you might become rich for

eternity. What pity that you should once again lose seasons on which so much depends. Will you forever remain like the heath in the desert? If tears would avail we would weep over you with the weeping of Jazer. But tears and entreaties have hitherto been to no purpose. Shall every thing be lost upon you? Shall the influences of the Holy Ghost be thrown away upon you? I entreat, I beseech you, let not this precious season be like those which are now with the years beyond the flood. It may be the last. For once have compassion on your own souls.

2. I will apply the subject to the awakened. In the name of God I warn you not to place your dependance on any helper below the skies. Trust not in your own strength, nor in the purchasing influence of your own duties. Rest not on ministers or christians. The arm of an angel is too short to save. Only he who expired on Calvary can bring the mighty blessing. Repair immediately to him. Spread your wants before him. Cast your souls upon him. Offend him no longer by your obstinate delay. Grieve him no longer by refusing him your confidence,—a confidence which he has so richly earned. He has a heart to pity the wretched though unworthy. His arms are open to receive you. If the voice of Sinai thundering in our text be unheeded, O let the inviting voice of Calvary woo you to his arms.

3. I would address those who dream that they love God better than father or mother or life, and yet are sluggish and unconcerned in such a day as this; in other words, those who are chained to death by a false hope. This is the most frightful description of people we meet with in revivals. Infidels are on the open field of battle; mockers are on the open field, and we know where to find them; but these skulk under our feet and we stumble over them: we lean upon them and they let us fall: we confide in them and they betray us to the enemy. They are the most perplexing and discouraging of all men. They stand in the way; they cumber the ground,—the consecrated ground of the vineyard itself; they are only fit for the flames.

Unhappy men, I have nothing to do with you at present but to assail your false hope. Others I urge to come and embrace a Saviour; you I would tear away from your lying hold of him. But I shall not prevail. I shall probably shake hopes, but not yours. It is easy to alarm the humble, who know the deceitfulness of their hearts; but to demolish a false hope, deeply embedded in selfishness and ignorance, and sworn to by the grand deceiver, this the labor, this the task is. I would rather undertake to convert ten infidels, than to demolish one false hope, especially if pampered by the sacramental elements. I thought to make an address to you, but I turn away discouraged. I seem to hear him say, "He which is filthy let him be filthy still." There is very little prospect that your hope will ever leave you until it is sunk in eternal despair.

Finally, let the children of God,—the dear, lov'd children of God,—renounce all remaining confidence in creature resources,—broken cisterns,—and receive what with all my heart I present them, the precious promises which succeed our text: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh; but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

## **SERMON VIII**

### **TAKING THE KINGDOM BY VIOLENCE**

And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force. - MAT.

11:12

This refers to a remarkable revival of religion which commenced under the preaching of John and continued during the ministry of Jesus. In that day of God's power people flocked to hear the Gospel and with mighty efforts pressed into the kingdom of God. There was all the earnestness common to modern revivals; and this the Saviour, so far from rebuking under the character of irregular warmth, as modern formalists do, distinctly approved. He speaks of it as though it was an attack upon a fortified city which must be carried by storm: and that single figure shows what ideas he had of the exertions needful in this conflict. "Agonize," said he, "to enter in at the straight gate." He would have men come up to the work with all that agony which is necessary in sacking a strong city: and that agony diffused through a community presents all the earnestness of a revival of religion,—of that revival in particular to which the Saviour referred with so much approbation.

Make a law that men shall never break over that formal round in which they are accustomed to move when their heart is cold and engrossed by business or science, and you never will rouse the multitude from sleep,—you never will break the enchantment which binds them to the world,—you never will lift them above their pride, which stands like an armed giant to guard the door of their prison.

The necessity for these strong exertions arises from the immense difficulties in the way. These difficulties may be classed under the following heads.

1. The world, as comprehending both objects of attention and objects of attachment. As the first, it diverts the attention from God and eternity and holds it spell-bound to earth. Business and amusement and vain society throw an enchantment over the mind and allure and enchain it as by magic. As the second, it plunges men into the grossest and most incurable idolatry. Honor, wealth, and pleasure become their trinity. And what an obstacle this is to salvation the Scriptures plainly teach. "How can ye believe which receive honor one of another?" "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a



needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." "That which fell among thorns are they which—are choked with—pleasures of this life."

2. The devil and all his angels. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." These subtle spirits, knowing all our weaknesses and all the avenues to our hearts, do all they can to prevent sinners from being awakened, to prevent the awakened from submitting to Christ, and to embarrass and perplex believers. They seduce the awakened back or delude them with false hopes. They lead them into errors and sins, by which they grieve the Spirit to their destruction.

3. The flesh with all its passions and lusts. Supreme selfishness turns the man into a confirmed enemy of God. His pride is afraid to go over to his Prince or to make a motion towards him, lest his companions in revolt should deride. It clings to the worldly honors that are to be renounced. It cannot bear to lie down under the convictions of guilt or to come as a beggar to sue for pardon on account of another. Pride and selfishness engender unbelief, which stupifies the soul and excludes a sense of eternal things,—a sense of sin and ruin. The lusts and passions fasten upon the world and turn a thousand objects into idols. They keep the stupid from being awakened, the awakened from accepting a Saviour, and raise in the believer a war which nothing but death can terminate.

The whole soul gravitates towards the earth, and it is as unnatural for it to rise to God as it is for the body to ascend to heaven. These corruptions render the heart invincibly obdurate, so that all the commands and entreaties of God, all his promises and threatenings, all the light of this world and all the sufferings of the next, cannot subdue it. Though the sinner, arrested by the Spirit and overwhelmed with guilt, stands trembling over the eternal pit; though a bleeding Saviour shows him his hands and his side, and offers him pardon and a crown of glory, with entreaties that might

move a rock; the invincible traitor still urges his way to hell: and when he arrives there, not all the tortures of the damned, nor the certainty that continued sin will eternally increase his torments, will ever bring him to one right feeling towards his Maker.

4. The difficulty of dissolving long connected associations, and of breaking up long established habits, and of issuing forth into new courses of action; the difficulty of transferring the affections to God which have long been given to the world, of bringing one to tread the valley of humility who has long stalked in pride, of inuring lips to prayer which have long been profane. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil."

These immense difficulties are not to be overcome without great and continued efforts. It is by far the most difficult work that ever man attempted. Hence the life of christians is compared to running, wrestling, fighting, and they are exhorted to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. All men are commanded to agonize to enter in at the strait gate, and are warned that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and that the violent take it by force. All are required to watch and to pray without ceasing. And yet even "the righteous scarcely" are "saved." It will be an everlasting wonder to see one of our race in heaven.

But I seem to hear objections raised against all this.

Objection I. You say the hardness of sinners is invincible, and now you call upon them to conquer it.

Answer. Their hardness arises from the wickedness of their own hearts, and ought not to remain a moment; and although means cannot subdue it, they ought to subdue it themselves. It is invincible to all others, but not invincible to themselves.

Objection II. This transferring of the affections to God is the work of the Spirit, and is not to be done by human strength and resolution. It

is not like a worldly task in which men are to apply their natural strength in proportion to the difficulties they meet, because that natural strength is to accomplish the whole work.

Answer. The transferring of the affections to God is the work of the creature, although the moral strength or inclination comes from God, and the creature is solemnly commanded to perform it. And we may set before men the whole work which they ought to perform and urge them to exertions in proportion to the difficulties involved. Their dependance on God for moral strength is no reason why they should not proportion the exertions to the difficulties, for the work is still to be done by their own agency as much as though they were independent. If men are not to make great efforts in difficult matters because their moral strength comes from God, they must not make any efforts in easy matters because their moral strength comes from God. The truth is, that while they must cast themselves on the Spirit for moral strength to do any thing great or small, the thing is done by acts of their own, and what is more difficult, by greater exertion, and what is less difficult, by less exertion. This is obviously the case in every thing which depends on the established laws of nature. We make greater efforts to lift a large weight than a small one. And why should it not be so in every thing which is accomplished by our own agency, whether the strength be obtained in a natural or supernatural way, and whether it be natural or moral? We have to take our affections from idols and give them to God, and crucify our lusts, as much as we have to ascend a hill or to walk a plain. We certainly call upon christians to make greater efforts in more difficult duties, though their moral strength is supernaturally derived.

Objection III. The work is difficult only because men are sinful. They ought not to allow it to be difficult. And instead of calling upon them for new exertions on account of the difficulty, you ought to require them instantly to make it easy.

Answer. We certainly ought to require them to be holy as God is holy. They are bound to be thus because they have natural ability or the

faculties of a rational soul. But when we speak of their ability as a reason for their obligation, it is because that ability is capable of an effort in proportion to the difficulties to be overcome: otherwise it would not be an ability. Now to break up old associations and habits and to enter on new courses of action, involve an intrinsic difficulty which was never felt before the fall, and which therefore is superadded to the original work of serving God. Can we expect men to rise above this difficulty without an effort? The thing is impossible?

Objection IV. It is not right to call upon the unregenerate to bring to the work their own increased energies and resolution, and especially to put forth exertions in proportion to the difficulties to be overcome, as though all was to be done by their own strength, when the main point is to make them die to all hope from themselves and fall helpless at their Maker's feet.

Answer. We certainly have a right to call upon them to do their whole duty, and therefore to put forth exertions in proportion to the difficulties to be overcome. And if they would do this they would have no occasion to cast themselves dead and helpless upon God's sovereign will. They ought instantly to cast themselves on his Spirit for all their moral strength and to go forward to their whole duty. But instead of this they attempt to go in their own moral strength, in a feeling of independence, and with an impenitent, self-righteous, unbelieving heart; and they never will succeed. And when they see that they never shall succeed nor move God to subdue them, they will, if they act according to truth, cast themselves upon his sovereign will. They are prone to put their own moral power in the room of the Holy Ghost, and their own duties in the room of the atonement and righteousness of Christ, and their own prayers in the room of his intercession; and thus they sustain themselves. But the moment they are torn from this self-dependance, they must fall upon Christ, or upon the sovereign will of God, or into blank despair. It is their wickedness which keeps them from going forward to duty; and when they will not do this, it is their self-righteousness and self-

dependance which keep them from falling upon Christ or upon the sovereign will of God. Now the question is, does the urging of them to duty prevent them from falling helpless on God's sovereign will? So far from this, it is the very best means to bring them to the point. That urgency will put them upon exertion, and that exertion will show them their utter insufficiency to deliver themselves. They never will be convinced till they have thoroughly tried,—till they have exhausted their own moral strength. The strongest efforts are necessary for awakened sinners in two respects; first, as the natural effects of that view of sin and ruin which is needed to show them the greatness of their deliverance and what they owe to their deliverer; and secondly, to convince them, by the failure of all their efforts, that in a moral sense they are utterly helpless and hopeless in themselves, and to bring them to cast themselves dead at their Maker's feet and own him for their deliverer.

But the efforts of the impenitent and unbelieving are not the violence referred to in the text. This leads me, in the second place, to consider the nature of the violence intended.

1. It must be accompanied with supreme desire and with corresponding earnestness and diligence. You must covet salvation more than the riches, honors, and pleasures of the world, and be willing to forego every thing for this. You must come up to the struggle with all your heart and soul, or nothing will be done. Sluggish exertions will never avail. The mighty care must be fixed upon your heart from morning to night. It must swallow up every thing else. If you will not come up to this, you may as well give up the struggle and conclude to lie down in everlasting sorrows. Sit down therefore and count the cost. If ease or pleasure or the world is so valuable that you cannot break from them and come up undividedly to this effort, why then you must die. It must be one or the other. Take your choice. The highest promise to you in the Bible is in these words: "Ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

This earnestness must be attended with a sincere desire to be delivered from sin, to be holy as God is holy, to serve and glorify him, and to find your heaven in communion with him. This implies sincere love to God.

2. It must be accompanied with true repentance,—with deep self-  
abhorrence,—with a broken heart,—with an actual turning from sin.

3. It must be marked with submission; not setting up your own will against the will of God, nor your own interest against the interest of God; not dictating to him, nor counselling him, nor urging him as loath: not thinking to take heaven by storm and to wrest it out of his hands whether he will or not, but saying continually, "Not my will but thine be done."

4. You must offer "the prayer of the destitute." You must renounce your own moral strength and cast yourselves for moral strength on the Spirit of God, deeply feeling your utter weakness and dependance. Had Gideon and David met their enemies in their own strength, they would not have prevailed; but when they went forth in the name of the Lord, "one" could "chase a thousand and two" could "put ten thousand to flight." You must sensibly feel that you deserve eternal death, and that the law is just in condemning you; that you have no righteousness of your own, no claim on God, no power to make atonement for a single sin, no power to purchase eternal life, no power to procure any favor from God, no hope but in sovereign mercy, no hope but in Jesus Christ; and you must cast yourselves on him as the only ground of pardon, as having purchased eternal life for his people by his obedience, as the "Heir" who has received the inheritance for the "joint heirs," as the manager and distributor of the whole estate, as the intercessor on high.

I wish to apply this subject solemnly to three descriptions of people.

1. To those who are opposed to any great earnestness or any uncommon movement in religion. You and the Saviour are fairly at

issue here. He exhorts to agonize and to take the kingdom of heaven by violence; you advise, Let there be no violence, no agony, but leave religion to occupy a leisure hour. And why is it more irrational to be in earnest about religion than about other things? In commercial and political concerns, men will compass sea and land; and why may they not show a little zeal for the salvation of the soul? In times of war the greatest exertions are deemed necessary; and is nothing needed but your sluggishness to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil? May everything else be sought with earnestness but the kingdom of heaven? Why is it worse to expose the constitution to the evening air for the worship of God, than on worldly business, or at the theatre, or at assemblies? For shame give up this objection or avow yourself an infidel.

2. To awakened sinners. "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where" will you "appear?" If the faith of christians is barely sufficient to overcome the world,—if they must take firm hold of the strength of God to triumph over principalities and powers,—if all their humility and grief for sin are hardly enough to cope with pride and a hard heart, how are you to prevail without any faith or repentance, and wholly relying on your own strength? If with half of their heart won over, and with all the moral strength derived from heaven, they find it hard to maintain the contest with the other half, what will you do against your whole heart and with no ally in heaven? Be it known to you, my unhappy hearers, that your present violence will never prevail. It has by some been compared to the ploughing and sowing of the husbandman; but there is no established constitution, (neither any covenant nor any uniform mode of divine operation,) according to which your efforts tend to salvation; and they will forever be in vain without a special interposition in your favor. You have never broken up "your fallow ground," but have sown "among thorns" or on a rock; and you have sown "thistles—instead of wheat and cockle instead of barley." From Genesis to Revelation there is not a promise to anything you have ever done. If God ever gives you a new heart, it will not be for one exertion you ever made, or in answer to a single prayer you ever offered. Not because you are not able, but because

you are so obstinately wicked. You are altogether in his hands. Your last hope hangs on his sovereign will. You lie wholly at the mercy of him whom you have made your enemy by wicked works. If he frown you die. Fall down at his feet till he shall raise and heal and bid you live.

3. If obstacles lie in the way to heaven which the awakened will never surmount, and which the righteous, with all their watchings and prayers, can scarcely transcend,—there is a question which comes down with the weight of a thousand worlds,—where will the stupid, prayerless sinners appear? Here are men shut up in a burning house: some break through the flames and with the greatest difficulty escape: what chance remains for those who are asleep in the upper stories? A number are confined to a burning city, environed with besieging armies: all the passages from the town are broken by dangerous moats and trenches: a few valiant hearts burst through the flames, break through the hostile ranks, leap the ditches and banks, and escape with their lives: others are asleep amidst the flames. What but inevitable destruction awaits these, unless they instantly awake, and with the strength of a giant and the activity of an angel, break their way through a thousand deaths?—Wretched men, you see the difficulties so great that many will seek to enter in and will not be able: when, where, and by whom then are you to be delivered? Do you think to surmount all these obstacles while you sleep? Go to the christian's closet and see his daily wrestlings: go with him into the world and observe his habitual watchfulness, kept up for thirty or forty years; and all to conquer those very difficulties which lie in the way of your salvation; while you have never made a motion. So many years have you lived in God's world, and now death is hastening on, and you have never yet begun your work, and still remain unconcerned as though you had nothing to do. Were you not blind you would see your heart full of idolatry and enmity against God; you would see earth and hell leagued against your salvation. And how are all these difficulties to be overcome? No man ever yet conquered them without strong and persevering exertions: when,



where, and by whom then are you to conquer? You have never yet roused to an anxious effort; how and when is victory to be achieved?

But the great deceiver tells you, it is easy to become religious at any time, and it will be enough to have a few hours' warning of death. But ask those who have tried, and they will all give you a different account. Ask your companions. As soon as one of their number made the attempt, unexpected difficulties started up before him. He was alarmed at their magnitude and number, and was driven to despair of success from himself, and confessed that if a long abused God did not pluck him from destruction, he must perish. And here you are dreaming of an easy work, sure to be accomplished before you die; but how or when you take little thought. What distraction to defer this work till a dying hour, in the confidence of being aided by him whom, under that hope, you are now abusing. And should he desert you then, think you that your poor, weak, wicked, dying nature would perform the mighty task alone?

But it is an easy thing to prepare for death. Well then try and see. If it is so easy it will cost you but little trouble; and surely heaven is worth a little trouble. And if it is so small a matter to make everything sure for eternity, what madness to run the risk of losing all by a sudden death or by the loss of reason. What folly to put it to a moment's hazard. On the contrary, if it is so difficult, it ought to be entered upon without delay.

Others say, I cannot change my own heart, and God does not see fit to change it; what can I do but wait his time? This you say to justify yourselves and to cast the blame on God. It is the plea of the slothful servant, "I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown and gathering where thou hast not strowed." But out of your own mouth shall you be judged. If God requires more than you can do, is that a reason why you should do nothing? why you should sin against him with all your might? Is this the way to conciliate a hard master who has you altogether in his power? But you do not believe this plea yourselves. If you did you would not be

so easy. Were you locked up in a burning house, and the key in the hands of a cruel master, we should not see you laughing and singing about the apartments, but agonized with terror. You need help from God,—but is this a reason why you should neglect to ask help of him? Can you hope that he will save you while you are buried in the world and refuse to pray? And when is your case to be better? Every day you are growing more hardened; every hour the chances against you are increasing; and here you are waiting for future conviction, as thousands did who are now in hell.

What is still more affecting in the case of all the careless, you are losing this inestimable season of grace. The Holy Ghost, in infinite kindness, has come down from heaven to invite you, and yet you trample the mercy under foot. You see others around you pressing into the kingdom of God, and you will not move a finger, but wait, like a stock, for God to move upon you. You see them taken from you and you are left as men abandoned of God. And yet you will not move. You are about to let a Saviour go, though in all probability it is the last time that he will pass this way in season to open your eyes. There is very little chance for you in stupid times; and after you have rejected the Holy Ghost through this revival, there is solemn reason to fear that you may not live to see another, or if you should, that you will be left like the heath in the desert. As this season leaves you so it is likely you will remain to eternity. O if you have any reason left, awake without delay and take the kingdom of heaven by violence. Have you resolved to perish let God and his people do what they will? If you throw this season away, I ask again, when do you expect to prepare for death? When? Must we take an eternal leave of you and see you forever lifting up your eyes in torments? This we have distressing reason to fear. You have resisted the tears of parents and the solemn exhortations of ministers. You have resisted all that heaven could do in a way of means. What hope then remains? O go not from this house till you have awoken to sleep no more, like those who are awoken by the last trump.

I have done my errand. And now, when the last trump shall sound, if we shall see you emerging from the grave stamped with the horrid emblems of the damned, and convulsed with horror at the prodigies of the opening judgment, blame not me,—blame not God. I call heaven and earth to witness that your blood will be upon your own head.

## **SERMON IX**

### **THE BAND WHICH TOOK CHRIST**

As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground. - JOHN 18:6

There is a use in selecting some specimens of the human heart and holding them up as a mirror in which all may see themselves. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." For though there are small constitutional diversities, and different degrees of restraint, and different degrees of ignorance and hardness, of prejudice and infatuation, the essential character of all is the same. All lions are lions and not lambs, though there are small diversities among them. Men are alike by nature in all the great characteristics. They do not love God; therefore they love themselves supremely; therefore they hate the God of the law. As sure as they are governed by motives, they must hate the God who stands over them and says, If you do not love me better than yourselves, I will dash the interests you so dearly love to all eternity. They are full of pride; and selfishness and pride, separately and jointly, produce unbelief. They are enslaved by sensible objects; and when hardened by habits of sin and a resistance of the calls of God, they are proof against every thing. I have selected the text, and the story of which it is a part, in order to exhibit a fair sample of the human heart,—of your heart under the same circumstances.

Judas, having made up his mind to betray his Master, went to "the chief priests and captains" and agreed to do it for a bribe. About these captains there are different opinions. Some suppose they were officers of the Roman band which guarded the temple at the time of the passover, which officers were selected from among the Jews; others think they were officers for constructing and repairing the buildings of the temple; others think they were priests whose particular office it was to apprehend those who transgressed in sacred things. From that time the traitor "sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude." He was at the passover after this, and went out between the passover and the supper, to make ready for the infamous expedition. After supper, and after Christ had uttered those memorable words in the 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th of John, he went out to the garden of Gethsemane, whither he had often resorted with his disciples. In the mean time Judas received "from the chief priests and pharisees" "a band of men and officers." In the tower of Antonia, at the northwest angle of the temple, a Roman garrison was kept, which, from its eminence, commanded the temple, and through that, the city. A detachment from that garrison, under Jewish officers, guarded the temple at the time of the passover. This detachment, or the greater part of it, constituting "a great multitude," some say 500, others 1,000, were committed to Judas, and accompanied by some of "the chief priests and captains of the temple and the elders." The band was made so strong and armed "with swords and staves," from an evident apprehension that "the multitude" might attempt a rescue. And though it was the time of the full moon, they went out "with lanterns and torches," determined, if he should hide himself, to search for him in every corner. How active and vigilant are the persecutors, while the disciples are asleep. "Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he, hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus and said, Hail, Master, and kissed him." Then "Jesus—went forth and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he.—As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground." They are seized with a

strange supernatural terror: they are thunderstruck and sink to the earth. Soldiers and officers, chief priests and elders, captains of the temple and the traitor Judas, all are prostrate together,—according to that prophetic prayer of David, "Let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt." This was a decisive proof of his divine power and that they were altogether in his hands. When he struck them down he could have struck them dead; when he spoke them to the ground he could have spoken them to hell. But he would manifest his patience towards his enemies by giving them a call and a space to repent; and he would show to all men that his life was not forced from him, but that he laid it down of himself.

When the prostrate army had recovered themselves, Jesus asked "them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth." Notwithstanding that overwhelming impression and all the proof it brought of his divine power, they immediately returned to their purpose, and with a hardiness that never quavered again, bound him and led him away to judgment and to execution. Had the impression remained they could not have done this; but when it was gone, not all the discoveries they had had of his power and majesty, could hold them back from the ensuing scene of mockery and torture.

This solemn piece of history gives rise to several reflections.

1. The power of Christ and the discoveries of him will bring down the stoutest sinner. It is no evidence that men are weak that they are thus affected. Those who fell in Gethsemane were among the stoutest and proudest minds in the Jewish nation. Among them were some of "the chief priests and captains of the temple and the elders," who probably knew that Jesus was the Messiah, and yet were intrepid enough to compass his death against all the miracles which surrounded it. Among them was the traitor Judas, whom John particularly notices as standing with them at that moment. It is no sign that men are credulous and superstitious, and predisposed to their impressions by a distempered imagination, that they sink under the power and discoveries of Christ. It cannot be pretended that

those who were prostrated in the garden were credulous, or in a temper to create a vision in proof of the Messiahship of him whom they had come to apprehend. Sometimes the greatest mockers and persecutors are suddenly brought down by these discoveries. Though it is generally true of mockers that their "bands" are "made strong," yet some of them are demolished to show the greatness of the power. Who were greater mockers and persecutors than those who "went backward and fell to the ground?" Who, than the dying thief?—Who, than the centurion and soldiers who enacted those dreadful scenes in the pretorium and at the cross, and were subdued before they left the spot? Who, than the spectators of the crucifixion, who had joined in the horrid mockery, but returned smiting their breasts, and were, many of them, probably converted at Pentecost? Who, than Saul of Tarsus?

You see them falling around you now. And why should they not tremble and be astonished? They are sinners condemned to eternal death; and they never can apply to the Saviour till they see their utter and helpless ruin. And when they see this, and before they have any interest or confidence in Christ, must they not tremble? must they not be in anguish? And what is it that distresses them? Nothing but this very conviction of their perishing need of a Saviour; nothing but a discovery of Bible truths. The Bible told us that the Spirit was sent out to convince the world of sin, and that in the latter day it would be poured upon all flesh. And this very prediction was quoted by Peter at Pentecost, to wipe off the reproach of disorder which even then had been cast upon the work of the Holy Ghost.

This prostration in the garden was a strong attestation of the power of Christ and of the justice of his claims. And that divine power which attends the Gospel, which the Bible predicted, and which suddenly brings down the stoutest sinners under an impression of Bible truths, and converts them from profligate to holy lives, and to which may manifestly be traced all the real goodness in our world, or that ever was in our world since the fall, is one of the strongest proofs of the christian religion.

2. There are hearts so obstinate that nothing will reclaim them. They may be brought down for a season with alarm and consternation, but cannot be subdued. This seemed to be the case with that audacious band. They could be brought to the earth under an awful impression of the power and majesty of Christ; but all that terror, and all that proof of his divine authority, could not subdue them or protect him against their violence. And there are those who have been brought up by pious parents, and were early and frequently called by the secret whispers of the Spirit, and have enjoyed all the means of grace from a child; who are suffered to live in revivals of religion, and see their friends and companions pressing into the kingdom of heaven, and are themselves entreated until they will bear it no longer; and yet nothing can avail. They do not feel, and they do not want to feel. They will not pray, they will not attend the special religious meetings, and are angry at God and his people. Some of them openly oppose religion and mock at the work of the Holy Spirit. Nothing that God or man can do in a way of means will bring them to their knees or to an hour of serious reflection. They are proof against everything. And though they sometimes look forward to future conversion, they are growing harder and harder every hour, and in all probability will die as they have lived, and take their portion with Judas and his invincible band.

Indeed it is true of all, that, left to themselves, they are capable of resisting every thing. In supreme selfishness there is a hardihood which requires nothing but the absence of restraint, and to have the eye of conscience blinded by ignorance, and the passions roused to an impetuous sweep, to present a wall of brass to every arrow of the Almighty, and to prevent men from being "persuaded though one rose from the dead."

This will appear more evident and less wonderful when it is considered that it is not the province of light essentially to improve a heart wholly opposed to the objects revealed. No motive is effectual unless it is addressed to a corresponding taste. An invitation to a feast is no motive to a man without an appetite,—to a man disgusted

with every viand prepared. All the light of eternity will not convert a devil. A view of God and his perfections and mercies and claims, is transforming to a partially holy heart; for there is something in that heart which can fall in with the motives: but no light cast upon God's character can bring the natural heart to love it. If it could, the natural heart is not totally depraved. If the more full explanations of the divine character present an object which the natural heart loves, what it hated before was not the true God, and its enmity was only a commendable aversion to an idol. But if it hates the true God, it will hate him the more the more he is seen, as surely as it is governed by motives. Light, so far from extinguishing the flame of rebellion, is only oil cast upon the fire. So it is in hell. The more God is seen the more raging is the enmity, because it is the real character of God they hate. So it is with convicted sinners. Their enmity was never so much inflamed before they came to have clear ideas of the God of the law. I have seen them ready to gnash with their teeth but a few hours or minutes before they began the immortal song.

It affords no relief to say that the instrumentality pleaded for is that of mere antecedent, and that it is the Spirit which really sanctifies. This is true, but it does not justify the calling of the light an instrument. The rod of Moses was an antecedent to the opening of the sea and of the rock, but it was not an instrument, in the sense in which fire is an instrument in dressing our food; because it had no influence according to the stated laws of nature. Where light is used in sanctifying a heart that had a previous temper to fall in with the motives, it may be truly called an instrument, as much as any successful motive addressed to a corresponding taste. But though light is of vital importance to the awakened sinner, to show him his duty, to show him the extent of his ruin, to show him, after his conversion, to whom he is indebted for his deliverance, and how much he owes his deliverer, yet it is not the instrument of changing the temper of his heart. That is done by the immediate power of God. By no stated connexion between second causes will the discovery of a hated object, (hated in its whole character,) produce love.



I have thus slid from my subject into the doctrine, that convicted sinners, so far from being improved by light, are roused by it to greater opposition. They sin also against greater knowledge and greater love, and every moment is adding new sins to the former catalogue. On all these accounts their sins are greatly increased. And O how has their guilt increased. There is not an awakened sinner in this house but hates God with all his heart. Notwithstanding all the wonders of Calvary,—notwithstanding this most gracious visit of the Holy Ghost,—he hates the Father, he rejects the Son, and he resists the Spirit. And he must be convinced of this unbounded wickedness, before he will see his total ruin and his perishing need of a Saviour.

We see then the invincible hardness of the carnal heart. No motives, no means can subdue it. All motives are wrapped up in light; and all means, (except prayer, and this the carnal heart does not use,) are comprehended in light and in the ways of carrying light to the mind. No motives, no means can essentially improve it. They may assist in regulating the passions under the present state of society, and in making some improvement in the habitual temper towards men; but they cannot bring the natural heart any nearer to holiness or to God. It stands immovable against all means and motives in earth and hell, and nothing but the almighty power of God can bring it down.

3. The strongest impressions may soon pass off and leave nothing but increased hardness and stupidity behind. Who would have thought, when that murderous band fell to the ground under an awful impression of the presence of Christ, that they would so soon rise up harder than before and renew their horrid purpose of dragging him to judgment and to death? The resistance of that heavenly call prepared them for anything. When they came to Gethsemane they were not too hard to sink to the earth before that awful presence; but they never quailed the second time. They were now screwed up to deeds of daring at which a devil might recoil. And the awakened here, who are now overwhelmed with the presence of the great and dreadful God; who feel crushed under mountains of guilt, and see hell naked before them and destruction without a

covering; who consider themselves as placed on their last trial, and dread the idea of returning back as they dread a plunge into the burning lake; even some of these, in a few days, may be stupid and mirthful and entertained as much as ever with the vanities of the world, and withdrawn from meetings, and neglecting prayer, and profaning sabbaths, and opposing the Bible, and scoffing at revivals, and sunk in vice, and sinking into the grave and hell as sottish and confirmed infidels. I expect nothing else but that some of them will obstinately hold out against all the calls of God until the Spirit leaves them forever. Some of them in all probability are on their last trial, and will sin away this awful crisis and be sealed over to eternal reprobation. I tremble for those who have been resisting the Spirit for several weeks. I tremble for those who are past the middle of life. Who can doubt that a return of these would be a return to hopeless destruction? How can we help watching them as we would a friend in the turning point of a dangerous fever, and trembling at every symptom of a relapse? It is insupportable to think of your going back. To what would you return? Do you now see the dreadful condition you have been in all your days? and would you go back to a condition far more guilty and hopeless? Do you now see the wrath which for many years has been struggling in the divine mind to burst upon you? and would you lie down under wrath heated seven-fold? Do you now tremble at the hidden dangers among which you have been sleeping secure? and would you go back to sleep among dangers ten-fold increased? What can any man propose to himself by going back but a miserable eternity, made still more miserable by these slighted calls? Your circumstances are amazingly critical. If you feel less than you did, I wonder you are not distracted with alarm. It looks like the first step towards a fatal return: and like the fruitless fig tree you may soon be cut down, and never live to see another revival: and should you see another, what reason have you to expect any yielding of a heart that cannot be brought down by all that is now passing before you and pressing upon your conscience? Or what can you hope for in a time of general stupidity? It is madness to look forward to any future conversion. You stand in the most awfully critical circumstances; and yet your stubborn heart still holds out

against God. One week passes after another, and you remain as you were,—the enemies of God,—hating those glories which angels love, trampling under foot the blood of Calvary, resisting the Holy Ghost, and doing all you can to provoke heaven to abandon you forever. You must not remain so another hour. With all this light upon you, it is infinitely hazardous to resist a moment. Your sin may become unpardonable. No tongue can describe your danger: and here you are waiting still, and thinking it enough if you do not go back. It will not do. You must submit before you leave your seats. A thousand dangers hang on a moment's delay. We are looking every instant for the heavenly dove to take wings and fly away. And when it is gone, I know that all the truths which have overwhelmed your conscience will not leave one impression on that rock in your breast.

And some of you will draw back in spite of every thing that can be said. The moment the heavenly influence is withdrawn, that Godhating heart will spring back like a stubborn bow loosed from its string. And then all these impressions will vanish like a footstep upon the face of the waters, and you may be prepared for any thing. That profligate band, after they had risen from their overwhelming impression, appear to have been foremost in the wickedest and most horrible transaction that ever appalled the universe. The soldiers seem to have been among those who mocked in the pretorium and aided in the crucifixion: and it cannot be doubted that "the chief priests and captains of the temple and the elders" who belonged to the band, were among the boisterous clamorers for the condemnation and the blasphemous scoffers at the cross, and probably among those who knew the high character of the victim. For all this they had become prepared by resisting that solemn call. O take care how you raise yourselves up to these infuriated acts of treason by rejecting the loud and special calls of God.

4. If there was so much power and majesty in the voice of Christ in one of his lowest acts of humiliation, what majesty and power will attend his voice when he shall come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels! If when resigning himself up to be dragged before a

human tribunal, he spread such awe around him, what awe will he throw upon three worlds when he shall come in the clouds of heaven to be himself the Judge. If when his enemies rushed upon him to take him, the grandeur of his nature was so much felt, how will it be felt when from his "face the earth and the heaven" shall flee "away and there" shall be "found no place for them." If a word from his lips in the dark hour of night, when his glory was veiled, was so overwhelming to his enemies, what will it be when he shall appear on his great white throne, encircled with the brightness of a thousand suns, and arrayed in all the terrors of the Godhead. If he could quell his enemies at his feet in Gethsemane how will he crush them beneath his eye when he shall sit on his seat of judgment, with all the authority of God on his lips and all the power of an avenging God in his hand; when "the great day of his wrath is come and" none "shall be able to stand." If only to say, "I am he," prostrated the most malignant and daring enemies that he ever had on earth, what will be the effect of that tremendous sentence, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Where is Judas now? Where are Caiaphas and Annas? Where are Herod and Pilate? And where are those among my hearers who preferred the world to Christ? who rose up to oppose the Gospel? who mocked at the operations of the Holy Ghost? Ah when you shall see your companions who fled to Christ in this revival, shining "forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," and filling all the arches of heaven with their bursting praise, and you yourselves cast out among devils; with what agonies will you remember this day as you pour upon the ear of hell the eternal lamentation, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!" How many thousand times will you wish that you had gone to hell before this revival; that you had been in hell while those sermons were preached, while those companions were pressing into the kingdom. My poor hearers, I shall meet you at that tribunal. Perhaps I shall know you under all the disguise of damnation. Perhaps I shall look in your face as you writhe in agony, and say, Why would you die? why did you not listen to those entreaties which used to burst from

breaking hearts? O what will be your thoughts then? what your deep and torturing musings upon the past? How bitterly will you lament your present folly,—the strange stupidity which now seals up your senses. I hear you cry, "For a few vapid pleasures I lost a deathless soul: I might have spent my eternity in yonder heaven, and now I sink in everlasting fire." Ah, my dear hearers, why should unbelief drag you down to this? You do not believe a word of all that I am saying, or you could not remain so stupid,—you would be convulsed with horror. But why will you not believe? Why will you not examine? Why will you hug infidelity as your protector against conscience? Why will you love "darkness rather than light because" your "deeds" are "evil?" Why will you refuse to come "to the light lest" your "deeds should be reprov'd?" If your unbelief could stop the approach of the judgment,—could disrobe Christ of his terrors,—it might avail; but now it is only marching up to the battery of the enemy with your eyes and ears closed. Can you have a particle of reason left? If you have why will you not exert it? Why will you die?. How long shall God command you in vain? shall Christ entreat you in vain? shall the Holy Spirit woo you in vain? How long shall parents, shall ministers, shall christian friends, beseech you and weep over you in vain? But if your purpose is unchangeable, go, and extract what you can from the creature, and break your parents' heart, and lie down in hell. Go and take your fill of damnation. But drag not down your companions with you. In mercy leave them to God and to heaven if you yourselves are resolved to take the plunge.

## **SERMON X**

### **THE FRUITLESS FIG TREE**

He spoke also this parable. A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of the vineyard, Behold,

these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none: cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down?" - LUKE 13:6–9

In this parable the vineyard represents the visible Church, and in a larger sense the world. The trees are the members of the visible Church, and in a larger sense mankind in general. The planter and owner of the vineyard is God. The dresser is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first idea suggested by the parable is, that men are placed in this world for no other end than to bring forth fruit to God. For what other end are fig trees planted in the vineyard but to bring forth fruit? You were not sent into the world to buy and sell and get gain. The only reason why you are here rather than not here, is, that you may have an opportunity to serve your Creator and Master.

Another idea suggested is, that God has an absolute right to all the services which men are capable of rendering. Shall not he that planted the vineyard eat the fruit thereof? Has not he who created the materials of which you were made, and then formed them into men, and breathed into them immortal souls; and created the world, and placed men in it, and owns it all; has he not a right to all the services which you can possibly render? Can you be justified in living to yourselves a single hour?

Another idea is, that to render his vineyard fruitful God has appointed one to dress it. This dresser, the Lord Jesus Christ, waters his trees with the dews of heaven, fences round them with his protecting providence, prunes them by affliction, and supports them when they are ready to fall, until he can lift his hand to heaven and say, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" He has made a full revelation of God and of a future state,—of man's duties, ruin, and recovery. He has given his word and ordinances; he has sent out his Spirit; he has filled the world

with expostulations and entreaties; until it can be said, If they hear not these, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

Another idea is, that God attentively watches men to see if they are fruitful. The owner of the vineyard is represented as coming year after year; that is, as often as fruit was to be expected. God attentively observes men as often as they have an opportunity to perform public or private worship, to hear a sermon, to drop a word of instruction, to relieve the poor, or to cast their gifts into his treasury. On such occasions he fixes his eye upon them as though they were the only objects of his attention. And as he is always expecting fruit, he always watches them. His eyes follow them into every corner. If a sinful deed is done in darkness,—if a vain word is uttered in secret,—if an unhallowed thought lurks in the heart,—lo he knoweth it altogether.

We are further taught that there are some trees in God's vineyard on which, when he comes year after year seeking fruit, he finds none. Every unregenerate man is of this description. Though his life may be regular towards his fellow men,—though he may observe the forms of devotion, and even transact with covenants and sacraments, yet as his heart is always under the dominion of selfishness, he never brings forth any fruit which a holy God can approve. There are many who not only do not bring forth good fruit, but are constantly bringing forth bad fruit. They profane the sabbath, they take the name of God in vain, they reproach religion and its professors, they are wholly buried up in the world. A hundred times a day they violate the rule to do to others as they would have others do to them. How certain that such do not answer the end for which they were sent into the world. If a figtree, that is good for nothing but its fruit, remains barren, it answers no part of the purpose for which it was planted. It is utterly useless. It cumpers the ground. It stands in the way and exhausts the soil. It is fit for nothing but to be cut down and cast into the fire. So those who do nothing for God are only an encumbrance on the face of the earth,—a grief to christians and a stumbling block

to sinners. Some of them, by their turbulent passions, keep the world in commotion, and all of them, by their vain and careless lives, spread a moral pestilence around them. And since they will not do any good, they are fit for nothing but to feed the flames which will enlighten the universe into the knowledge of divine justice. Unless they are made of some use in this way, their existence will prove a curse to the universe.

We are further taught that God, wearied out with coming year after year seeking fruit and finding none, at length raises his hand to cut the sinner down, and would send him quick into hell, but that the Mediator steps in and pleads, Father, spare him a little longer, and I will try some more powerful means for such a time: if he bears fruit, well; if not, then after that thou shalt cut him down. Now then the matter is fairly at issue. The trial is begun, in view of heaven and earth, which is to decide his destiny for eternity. It is to be for a limited time; after which, if he remains unfruitful, he will be destroyed without remedy. Awful crisis! Angels look down and tremble for the issue.

Here is one put upon his last trial whom Christ seeks to reclaim by affliction. He teaches him, as Gideon taught the men of Succoth, with briers and thorns. His affairs go wrong, or his health fails, or his friends die. This is the only means selected for the final experiment. If it succeeds, well; if not, he is irrecoverably lost.

Here is another put upon his last trial whom the Saviour seeks to render fruitful by more ample means of instruction and impression. He puts religious books into his hands. He stirs up christians to entreat him. He gives him more frequent opportunities to attend religious meetings. These are perhaps the only means chosen for the great experiment. If they avail, well; if not, he is forever lost.

Here is a third put upon his last trial to whom Christ presents the example of others pressing into the kingdom of heaven. He shows him a revival of religion, with all its solemn attestations and appeals.



If this brings him to stretch out his hands to a passing Saviour, the trial is happily ended; if not, his doom is unalterably fixed.

Here is a fourth put upon his last trial whom the Saviour plies with still more powerful means. He is awakened by the Spirit of God. His danger, guilt, and ruin are laid open before him. Perhaps he knows not what ails him, and little thinks that the Spirit of God is making the last decisive experiment upon him. How it will issue no man can tell. Many go back from every stage of conviction and plunge into a deeper hell. If all this light and entreaty can bring him to repentance, well; but if he can hold out against the calls of heaven a little longer, he will be left where an angel's voice could not break his slumbers. He will either be cut down like the figtree in the vineyard, or, like that by the way side, will be smitten with the curse of perpetual barrenness, and left to grow drier and drier to feed a fiercer flame.

Here is a fifth put upon his last trial on whom the Saviour employs all these means. He sends afflictions upon him, he multiplies the means of instruction and impression, he shows him others pressing into the kingdom of heaven, and he convinces him of sin. He seems determined to make one more thorough experiment upon him. If all this avails, well; if not, the wretch is lost for eternity. Infinite mercy, interpose and decide the matter favorably!

After the dresser of the vineyard has dug around the figtree and manured it, if it will not bear fruit then, what more can be done? It is proved to be incorrigibly barren, and is good for nothing but to feed the flames.

Let it be considered that the time of this last trial is short and precisely limited. The request was, "Let it alone this year." The probation was only during one season of fruit,—just long enough to make one more fair experiment. The moment is fixed in every case when the last trial shall end. That moment may arrive before another morning. And if the trial has continued for weeks, and especially if the persons exercised have struggled against the calls, or suffered

business or trifling cares to divert them, the evidence of their incorrigibility may be the sooner obtained, and the trial may be now near a close. God of mercy, compel them to seize the critical moment before it is forever too late!

And when the last trial is closed and their incorrigible barrenness is evinced, why should they not be cut down and cast into the fire? They never will bear fruit. They will only remain cumberers of the ground. Why should they be spared? It is reasonable that barren figtrees, after all hope of their fruitfulness is gone, should be removed out of the way, and, since they can be of no other use, should be made fuel for the fire. And if fruitless men had any ingenuousness in them, they would not desire to be left to cumber God's ground. If they will not do any good, they ought not to wish to do hurt.

There are exceptions to every general rule. Not all who have passed the last trial without effect are instantly cut down. Some are left to stand as dry trees with which no further cultivation is to be used. They are abandoned by the Spirit and left only to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath. So that in one sense they are in a more awful condition than though they were in hell. The reason of their being spared is distinctly stated in these tremendous words: "What if God, willing to show his wrath and make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." They are left to fill up the measure of their iniquity, that the power of God may appear in their more tremendous ruin. Awful thought! After God has held up the heavens for six thousand years,—as though nothing had been done, he has occasion to show his power by the blows he inflicts on his enemies.

It is not indeed every one who is distinctly called that is put upon his last trial. But the following are among the symptoms, though not infallible symptoms, that the experiment is final. If the man is advanced in years, there is great reason to think that the trial is the last. Few seem to be called in after the middle of life; and if at that

age a special call is rejected, there is little prospect of another. If the person has formerly lived in revivals of religion, and made a mock of them, or even neglected to improve them, it is likely that this is his last trial; that God, seeing so much evidence of incorrigibleness, had lifted his hand to cut him down, when the Intercessor stepped in and pleaded, Spare him one more season, and I will try another and a more decisive experiment upon him. If he bears fruit, well; if not, then after that thou shalt cut him down. If the person has formerly rejected many calls, and now at length is assailed by another more earnest than the rest, it is a symptom that it is the last. It looks as though Christ was determined to try once for all what could be done. Awful crisis! If when we stand over a friend in the turning point of a dangerous fever, and see nature struggling between death and life, we anxiously watch every symptom, how can we do otherwise in the present case?

I would now address myself, in the most solemn manner, to the different classes who have reason to think themselves on their last trial for eternity. But I feel utterly unable to reach the magnitude of the subject. I would fain come at your conscience and heart, but I know not how to bring the whole subject with me. Stretch all your powers to encompass it yourselves, while I only suggest a few imperfect hints.

Are there any present who have resisted the calls of God all their days, and are now exercised with affliction? Justice, wearied out by your long delay, had raised the sword to cut you down, when mercy pleaded you off for one more trial. Perhaps the new cultivation was to consist wholly of affliction,—how long or how heavy is yet to be determined. If your present sufferings are not sufficient, and good is intended for you, they will be increased. But if they finally fail of producing the effect, and this proves the last trial, you are eternally gone. Up and press into the kingdom of heaven before it is forever closed.

Are there any present under the special calls of the Spirit? Here my anxieties become intense. There is reason to apprehend that this is the last trial with you; that exhausted patience had raised the sword to cut you down, when compassion interposed and pleaded you off for one more season. After the word has gone out, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," can you expect another trial? This season is likely to be short, and it is precisely limited. It may end before the setting sun. And if it end unsuccessfully, and prove the last, you must either be speedily sent to hell, or be left to prepare for a heavier doom. How will this infinitely important season appear to you at the judgment of the great day? I beseech you to regard it with fear and trembling.

Are there any present who in former revivals were stupid and mockers, but are now awakened? Justice had raised the sword to cut you down, when mercy pleaded you off for one more trial. And have you not reason to think that this is the last? God has used his most powerful means with you, and what more can he do? And when all means fail, will not the proof of your incorrigible barrenness be obtained? And then that word may be fulfilled, "He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." O submit before you leave your seats.

Are there any present who were formerly awakened by the Spirit of God, but returned to stupidity, and are now awakened again? How few are thus favored the second time. And considering the many calls which you have received from the word and providence of God,—from parents and instructors,—can you reasonably expect another trial? Immortal creatures, it is too late to trifle with these infinite concerns. It is distraction to delay another moment.

I would next apply the subject to those who were formerly awakened, but cannot now be moved by all that is passing before their eyes. I am at a loss how to consider your case; whether to regard you as still under trial, and these means as sent to make one more experiment upon you, or to view you as abandoned of God and left only to fill up

the measure of your iniquity. While you remain stupid there is not a particle of evidence that you are not abandoned. And if you can continue thus through the present revival, the evidence will be great that this is your fearful condition. But if not abandoned already, there is every reason to think that this is your last trial. Sleep a little longer and your case will be unalterably fixed, and you must inevitably make your bed in hell.

I would next apply the subject to those who were unmoved in former revivals and remain unmoved in this. I have two things to say of your case. The first is, that you have had abundant outward means. The second is, that God is not obliged to send his Spirit when men reject his other calls. Should he close your probation to-day you could not complain. It is by no means certain therefore but that, months ago, he raised his hand to cut you down, and mercy pleaded you off for one final experiment. If so, and this fails, you will either be soon cut down or left to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath. For millions of worlds I would not be in your condition a single day. Where is your reason? Are you resolved to go out of the world sleeping? If so the pains of hell will awaken you to purpose.

I would next apply the subject to those who have lived along with an uncertain hope, without acknowledging Christ before the world, or taking a decided part for him, or bringing forth fruit. There is solemn reason to believe that all the calls of God and all the motions of his Spirit have received nothing from you but resistance. Dare any of you then conclude that this is not your last trial? Cast away that delusive hope, and lay yourselves down at the feet of Christ, and there die that you may be made alive.

I will next apply the subject to unfruitful professors. The Church is emphatically the vineyard of God, and you are pre-eminently barren trees in the vineyard. So many years has God come seeking fruit on you and found none. Justice long ago would have cut you down, but mercy pleaded you off for one more trial. There is reason to think that this is the last. And when all hope of your fruitfulness is gone,

God may say, Cut them down, why cumber they my ground? This stroke will be more likely to fall on you than on those who are out of the Church. The husbandman, though he lets dry trees stand awhile in his common field, will not long suffer them in the midst of his vineyard.

I will lastly apply the subject to all who are out of Christ and have not passed their last trial. By this gracious visitation you are all brought to a solemn crisis. There is reason to think that some of you in this season will pass your final trial; and all who remain unfruitful after this, will stand a greater chance for perdition than they ever did before. Could one of you think it strange if this should prove the last trial with you? Have you not had and misimproved as many means as you have reason to think the generality of men do before they are given over? If the trial has been upon you for some time, and you have remained stupid, the proof of your incorrigibleness may be the sooner obtained, and the trial may be now drawing to a close. I put this question to you in the name of God: Will you improve the present season and live, or will you run the dreadful hazard of throwing away the price now in your hands? Heaven and earth unite in crying to you, Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near. Not always will he be near; not always will he be to be found. When your doom is once sealed, then he will no longer be near. When you have shot the gulph, no hope will visit you more; no sabbath will dawn upon you there; no mercy-seat will send out its inviting voice; no season of prayer will ever return. How will you then look back upon these assemblies in the house of God? how to these gracious visitations of the Spirit, when your hands had almost hold of the threshold of heaven? How will it rend your hearts to hear him say, "Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh."—But I have done. My heart is ready to break, but it is nothing to what you will feel. For God himself has said, "If thou scornest thou alone shalt bear it." We

can now weep over you and almost die in your death; but then—you alone must bear it. Amen.

## SERMON XI

### HARVEST PAST AND BALM OF GILEAD

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt. I am black. Astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? - JER. 8:20–22

The Jewish prophets, born and educated among an agricultural people, borrowed many of the most striking images which adorn their writings from scenes of husbandry, and not unfrequently from the season and employments of harvest. By the latter figure is sometimes meant the proper season for activity in divine things: thus: "He that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." At other times is meant by it the end of the world, when the wheat shall be gathered into the garner and the tares burnt with unquenchable fire. In our text it may mean either or both of these. When the word summer is used metaphorically by the sacred writers, it always means the proper season to lay in provisions for a future day: thus: "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son." The first part of the text may therefore be paraphrased thus: The season to discharge the great duties of life is past, the time allotted to lay in provisions for futurity is ended, and we are not saved. Or if the text is supposed to look forward to the end of the world, then its meaning will be: The awful process of gathering the wheat and burning the tares is past: the concluding scene is closed: ended is the whole period allotted mankind to lay in provisions for eternity: the last chance is over, and we are not saved.

In the next verse the prophet takes up a tender lamentation over his unhappy people. In all the bitterness of heart-felt wo he exclaims, "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt. I am black: [either, I am clad in mourning, or, I walk in darkness.] Astonishment hath taken hold on me." Jeremiah was a man whose heart-strings seemed attuned to wo. "One would think," says Dr. South, "that every letter was written with a tear; that every word was the noise of a breaking heart; that the author was a man compacted of sorrows; disciplined to grief from his infancy; one who never breathed but in sighs nor spoke but in a groan."

Having thus vented his grief, he makes the tender inquiry, why need it be? "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" Gilead was the name of the country east of Jordan, which fell to Reuben and Gad and half of Manasseh. As early as the time of Jacob it was celebrated for a medicinal balm, known in commerce, and which in later ages furnished a figure to illustrate the healing virtue of the Gospel.

In further pursuing the text, I shall take its parts in an order somewhat inverted.

"For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt. I am black. Astonishment hath taken hold on me." Serious indeed must be the state of sinners, if a faint view of it can fill the pious heart with so much grief and astonishment. Extreme must be that ruin, a glimpse of which could cause the distressed prophet to cry, "O that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." Awful must be that wrath, a sight of which could press the blood through the pores of the agonized Saviour, and to deliver men from which he could come down from above all heights to the manger and the garden and the cross.



And why will they die? "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Why do wretched millions lie weltering in their blood? Why does a demolished world lie in ruins? Why do infatuated nations rush down together to eternal despair? Why must the benevolent cry over a dying world, as they did over wretched Moab: "O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer." "I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh.—My bowels shall sound like a harp for Moab, and my inward parts for Kirharesh?" Why do multitudes on every side swarm the road to ruin, and urge their impetuous course, and never slack till they plunge into eternal death? Is it because no remedy is provided? Not so: there is balm in Gilead and an able Physician there. God has not been wanting on his part. He can appeal to heaven and earth, "What could have been done more—that I have not done?"

The providing of this Physician and balm proved that men were sick. Aye, sick unto death in the whole head and heart. "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness." All is "wounds and bruises and putrifying sores." The disease has turned the brain and induced madness. Like many other maniacs, while deeply diseased, they fancy themselves in perfect health. They spurn the remedy, and account their best friends their greatest enemies for urging it upon them. They are constantly struggling to destroy themselves.

But "is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?" Yes, all the rivers flow with balm, and a Physician there is as powerful as God, who offers his healing aid "without money and without price."

When it became manifest that God must abandon his law or the human race or sacrifice his Son, he "spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all." By sufferings never endured by another, the Saviour fully answered the purpose of our punishment, and by his obedience he purchased for us all the positive blessings of both worlds. And now if we want pardon, his expiation and covenant-claim secure it. If we want sanctification as well as pardon, he is

exalted "to be a Prince and a Saviour,—to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." He is our Prophet to teach us; he is our king to rule, protect, and enrich us. He is "the first born among many brethren," the "Heir" under whom the "joint heirs" inherit. He "is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." He is our refuge from all the cares and ills of life. He supplies all our wants, and prevents all the evils we shun. In all respects he is just such a Saviour as we need. There is an infinite fulness in him. His willingness to save is equal to his power. When our astonished eyes follow him through the labors and sufferings of his life, we perceive, not only a willingness, but an unspeakable eagerness to save. We see none turned from his door, but find him, with untiring zeal and pity, seeking the lost sheep upon the mountains. If we go to his Gospel, and listen to the invitations and entreaties which there forever plead, or if we mark his providence, and see the warnings and long suffering there displayed, and the wooings of the Spirit, our impression will be the same. He is infinitely willing and able to save. There is indeed balm in Gilead and a Physician there.

"Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" The Physician himself has told us: "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." To this charge however sinners do not readily plead guilty. They often say, I would give all the world for an interest in Christ, but I cannot obtain it. While under strong apprehensions of future wrath, they may indeed consent to part with present comforts to purchase future safety; and knowing Christ to be the only Saviour, they may indirectly desire him, just as a sick man desires a disagreeable potion for the recovery of his health. But a direct desire after Christ, arising from a view of his loveliness and the glory of the Gospel, never dwelt in unsanctified souls. While the heart remains "enmity against God" and in love with sin, it cannot desire a way of salvation which lends all its influence to support the law and to condemn sin. But the particular reasons for refusing to come to Christ, are selfishness, pride, and unbelief. Selfishness takes the sinner's part and pleads not guilty to the charges of the law, and thus

denies the need of a Saviour. Pride cannot come down to the state of a criminal and to the feet of Christ, and sue for pardon on account of another. It clings to self-righteousness and makes demands on God, and when denied, rises in angry resentments against him; and then goes to work with greater earnestness, under the notion of offering a greater price. Selfishness and pride beget unbelief; and unbelief excludes a realizing sense of every thing,—of God, law, sin, the Saviour, the reality of his appointment, the sincerity of the invitation, and the truth of the promise. The fault is altogether with the sinner. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." His blood therefore must be upon his own head. If he mourns at the last when his flesh and his body are consumed, he must pour upon the ear of hell the eternal complaint, "How have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof." "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

In contemplating these affecting words, the impression comes over us that the present life is the season to perform all our duties to God and man, and to lay in all our provisions for eternity. The great errand on which we came into the world, was to do the work of God and to prepare to leave it. Of how little value are all the pleasures and profits of this life viewed in any other light than as related to eternity. The idols which we most fondly infold in our arms, will soon be torn from our embrace and crumble into dust. Tekel is inscribed on all the charms of a world groaning under the curse of Adam's God. This state was intended for a higher end than that of present enjoyment. It was designed for a school in which to learn lessons of God, of his government and works,—of Christ and the wonders of grace,—to catch the spirit of heaven, to become inured to obedience, and trained to the employments of the heavenly world. The comforts of earth are bestowed, not so much for their own intrinsic value, as for helps to further us on our way to heaven. That comfort which does not answer this purpose, ceases to be a blessing, and fails of the end for which it was bestowed.

What ought deeply to impress us is, that this golden season will soon be closed. The summer of life will soon flit away like the evanescent shades of night, and the vision of our worldly hopes and calculations will burst like a morning dream. The joys which we inherit below the sun will in succession soon forsake us, or we shall at once take our leave of them. And even though we outlive all our comforts, and for a few days longer water this vale with our tears, yet the end of our pilgrimage will come; a joyful event which will lay to rest many a weary soul,—a dreadful event which will be to many but the beginning of sorrow. Not a person in all those seats, however young, but must soon become a breathless lump of clay, and have done with all the busy scenes of life, with the means of grace, and with a preparation for a never ending eternity. Our convenient habitations must soon be exchanged for the dark and narrow house, our dearest friends for the company of worms, and our downy pillows for the cold clods of the valley. The places which now know us will know us no more forever. We shall become strangers in our father's house. A new generation will arise to occupy our seats. A few surviving relatives may for a time remember that we lived; but those few will soon follow us to the land of silence. We shall no longer be missed. Our names will be forgotten on earth. Strangers will walk over our graves without knowing that we ever had existence. The world will not be changed by our departure. Seasons will revolve and the sun will arise and set as usual. Mirth and diversion will be as brisk as ever. No one on earth will care for our joys or sorrows, while we shall be either spreading our pinions in the regions of immortal day and skimming the air of paradise, or—or—how shall I express it?—or be tossing on the fiery billows of the wrath of an infinite God, where all the millions of ruined sinners will roar forth the eternal complaint, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

O let our excited souls approach and see a wretched sinner looking back to a misspent life with this dismal lamentation upon his tongue. Enter his gloomy chamber, ye who have nerves to endure the sight. Look through the mournful curtains, if room can be found among the weeping friends. See the writhings of his agony. Mark the wild

despair of his glaring eye. His quivering lips attempt to speak. "O earth, earth, earth, open and receive a wretch, who is called to appear before an angry God, and who dares not, cannot go. O eternity, eternity, who can enter thee when thou art filled with fire? O life, how hast thou been spent?" A convulsion stops his voice. Support that sinking mother and that fainting sister. His cries are heard again. "A thousand worlds for one more year,—for one more day. O my soul, what will become of thee? And must I go? I cannot. And yet I must. I cannot. But O there is no reprieve, and plunge I must, this moment, into eternal burnings." What spectacle so awful this side of the regions of the damned? My flesh trembles, and my spirit cries "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

Or if we understand by the harvest the end of the world, how dreadful will be the condition of those who will then have this lamentation to make.

The process of the general judgment will be so awfully interesting as to awaken the strongest emotions of three worlds. To see the judge descend with ten thousand of his saints,—the sepulchres of many generations broken open,—columns of rising dead filling all the air, some with shrieks and some with hallelujahs on their tongues,—some surrounded with the glories of the sun, and others stamped with the horrid emblems of the damned,—the earth and the heavens on fire,—all the works of God in confusion and uproar,—the universe disjointed and falling to ruins,—the spirits in heaven descending with songs to judgment,—the affrighted ghosts of hell coming out of their prison convulsed with horror; to hear saints and angels shouting their triumphs and thanksgivings, and devils and damned men uttering their most piteous shrieks of wo and vomiting out their raging blasphemies; O this will be an awful day! And when the moment comes for the two armies to separate to different worlds, will you not desire to ascend with the righteous? Can your heart endure to be torn from your godly relatives, and as you turn to enter the regions of night, to say, "Farewell, my father, mother, wife, and

children. Farewell ye worlds of light,—ye joys which once I knew. And hail, ye haunts of devils and ye regions of the damned. Ye alone are left me of all that this universe contains; and never, never shall I have more?" Ye deathless souls, in the name of the eternal God I charge you not to have, in that day, this lamentation to make.

From the heights of these sublime and awful wonders, I descend to earth to cry in the ears of my beloved hearers, Prepare for the great and terrible day of the Lord.—As life in general is a harvest season, certain portions of it are so in a peculiar sense.

1. Such is the period of youth. If provisions are made for eternity, it is many to one that they will be made before this season passes off. It is generally thought that by far the greater part of the elect are called in under the age of twenty. So strongly fixed are the associations which are formed in early life, and the habits which are founded on those associations, that the character is generally settled for both worlds before the days of manhood. One of the commonest and most subtle of Satan's temptations is to persuade youth to postpone religion till future life, and to encourage them to hope that little hazard will be incurred by the delay; but never was a greater falsehood uttered by the father of lies. Yet it is his constant resort, and the most successful of all his devices. He knows if he can prevail in this, he is likely to prevail finally, and therefore he bends his chief attention to this point: and silly youth, unwarned by the millions thus seduced to ruin, believe and follow him, "as the ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks."

My dear young friends, the present is the harvest season of your lives. Could you realize its unspeakable importance, you would not let it pass unimproved. O devote yourselves to early piety. Fulfil the joy of your pious parents, and dry up those tears which have often flowed for you in secret, by remembering your Creator in the days of your youth. Let not the almond tree blossom on your heads before He who dwelt between the cherubims has taken up his abode in your hearts. When "the evil days" of age shall "come" and "the years draw

nigh" in which you shall "say, I have no pleasure in them," may not your dim eyes be then drenched in tears while looking back on misspent youth, nor your hearts surcharged already with sufficient sorrow, be forced to heave the unavailing sigh, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

2. Such also is the season of a revival of religion. "Think not to say within yourselves," We are not awakened, and therefore it is no harvest season to us. As well might the sleeper in the time of the natural harvest say, It is no harvest season to me because I refuse to work. It is a harvest season to him, and he must answer for it. To the veriest sleeper the harvest offers the most favorable season for successful labor, and the summer, the best season to lay in provisions for winter. Such a season is now afforded you all. A faithful attendance on means, or even one solemn effort to think or pray, may now be attended with effects far greater than at other times. The Spirit is now offered to all, and stands ready to assist the beginning of every humble and earnest effort. The chances are far greater than at other times for every one in particular that he will fill his granary with immortal fruits. Your chances for conversion in stupid times are very small. Two or three in an ordinary congregation in the course of a year, are as many as can be expected. But what are these to the number of births within the same bounds of time? If you are to be saved there are many chances to one that you will be converted in a revival. But when if not in this? If you ever live to see another, it will find you older and a less probable subject; it will find you harder and less likely to be subdued; it will find you laden with the guilt of rejecting this call, and therefore less likely to be approached by the Spirit, and perhaps sealed over to hardness of heart. The abuse of this harvest season will involve infinitely more guilt and danger than you imagine. It is the highest reach of madness to neglect another hour to press into the kingdom of God. O that that voice from heaven might be heard again, bearing upon you with boundless authority and love, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." God forbid that any of you should throw away so infinitely important an opportunity to make

your fortune for eternity, and have a few months hence, to cry, with regrets which come too late, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

3. Such, in a very special sense, is the season with a sinner when the Spirit of God is moving upon his mind. This affords advantages and imposes obligations beyond all others. It is the Spirit rousing a soul from sleep and convincing him of his guilt and ruin and helplessness, and bringing home to his conscience the general truths of the Bible, and whispering in his ear a particular invitation to come home to a Saviour's arms. It is the Spirit preparing the way for him to come to a Saviour's feet with a distinct understanding of his necessities and of what he owes to his Deliverer; so that, if he has a mind to believe, nothing shall stand in the way of an enlightened faith. It is the Spirit coming near and offering his own assistance to carry the man through to heaven if he will only cast himself on him. It is putting salvation more immediately within his reach. It is bringing all the discoveries and truths of God nearer to him, and into contact with the sensibilities of his soul, and making their authority and claims to bear upon him directly and most powerfully. It is bringing him near to the kingdom of heaven, and opening the door, and showing him the Saviour within, and urging him to enter, and pressing him from behind with all the authority in the universe and with all the boundless force of truth. Is not such a moment of all others the harvest season of the soul? Is it not the time to act for God if ever there is a time? Is it not of all periods the summer to lay in provisions for eternity? There is an importance and a sacredness hanging around this moment which belong to no other,—a weight of obligation which can scarcely be increased. Under all these circumstances is it not the great crisis to act and to provide for eternity? What tremendous guilt and hazard if this moment is abused,—if, right in the eye and ear of God, there is a refusal to act. My immortal friends, I cannot hold my peace. In the midst of this awful crisis, and environed with all these solemn obligations, here you are holding out against God. Instead of falling dissolved at his feet under mercies so wonderful and distinguishing, you are fighting



against him,—you are hating him;—you never loved nor thanked him; you are rejecting the Saviour and putting your own duties in the room of his atonement and righteousness and intercession; you are rejecting the Spirit and putting your own power in the room of his proffered assistance; you are disobeying the Spirit and refusing to do any thing that he suggests except the outward form, and are taking strong measures to grieve him from you forever. You are wrong in every thing and do nothing right. How long shall this abominable state of heart continue? How long shall this horrid ingratitude remain? O that you knew, in this your day, the things which belong to your peace, before they are hidden from your eyes. Why should you hold out against God another moment? He commands you, O rebel, now to lay down your arms. Will you obey God and live, or will you disobey him and die? I wait for your reply. What answer shall I carry back to him that sent me? All heaven is waiting to hear; what is your answer? Shall I come around among those seats and ask you one by one, what is your decision? Have you made up your mind? Why this delay? Ah and you will delay; and some of you, I fear, will go back to seven fold darkness,—to infidelity itself,—to open vice,—to an early grave,—to a hell lower than that of pagans,—than that of devils. How distressing to think that any of you should turn this affecting grace of God into an eternal curse; that you should have to look back from the profoundest deeps of hell to this blessed season, and pour forth the heart-rending and perpetual lamentation, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Before I conclude I must address a few words to the impenitent in general. When I consider the infinite and eternal evils into which you are plunging, "for the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt." To think of seeing you eternally crying for a drop of water, is more than I can bear. And why will you die? Why need you die? "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Is there no mercy in the heart of God? "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." If there is any sincerity in the God of truth, your blood must be upon your own head. You are deliberately committing the highest

and most flagitious act of suicide. Stop, I beseech you, that murderous hand. Have mercy on your own soul. When you shall see your former companions in heaven, who fled to Christ in this revival, and you yourselves eternally cast out, what agonies of regret will fill your soul. Then we can no longer pray for you nor pray to you. We must acquiesce in your damnation, and say, Alleluiah, as the smoke of your torment ascendeth up forever and ever. But at present the thought is very afflicting. How does it seem to you? Would you for ten thousand worlds be found at last in the circumstances which have been described? I can say no more; and "if ye will not hear,—my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and my eye shall weep sore and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive" to that land from which there is no return. Amen.

## **SERMON XII**

WHAT WILT THOU SAY WHEN HE SHALL PUNISH THEE?

What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee? -JER. 13:21

The time had come when God was about to call the Jewish nation to an awful account. While the storm of war was gathering in the north, and had almost rolled itself to their door, the distressed prophet was sent to say to them, "Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will fill all the inhabitants of this land—with drunkenness, and I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together.—I will not pity nor spare nor have mercy." This holy man, who was disciplined to grief from his infancy, whose tones seemed always the sounds of a breaking heart, set himself to mourn over them and entreat them. "Hear ye and give ear; be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken.—But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your

pride; and my eye shall weep sore and run down with tears." He then puts this penetrating question: "What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee?"—After all he turns away discouraged, and cries, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil."

The same question may be put to sinners in every age and place. God has solemnly declared that he will punish the wicked with everlasting destruction. And when he shall summon you to his bar, and explain the grounds of his conduct, and with the approbation of every conscience in the universe banish you to your eternal prison, what will you then say, poor, ruined sinner? What reason can you offer why sentence should not be executed upon you? What can you allege against the justice of your doom? To this question I must insist on an unwavering answer. And to enable you to meet it with clearness and precision, I will,

I. Lead you to reflect on that change of circumstances which will be favorable to a correct judgment.

II. Examine the several pleas which may be supposed then to offer themselves to your thoughts.

I. I will lead you to reflect on that change of circumstances which will be favorable to a correct judgment.

All that infidelity which now blinds your minds will then be done away. You will see that there is a God, as you now see that your parents and children exist. You will see that God was your Creator, Proprietor, and Master, who put you into his world and supported you in it that you might labor for him; that he put you under law and commanded you to serve him; that all your sins and all the idolatry of living to yourselves were a gross contempt of his authority. When "the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll" "and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," then you will see the majesty of that God against whom you dared to rebel. When the Son of God shall

descend with his innumerable retinue, and arraign three worlds before his bar, and the destiny of all creatures shall tremble on his lips; then will you see the dignity of him who descended to the manger and the sepulchre for you: then will you see the infinite evil which your sins wrought on Calvary, and the amazing exhibition there made of their horrid deformity. When "the books" shall be "opened" which contain an account of all your talents, a record of all your sins, an explanation of all the dealings of God with you, a justification of all his requirements, of all his dispensations;—the books, in short, which shall make a full "revelation of the righteous judgment of God;" then will you see that you have sinned against a God of infinite rectitude as well as infinite majesty, that your sins were unspeakably more numerous, as well as more aggravated, than you ever supposed. When eternity shall be laid open to your view, in all the glories of heaven and in all the horrors of hell; when, looking through the universe, you shall see the infinite and eternal interests which the law of God was appointed to protect, and against which your sins have waged an eternal war; when you shall thus see the infinite malignity of sin, its raging hostility against the whole creation, its deadly struggle against the throne, the happiness, the life of God, against the unspeakable blessedness and glory of unnumbered minds then just beginning their eternal progression; when you shall thus see yourselves to be implacable conspirators against all that is blessed and glorious in the universe; then will you form a correct judgment of your ill deserts. There will be no unbelief, no stupidity then. All things will be real, amazing, overwhelming. No object to divert attention, none to excite false hopes, no chance to cover yourselves with hollow excuses. Your minds will be strung up to the highest action; your thoughts will dart through eternity. Every thing will burst upon you marked with eternity and infinity. In every thing you will have a personal interest, deeper than the soul of man can now conceive. Who can describe the emotions of that day?

II. Let us now examine the several pleas which may be supposed to offer themselves to your thoughts.

Will you say that you meant no evil, or no evil great enough to deserve eternal death? But it will appear that your selfish heart followed your idols to the neglect of God,—did not love God, but was opposed to his holy character and precepts, and had in it a preparation to hate him with all the malignity of a fiend as soon as your interest should be sufficiently assailed. It will appear that your unbelief gave the lie to his word; that your disingenuous heart refused to thank him for all his infinite mercies; that you excluded the universe from your affections, and followed, as well in your placid as in your turbulent hours, wherever your own apparent interest led the way; that you made yourself your god.

Will you say that your sins have done no great evil, as God was present to prevent their effects? This goes to deny the right of God to punish any sin, and sweeps away at once every vestige of a moral government. What sin is there in the universe which he does not limit, and out of which he does not educe good? And if he makes "the wrath of man" to "praise" him and restrains the remainder, is he therefore deprived of the right of punishing, when it is partly by that very punishment that "the wrath of man" is made to "praise" him? If an enemy discharges a pistol at your breast, and opens an abscess which saves your life, is he the less criminal on that account? But your sins have wrought evils immeasurable. They caused the death of the Son of God. They have perhaps contributed to plunge many into hell.

Will you say that you sinned but a little while, and that there is no proportion between temporary transgression and eternal punishment? Tell me another thing. How long must a man commit murder, to deserve to lose forever his natural life? Cannot a person entail on others lasting misery by a momentary act? By the midnight torch can he not in one hour cast a family naked upon the world for life? And if the wickedness of an hour can fix lasting misery, on whom should that misery fall rather than on the culprit himself? Sin has applied its torch to the kingdom and throne of God, and sought to destroy in one hour an infinite and endless good: and shall its

punishment be limited by the time taken up in sinning? or shall it be measured by the duration of the good sought to be destroyed?

Will you say that you sinned in a finite nature, and cannot deserve an infinite punishment? But you sinned against an infinite God: you sought to destroy an infinite good. And while your punishment, in every stage of it, is finite in degree, to comport with your finite nature, it ought to be infinite in duration, to comport with the dignity of the Being and the worth of the good you sought to destroy.

Will you plead that you were no worse than others? And what of that? Can the rebellion of others justify yours? Did God allow you to go with the multitude to do evil? Did not his law insulate you and bind its authority upon you as an individual? The obligation was not a company concern; and the failure of others ought not to have produced a failure in you. What is Judas the better for the sin of Cain or of Satan?

Will you say that you were beset with strong temptations? But the temptations were purposely appointed for the trial of your obedience. They were an experiment to test the temper of your heart. Without a temptation it could not have appeared by any outward act whether you loved God or idols most. Temptations did not make your heart what it was; they only brought it out to view. Had your heart been right with God, they would have made no more impression upon it than they did upon our Saviour in the wilderness. Your own depravity gave them all their power.

Will you say, in vindication of your errors of doctrine, that others, wiser than you, betrayed you into them? But what right had you to believe fallible men when you had the word of God in your hands? In whom did God command you to trust, in himself or in blinded worms? But you say, they interpreted Scripture for you and made you think that their errors were supported by the Bible. Aye, had your heart been in love with truth, that truth lay so plain on the

sacred page, that, with diligent attention to the Scriptures, it could not have been mistaken under any disguise.

Will you plead that you had many good desires and did many good actions? And what of that? Will the good actions of a murderer exempt him from execution? Will the payment of a new debt extinguish the old score? Was there any thing more than was due for the time being in any of your good desires or works? But what if it shall appear that in God's account you never had a good desire nor performed a good action? What if it shall appear that all your desires were selfish, or at best the motions of natural and neutral affections, and that all your actions had no higher character, being prompted by no higher motives? What if it shall appear that your "plowing" was "sin," and that your very "sacrifices" were "an abomination to the Lord?" And all this will appear against every unregenerate man.

Will you say that you did not know God? But "the heavens" declared "the glory of God, and the firmament" showed "his handy work." God stood expressed before you in all his works, but more gloriously in his word. Why then did you not know him? Because you believed not, and "the god of this world" had "blinded" your "minds." But did you never read that "he that believeth not shall be damned?"

Will you say that the Holy Spirit never strove with you? What then made you so often solemn in your childhood? What forced you into the secret corner to pray? What, in maturer years, pressed you with eternal realities when you stood by the grave of a departed friend, or sat under a soul-searching sermon? Was it less the Spirit of God because he wrought by means? By means he generally works. Ah, had you listened to his voice, had you cherished his suggestions, you would not have been in this condition now.

Will you say that christians and ministers did not warn you? Say not that again. We are witnesses that they have often wept over you and pleaded in your ears with a bleeding heart: but nothing could move the dead. You know not how many tears they have shed for you in

secret. But you would neither weep nor hear. O if they could have prevailed, how eagerly would they have snatched you from destruction. But they could not prevail, and you have come to this.

Will you come out at last and boldly charge the blame upon God? Will you say that you received your evil nature from him,—that he gave you passions and appetites which betrayed you? Here I cannot hold my peace. Is infinite rectitude to be thus assailed? All as false as perdition. "This only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." In his great bounty he gave you appetites, that you might relish creature good. But did the power of relishing bind you to turn the creatures into idols? This was because you loved not God. Passions he gave you, but not such passions as would lead you astray. These sprung up from the selfishness of your hearts. Supreme regard to your own gratification changed every relish into an ungovernable appetite,—every desire into a domineering passion,—every thing loved into an idol. Whatever in your nature was more infirm than creatures necessarily possess, grew out of that supreme self-love. That, and not God, was the cause of all: and for that you alone were to blame.

Will you plead that you could not love God, that you could not repent and believe, that you could not change your own heart? All this is saying that you had a heart so desperately wicked that it would yield to no motives. But in such a temper lay your whole guilt. It could lie no where else. Your words and actions were no further sinful than as they were dictated by such a heart. Separate from the heart they had no moral nature. If the wickedness of your heart is excused, all sin is excused. If this is not worthy of punishment, nothing is worthy. If this is not an evil deserving of God's displeasure, there is no moral evil, there can be none, and no creature can possibly be formed capable of sinning. If then God may not punish you for the evil temper of your heart, he can no longer exercise a moral government.

Will you say that you were excluded by God's foreknowledge and decree? But pray, if God foresaw that you would reject the Gospel,



how did that compel you to reject the Gospel? He foresaw that you would do it freely and of your own accord, and you did it as freely as though it had not been foreknown. And as to a decree, he never decreed to compel you to reject the Gospel; he only decreed to let you alone. And if he may not punish those whose wickedness he foresaw, and whom he determined to leave to themselves, he must either cease to foreknow or foredetermine, and thus cease to be God, or renounce all right to punish, and thus give up his moral government.

Will you say, It is hard for a creature to be brought into existence without his own consent, and then be made eternally miserable? "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" If God may not create intelligent beings without their consent, he may not create them at all. And if he may not punish the wicked after he has created them, he may not exercise a moral government. All those pleas which go to deny the right of God to maintain a moral government over his creation, must be false, presumptuous, and at open war with him.

Will you say, Why did he suffer me to sin? But was God obliged to fix and proclaim the principle that no creature should ever be suffered to sin? Had there been no sin there could have been no punishment; and if no punishment, the penalty of the law could never have been executed. And if God had given out that the penalty of the law was never to be executed, the penalty would have been annihilated and the law turned into mere advice, and the whole machinery of a moral government would have been dissolved. Or take the subject in another view. Was God obliged to forego all the illustrations of his character, and all the increased happiness of the universe, which have resulted from the existence of sin? Had not the great Proprietor of all things the best right to determine how far to restrain and how far to leave his own creatures? And could not infinite wisdom judge as well as you? "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"

Will you say that there is no need of so much severity; that God could have made the universe happy without your destruction? And have you an eye that can look through eternity and infinity and judge better than God? Can you teach him what is necessary for the public good? He has settled it, with all his infinite wisdom and benevolence, that your destruction was necessary to the general happiness. Until you become wiser than God, and have detected him in a mistake, never use that plea again.

Abandoning all these horrible charges, will you at last cast yourselves down and say, I cannot bear it? Ah, you should have thought of this in season, when you were going on unconcerned in sin, and turning a deaf ear to all the warnings and entreaties of God; when all heaven and earth could not rouse you to a serious thought. Poor soul, I know you cannot bear it: and why did you not think of this before? But if you cannot bear it, neither can God bear to give up the order of the universe for you. He once pitied you and labored to save you, by means which have filled all heaven with astonishment and the Church on earth with tears. But now "he that made" you "will not have mercy on" you, "and he that formed" you "will show" you "no favor."

What more will you say? I insist again on an unwavering answer. Come, bring up your mind to a point and tell me, What more will you say? Ah, you will be "speechless." "Every mouth" will "be stopped, and all the world" will "become guilty before God." You will clearly see that you deserve nothing better than eternal fire and everlasting contempt. And when you see things in this light, what mountains of guilt will crush you down. If you had committed murder and felt that you deserved to die, what an amazing pressure of guilt would sink you to the earth. What then when you feel in your inmost soul that you deserve everlasting burnings? Ah, it will be an awful day. No language nor imagination can reach the tremendous reality. Why will you not think of it in season? Why will you not fall down at the feet of Christ and cast your poor, sinking souls on him? On him was laid the weight of all your guilt, if you will but flee to him with a bleeding and

believing heart. O come. "Why will" you "die?" Why need you die? There is plenty of "balm in Gilead," "without money and without price." Why will you not make it your own? After all the terrible views we have taken, there is no need that you should perish. You are reprieved for a season that a full and free offer of pardon might be made you. It is most sincerely made. With all your tremendous guilt, you shall be as welcome to mercy as the least sinner on earth. There is no malice in God. There was pity enough in him to send his only begotten Son to die for you. He is in earnest in making you the offer. It is not merely made to others in your hearing: he means you. There is nothing in the way of his receiving you,—nothing in the law, nothing in your guilt,—if you will only return. Come, for "all things are ready." God is ready; Christ is ready; the Holy Ghost is ready. Angels, and "the spirits of just men made perfect," stand ready to catch the joy and circulate it through all heaven. Are you ready? O come.

## **SERMON XIII**

### **THE STRAIT GATE**

Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in and shall not be able. - LUKE 13:24

It is a matter of unspeakable joy that while devils are left without hope, a way is opened for self-ruined man to pass from the deepest pollution to spotless purity,—from the lowest depths of guilt and wretchedness to everlasting happiness and glory. It becomes us with gratitude to raise our heads from pillows of despair wet with tears, to inquire after this glorious way of escape. It is said that Christ is "the way,—the truth, and the life;" but when we read that "strait is the gate and narrow is the way," this is not to be understood of the Author of salvation, but of the conditions of life. Christ is not a

narrow way, but wide enough for a whole world to go abreast. But the course of holiness, self-denial, and conflict, through which we must pass, this is a strait and narrow way. The gate intended is not regeneration, but the whole course of labor and watchfulness through which we must enter into the kingdom of heaven.

In regard to the term strait, there are two English words thus pronounced, though very different in their form and signification. One is opposed to crooked; the other, which is here used, signifies narrow and difficult, which is also the meaning of the Greek word employed in the passage. The text therefore may be paraphrased thus: Strive, (or agonize, as the original word imports,) to enter in at the narrow and difficult gate; for many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able.

My first inquiry is, In what respects is the way to heaven narrow and difficult? It is difficult as it is obstructed by all the corruptions of the heart and all the appetites of the flesh. Every step is in direct opposition to the whole current of depraved nature. It is difficult as it is overspread with briars and thorns. "Through much tribulation" we must "enter into the kingdom of God." Indwelling sin causes much trouble, and gives frequent occasion for the application of a Father's rod. It is difficult as it is beset with spiritual foes. A world full of temptations, and two worlds full of tempters, do all they can to render the way impassable.

It is narrow as regards the matter of duty. The world are more loose in their ideas of holy-living, and contemn as superstitious that precision which christians observe. In numberless instances they think that if they believe or act so and so it is well, and if in a contrary way it is no matter. But the Scriptures represent the course of duty as a narrow line between two extremes, the least variation from which brings one upon forbidden ground. Take for instance the following examples. On the narrow line lies a righteous liberality to the poor; near this on one side lies unfeeling parsimony, and on the other, a kind of charitable dissipation. On the narrow line lies a holy

economy in the management of our temporal affairs; near this on one side lies indolent neglect, and on the other, that "covetousness which is idolatry." On the narrow line lies a virtuous wish to live peaceably with all men; near this on one side lies a proud independent spirit which is too willing to give offence, and on the other, that time serving temper which loves "the praise of man more than the praise of God." A modest deference for the opinions of superiors is the narrow line; the extremes are, self-willed assurance on the one hand, and on the other, that implicit reliance on others which shuns the labor of searching and deciding for one's self. There is a Gospel charity which, in regard to the character of others, "hopeth all things;" the extremes are, a censorious spirit on the one hand, and on the other, that licentious liberality which equally embraces infidels and believers. A holy fear of God is on the narrow line; on one side of which lies a disgusting familiarity, and on the other, a slavish dread. A proper dependance on the mediation of Christ is the narrow line; the extremes are, on the one hand, a dependance on works, and on the other, that exclusive dependance on Christ which dispenses with personal holiness. On the narrow line lies a suitable dependance on the divine Spirit for light and life; near this, on one side, lies a proud reliance on our own powers, and on the other, that exclusive dependance on the Spirit which sets aside the use of our own faculties. Now in all these and many other cases, the line of duty between the two extremes is very narrow, and the least variation from it is sin.

I do not say that the way to heaven is as narrow as the line of duty. Wo to us if it were. But in comparison with the highway of open sin, and even with the latitude which many professed christians allow, it is very narrow. Without an habitual walk in this narrow way there is no salvation.

The way is narrow in another respect. Fatal mistakes are incessantly made by a seemingly small variation from the true line. There is but one narrow path between the barren heaths of formality and the wild precipices of enthusiasm. Close on one side lies the speculative

religion of the formal hypocrite, and as close on the other, the warm hypocrisy of the self-inflated enthusiast. Some defect at bottom, which is so subtle as to be out of sight, may turn the whole of one's religion into hypocrisy; and then, though it lies so near to true religion that no mortal eye can distinguish between them, it is worse than nothing.

After this view of the narrowness and difficulties of the way, it is not to be wondered at that so many seek to enter in and are not able. Yet this warning is very seasonable to us whose eternal all depends on finding the right way to life.

It deeply concerns us to know why so many seek to enter in and are not able. This is my second inquiry. The difficulties of the way, already mentioned, are indeed so many reasons; but there are others which belong to the seekers themselves.

The first of these is ignorance of the qualifications required. Some think it enough to be born in a Gospel land, and to have the general name of Christians in distinction from Mahometans, Jews, and pagans. Others, a little above this, think it sufficient to be baptised and to exercise a speculative faith. Others, not satisfied with this, imagine that if outward morality be added it is enough. Others, not content even with this, suppose that a profession of religion and a general attendance on means will supply the defect. Others know not what doctrines they ought to believe, and possessing a wrong creed, imagine that their salvation depends on propagating what will at last appear to have been "damnable heresies."

I say then, it is not enough to be born and brought up in a Gospel land. This distinction had the Jews, who, according to our context, will another day urge that they have eaten and drunken in Christ's presence and that he has taught in their streets. It is not enough to be born of pious parents and to be dedicated by them in baptism. The Jews gloried in having Abraham for their father, and seem to have calculated on some favor from him at the last day; and it was to

destroy this confidence that the rich man was represented as crying to Abraham in his extremities and crying in vain. And it was to convince them that it was not enough to be the children of the circumcision, that our Saviour declared in the context, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, and you yourselves thrust out." Yes, many children in that day will see their pious parents forever separated from them, and feasting at the immortal banquet from which they are eternally excluded.

It is not enough to exercise a speculative faith. "Devils—believe and tremble." It is not enough to attend on the means of grace. It was said of the wicked Jews, "They seek me daily and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness and forsook not the ordinance of their God; they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God." It is not enough, like the young man in the Gospel, to cleanse the outside of the cup and platter. Such decent people, who put morality in the room both of Christ and of the new birth, will as certainly fail as infidels themselves.

It is not enough to be awakened and to seek salvation with a selfish heart. Some who are thus think that now they are the objects of God's special regard. But doubtless there are many now in hell who were as much awakened and sought as earnestly as they. It is not enough to obtain a hope, and even to be very confident of one's good estate. None had greater confidence than the self-righteous Jews. And it is more than possible that some now present will hold fast their confidence until and through a dying hour, and then, when flushed with high hopes of entering the heavenly gates, will suddenly find themselves sinking in everlasting burnings. It is not enough to enter into covenant with God and to belong to the visible Church. This distinction had the Jews, and they reckoned on it as that which rendered them the peculiar favorites of heaven. Yet our Saviour forewarned them that many would come "from the east and from the west,—from the north and from the south, and—sit down in the kingdom of God," while "the children of the kingdom" would "be cast

out." And there may be some present who think it enough to belong to the visible Church and to preserve a fair exterior. But do they not know that tares grow in every field? And none are more likely to be of this description than those who lay so much stress on a mere profession.

Thus far in regard to mistaken notions of the qualifications for heaven. But there is a second class of reasons why so many seek to enter in and are not able. There are those whose speculative opinions are correct; who believe in the necessity of regeneration; who are themselves awakened, and tremble like Felix, and weep like Esau, and make long and frequent prayers like the Jews, and reform their lives like Simon Magus, and like the young man in the Gospel are conscientious in their general conduct; and yet are of the number of those who seek to enter in and are not able. What can be the cause of preventing these, it is of the last importance for us to know. I say then, that their failure is not to be ascribed to a mere want of earnestness. Although in general the unregenerate exhibit a criminal indifference to their salvation, which, among other causes, prevents any successful effort; although it is true in all cases that "the kingdom of heaven" is taken by "violence;" yet it is not true that the carelessness of sinners is in such a sense the only cause of their failure, that they would certainly succeed if it were removed. There must be an alteration not so much in the degree as in the nature of their violence. There are two radical defects attending all their strivings; one, that they do not strive after proper objects; the other, that they do not seek their own object in a proper way.

The first defect is that they do not strive after proper objects. That which they supremely seek is their own happiness,—a happiness entirely separate from the kingdom of God and from all benevolent enjoyment. To be more particular,

(1.) They do not strive with direct desires to escape that in which the curse of the law essentially consists, namely, banishment from God. Possessing a general notion that hell is a place of misery, they would



gladly avoid that: but the thought of being banished from God, if that were all, would give them but little trouble. With the same heart they have been content to live without him for many years; and if they were sure that no conscience would disturb them, and that no other punishment would assail them, they would be content to live without him to eternity. Therefore,

(2.) They do not seek after a proper kind of happiness. Could they obtain an eternal residence in a place where they might forever revel in carnal enjoyments, they would have no desire after the christian's heaven.

(3.) They do not strive with direct desires after holiness. They desire holiness just as a sick man desires a disagreeable potion needful to the restoration of his health. Did they believe that they could be as happy without it as with it, they would no longer desire it.

(4.) They have no regard for the glory of God, and care not what becomes of him or his kingdom provided they can be happy. And is the infinite God obliged to regard them? Therefore it is that they pray without being heard, and strive without entering the strait gate.

The other defect is, that they do not seek their own object in a proper way.

(1.) Not with brokenness of heart. They apply to God for infinite blessings without being truly sorry for the injuries they have done him. And while all these injuries are fresh in his memory, and their impenitence and self-justification are distinct in his view, can it be thought that he will regard their prayers? Is this the manner of men? Would any human being receive and oblige another under such circumstances? Would you do it yourself, O complaining sinner? I know you would not. How just then that you should be treated as you would treat others. Until therefore you repent of your sins, not from fear of punishment, but from filial regard to him whom you have offended, you may forever seek in vain.

(2.) They do not strive with an humble sense of their own unworthiness. As vile as they have been, and as impenitent as they still remain, they do not feel utterly unworthy of the blessings they ask. When they have performed some outward duty in a poor wretched manner,—in a manner that deserves eternal rebukes,—they think they have atoned for all their abuses of infinite majesty and goodness, and moreover have laid God under obligations,—obligations to confer, not small favors, but the infinite blessing of eternal life. And under pretence of asking, they come to demand this as their due, and feel as though they should be injured if denied. And when for a time God withholds, their hearts rise against him as a "hard master," reaping where he has not sown and refusing to pay his laborers their honest wages. And such presumption they call praying. But a creature that deserves to be trodden down into shame and everlasting contempt, must come down to lower grounds than this before he can prevail with God. This leads me to remark,

(3.) That they do not seek in the name of Christ. Although his name is on their tongue, yet in their heart they do not approve of him as the only ground of salvation, nor do they believe him to be such, but look to their own duties as the meritorious ground of all. Thus they set aside the very pith and marrow of the Gospel. And while thus, to what purpose are all their strivings? As well might devils attempt to break prison and escape, as human sinners to enter into life while they reject the only Saviour provided for men.

These are some of the reasons why so many seek to enter in and are not able: for it must be remembered that no one is "crowned" in this contest "except he strive lawfully." The noting of these defects will enable us to discover the true manner of striving. Now awake to this. We must seek proper objects and seek them in a right way. In striving for happiness we must seek that which consists in contemplating God and the prosperity of his kingdom. The misery most anxiously shunned must be that of banishment from God. We must seek with direct desires after holiness, and aim supremely at the glory of God. All this must be done with a broken heart,—with an

humble sense of utter unworthiness,—with entire dependance on the atonement and righteousness of Christ,—and with supreme love to God. We must seek with earnestness, with dilligence, by faithful attendance on all the means of grace, in a course of universal obedience, and with perseverance until death.

I will now suggest some reasons which urge to this course of seeking.

(1.) It is the express command of Christ. This is plain from the text, and decides it to be our indispensable duty which no plea of inability can put aside. And if we will not obey, it unavoidably remains for us to reap the awful fruits of disobedience.

(2.) From the very constitution of things, without thus striving we can never win the prize. There is nothing of any value which we can hope to obtain without striving for it. Though all things come from God, yet he does not give them in a way to set aside the use of our faculties. Would you obtain science or wealth or honor, you must acquire them by exertion. So if you would gain a knowledge of God and a victory over yourselves, you must obtain them by holy exertion.

(3.) Another argument may be drawn from the value of the prize. This is nothing less than redemption from eternal pollution and misery, and exaltation to the everlasting glories of heaven; compared with which all that the world holds out to attract our attention are but weeds and dirt. And will rational beings wear out life in toiling for these, and madly neglect that which in value exceeds all estimation,—which in duration has no end?

(4.) "Many—shall seek to enter in and shall not be able." It was not without reason that our Saviour urged the necessity of putting forth all the powers of the soul, from the consideration of the great difficulties in the way,—difficulties which many with all their efforts will never be able to surmount. A nature in league with sin, a treacherous heart, a frowning and ensnaring world, and a subtle devil; these are difficulties which the strongest find it hard to

overcome. And "if the righteous scarcely" are "saved," where shall the stupid, inactive sinner appear? If the difficulties are so great that thousands who seek to enter in are not able, what will become of those who sleep out life in carnal security? If in time of war, many strong men, with all their exertions, are crushed by the rushing foe, what will become of those who are asleep on the field of battle? When such difficulties obstruct the way, what infatuation has seized on those who, like Jonah, are slumbering in "the sides of the ship." Hark! how the storms beat and break around you, and you are fast asleep! Arise, O sleeper, and call upon your God, that you perish not in the waves.

(5.) It is another reason for striving, that, notwithstanding all these difficulties, they who "strive lawfully" will certainly be "crowned." In numberless instances men will strive earnestly when the issue is very uncertain, and when the thing sought is of little value; and will they neglect to strive here, where the strife will be crowned with certain success, and where success will make them for eternity?

(6.) Comparatively speaking, there is nothing else worth striving for. And indeed without a comparison, no other pursuit but that which leads to immortality is worthy supremely to engross the powers of a rational soul, or worthy to have been the object for which that soul was formed. Such a wonderful substance was never created to exhaust itself in the pursuit of toys. In any other respect than as related to eternity, these things are unworthy of its attention. And shall we waste ourselves in pursuit of these vanities and neglect the heavenly prize? No, my brethren, if we will not strive for this there is no further use for our powers;—we have nothing more to do on earth;—and like the worm which winds itself in its web when its work is done we may as well fold up our arms and lie down and die.

(7.) Consider, ye who need such arguments, how much God and the Lord Jesus Christ have striven for your salvation; how much the holy angels in their ministrations to the Church; how much have ministers and christians. And shall heaven and earth conspire to

pluck you out of the pit, and will you lie still and refuse to help yourselves? Has all this zeal been employed about a worthless thing that you are so indifferent about it? O man, that hast an immortal soul within thee, why so regardless of thine eternal destinies when heaven and earth are so solicitous for you?

(8.) Attend to the awful consideration suggested in the context. With a solemn accent our Saviour assured the Jews, that the time would come when the gate of the kingdom would be forever closed; when they would stand without and pray for admission, but in vain; when, with "weeping and gnashing of teeth," they would see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and themselves thrust out. Ah, who can sketch a glimpse of that distressing scene,—when the die is cast once and forever; when the door of the kingdom is shut and there is no more entering in; when sinners shall look away through their tears and behold their former companions in heaven and themselves forever thrust out; when they shall see their pious parents "afar off," with an impassable gulph fixed between them, and shall beseech them by all their former love to send them one drop of water to cool their tongue, and shall find them deaf to all their entreaties. O children,—sinners,—old and young,—will not this be a most distressing hour? Hour, did I say? a most distressing eternity.

Are there any present under the calls of the divine Spirit? You see why you have so long striven in vain, and how you may strive to better purpose. The present is the crisis of your existence, and probably good and bad angels are anxiously watching the issue. Do not calculate too confidently on a change in your favor, and thus relapse into stupidity. Thousands have sought as earnestly as you to enter in and have not been able. Cast down the weapons of your rebellion at once and submit to God. Can you bear the thought of being at last in the condition which has been described?

It is painful to disturb the ashes of the dead;—but are there not some present who in former months or years were awakened by the Spirit of God, but relapsed into stupidity, and cannot now be moved by all

that is passing before their eyes? Wretched men! you little know how they who understand your case tremble for you, lest you should be of the number of those who sought to enter in and were not able. There is reason to fear that your eyes will never more be opened. But if they are not forever sealed, open them this once before you die, and behold the dangers among which you are sleeping secure. Could you see one who was known to be abandoned of God, with what feelings would you regard him! And yet how know you but this is your condition? Many, for resisting the Spirit as you have done, have been sealed over to destruction. But if your fate is not already fixed, it is in imminent danger of soon becoming so. O that one could speak so that the dead would hear: "Awake, arise, or be forever fallen."

One word to professing christians. Many of the visible church will seek to enter in and will not be able. Many will go down from sacraments and confident hopes to everlasting burnings.

Let impenitent sinners of every description attend. I could hope by this time that you are all convinced of the importance of striving for the kingdom of heaven first or last; but when will you begin? You have often had this conviction, but being disposed to delay, it has passed off like "the morning cloud and—early dew." Thus it has doubtless been with thousands now in hell. Take care that delay does not prove your ruin. After all, this is the rock on which many of you will probably split. But will not some, wiser than the rest, be induced to escape to day? The Saviour's arms are yet extended to receive you. The compassions of God say, Come. O come, for why will ye die?

## **SERMON XIV**

**GOSPEL DESPISERS PASSED BY AND THE HEATHEN TAKEN**

And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. - MAT. 8:11, 12

This was originally spoken with reference to the rejection of the Jews, (who by profession and dedication had constituted the visible kingdom of God,) and the calling of the Gentiles. The occasion was this. When Jesus, at a certain time, entered into Capernaum, a centurion, (a Roman officer who commanded a band of a hundred soldiers,) who was himself a Gentile, came to him and entreated him to heal his servant. And when Jesus promised to go with him the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof, but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed;" and subjoined what imported that diseases were Christ's servants to go at his command and to come at his bidding. When Jesus heard this "he marvelled, and said to them that followed, verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." There is a stronger confidence in me in this Gentile centurion, than I have found in the whole Jewish nation. These frequent instances of Gentile faith were tokens that the time was approaching when the Gospel and the sanctifying Spirit would be extended to the heathen. And the occurrence of such a remarkable instance was a fit occasion, not only to allude to that approaching event, but to introduce another which in the purpose of God was coupled with it, to wit, the rejection of the Jews. As our Saviour said to the chief priests and elders on another occasion, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof;" so here "I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The time has come when the heathen, after being mostly neglected for fifteen hundred years, seem about to be called in. And is it not to

be feared that, as it happened in the beginning of the Gospel, the kingdom of God, when carried to the heathen, will be taken from many who have long abused it,—from many of our baptised youth who are emphatically the children of the kingdom? This is a question which ought to awaken a solemn concern in those who have long rejected the Gospel.

It has been a principle of the divine administration to take from men the Gospel which they have long and egregiously abused. This was exemplified in the remarkable instance to which our text alludes. The Jews had been a nation brought up among prophets and Scriptures and divine ordinances.—They had abused these privileges by continuing in unbelief. God had shown himself long suffering towards them. But when the point was reached beyond which endurance could not be carried, he stripped them of all their distinctions, burnt down their temple and cities, banished them from the land given to Abraham, abandoned them to unbelief, ignorance, and vice, and altogether took his kingdom from them. This was exemplified also in the case of the seven churches of Asia. They had been planted and watered by the labors of the apostles. They were flourishing and exemplary and greatly beloved. But ere the apostolic age had run out, most of them began to decline in piety; which drew from the risen Saviour those messages of reproof and warning contained in the second and third chapters of Revelation. To the Ephesian church he said, "Remember—from whence thou art fallen and repent and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place." To the church of Pergamos he said, (in reference to a part who had run into error and were tolerated by the rest,) "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." An equally severe threatening was directed against a part of the church of Thyatira. To the church in Sardis he said, "If—thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." To the church in Laodicea he said, "Because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." The churches of Smyrna and



Philadelphia were only commended. And what now is the state of those seven churches and their cities? "Ephesus," says one, "is now venerable for nothing but the ruins of palaces, temples and amphitheatres.—The town is merely a miserable village, the habitation of herdsmen and farmers, living in low and mean huts, sheltered from extremities of weather by mighty masses of ruinous walls. All the inhabitants—amount not to above forty or fifty families of Turks, without one Christian family among them."\* Pergamos "is now an inconsiderable place, thinly inhabited."† At Thyatira "there now dwell about four or five thousand Turks, in a good air and soil, but amidst multitudes of ancient ruins, and in a condition sufficiently wretched."‡ At Sardis "there still remain some vestiges of Christianity.—But since the place fell into the hands of the Saracens and Turks, it has gradually dwindled; and nothing now remains but a tolerable inn, some cottages for shepherds, and heaps of old ruins."|| "Laodicea is not only unchurched, but is a mere desert, with some ruins scarce sufficient to mark that ever such a city was in the place."\* Philadelphia and Smyrna, which were so commended in the Revelation, alone retain any considerable respectability. Philadelphia "was very considerable when the Turks took possession of it."† It is now "the see of a Greek bishop," and "contains about two thousand christians and twenty-five places of public worship," though it is "meanly built and thinly inhabited.—Many parts of the ancient walls remain, but with large chasms."‡ Smyrna alone, so highly praised by the risen Saviour, remains a flourishing city. It contains "about 130,000" inhabitants; of whom "about 70,000 are Turks,—10,000 Jews" and 50,000 Christians. It is a well built city and carries on an extensive commerce with all the world. ||

Thus five of the seven churches, (the same that were reprov'd in the Revelation for their abuse of Christian privileges,) have all been brought to ruin or to a state of great degradation, and the whole have been given into the hands, first of the Saracens, and then of the Turks. Indeed this has been the case with the whole Greek church, except its northern limb which lies in the Russian empire. All the rest, for the abuse of the Gospel, has been overrun by the Saracens

and Turks, abandoned by the Spirit, debased by oppression, and left in the grossest ignorance and vice. This is the case with all the churches mentioned in the New Testament except that of Rome. What an awful lesson to the abusers of the Gospel!

It is a remarkable and very solemn circumstance, that the time when the kingdom of God was taken from the Jews, was when it was carried to the heathen. God would not leave himself without a kingdom on earth, and therefore he would not call the Jewish nation to a final and decisive account for the abuse of their privileges, till he was prepared to adopt another people; according to the principle involved in the sentence against the Jews, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." These two events being coupled together in the predictions, every instance of Gentile faith in the time of our Saviour's ministry, was an alarming symptom of the approaching rejection of the Jews. Nor was that the only instance in which God had decreed to make his judgments on Gospel despisers to synchronize with the call of the heathen. Such a concurrence of dates was to happen in the age which has now opened, so far at least as respects the arraignment of the Romish church. The Catholic world have for ages grossly abused the Gospel. They have reduced it to a system of state policy and of gross superstition, to render it an engine to govern the multitude and to gratify the ambition and avarice of their spiritual lords. Never since the days of the Pharisees has the Gospel been so arrantly perverted. To illustrate the human heart and his own patience, God resolved to bear with their increasing corruptions for 1260 years. But the time to remove their candlestick out of its place was fixed. And it was fixed to the time when the Gospel should be generally carried to the heathen. Look at this. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people; saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come.—And there followed another angel saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen." By Babylon here the whole Protestant world understand Rome, including the entire Catholic church and

the civil governments which support it. The judgment is set forth in so close a connexion with the evangelizing of the heathen, that the thorough entrance on missionary exertions becomes an infallible sign of its approach. Indeed both events have begun, and began the same year. In 1792 the first missionary society in the modern series was formed, and the same year the blood began to flow in Catholic countries, which continued for more than twenty years, and went far towards breaking down the power of that church. Whatever intermissions may take place, it will continue to flow until the whole civil and ecclesiastical structure of those nations is completely subverted. Long ago God took from them in a great measure his Spirit, and now he will take from them the form of their church and of their government. This is the judgment to be inflicted on a hundred millions who bear the Christian name, comprehending something like one half of Christendom; and this is the age in which the destruction was to be announced by missions to the heathen. Is not this a solemn age? The going forth of missionaries and the calling in of the heathen, are a public token that the time is at hand when nearly one half of the Christian world, for their abuse of the Gospel, are to be completely unchurched, and to lose the whole structure of their ecclesiastical and civil state.

Is it not time for Gospel abusers in Protestant countries to tremble? One general feature of the present age is, that while with one hand God gathers in the heathen, with the other he will strip and dash those miserable men who have long slighted their birthright. Is this justice to be confined to Catholic countries? He wishes in this age to make a display of himself on earth as being such a God: must he necessarily confine his displays to countries under the influence of the church of Rome? He will indeed hold up those countries to the view of the whole world, and make his dealings with them to be seen and understood by all enlightened nations to the end of time; but will he not pursue the same course, in a greater or less degree, with sinners of the Protestant faith? I hope it will not be found necessary at this late day to break up any of our orthodox churches. And yet such facts have occurred, even in our own land, within a century.

They occurred after the great revival of religion in the days of Whitefield. But even if such facts are not to be repeated, may we not expect that the influences of the Spirit and the higher blessings of the Gospel will be taken from many individuals who have long abused their privileges? May we not expect that this will happen to many of our baptised children? This brings us to the very point of distress. How many of our dear youth who have been consecrated to God and nurtured in the lap of piety, and over whose unhappy state many a parental tear has flowed, still remain stupid in sin and carried away with the world. They come to the house of God and hear, but nothing which they hear affects their hearts. They come to the domestic altar, but half of the time their hearts, with the fool's eyes, are in the ends of the earth. They repeat their prayers in secret; (surely children who have been devoted to God cannot neglect the forms of prayer:) they repeat their prayers in secret, but it is only with their lips, while their hearts are far from God. They read the Bible, but it is to them a sealed book, and they have no realizing sense that what they read is the word of God. They pay a decent respect to the sabbath: (surely baptised children cannot profane the sabbath by rambling the fields or reading newspapers, or by worldly conversation:) they pay a decent respect to the sabbath, but they have no relish for the proper employments of the day, and are often ready to say, "What a weariness is it." They see the supper of the Lord set forth, but their seats are empty at the table. They see other children brought in the arms of their parents to baptism, but it is with no deep impression of their own baptismal obligations. The Spirit of God has called them, but this sacred influence is rejected. They have heard that a Saviour died for them, but they are penetrated with no love or gratitude to Christ. Their heavenly Father heaps daily and hourly mercies upon them, but they never once sincerely thank him. They have committed millions of sins, each of which deserves eternal fire, and yet they never repented of one. They carry about in their bosoms hearts of enmity against God, and yet they are no more concerned than though they had nothing there but love. They lie under a sentence of eternal death, and yet they can dance along the road of life with as much glee as if they were going to heaven. Though heaven threatens and calls

and invites, their whole concern is after the world. All their joy lies there and all their trouble springs thence. Their hearts are stupid and hard and full of unbelief. And they are growing harder every day. Formerly, when they attended funerals or heard awakening sermons, they would tremble; but now they can see and hear with comparative indifference. All this time the privileges which they thus abuse are marked with the price of blood. All this time they are surrounded with advantages which not one child in a hundred ever enjoyed. And have we no reason to tremble for them? Have we no reason to fear that God, wearied out with their obstinacy, will withdraw his influence from them altogether and carry it to heathen children? Have we not special reason to fear this in reference to those who were once awakened and have gone back? Why should we not fear and tremble? We see the children of other Christians, and even of some of the best of men, living and dying without religion, and even becoming profligates. There were the wicked children of Noah, of Job, of Abraham, of Aaron, of Eli, of Samuel, of David, of Hezekiah, of Josiah, and of many eminent Christians and Christian ministers in modern times. There is no certainty in respect to any that they will be saved because they have pious parents and have been dedicated to God. But on the contrary, we have great reason to fear that in many instances, for their long abuse of privileges, the Spirit will be taken from them and given to the children of the heathen. The Spirit of God ordinarily moves so far in a line with nature, that what nature would seem most likely to produce, more generally takes place under his influence. Now to pagan children the Gospel is new, and on that account more affecting. Its wonders break upon them and arrest their attention to many things which are passed over by children accustomed to them. Their hearts moreover have not been hardened by listening to its sound without regarding it. On these accounts the Gospel, according to the course of nature, is more likely to take strong hold of pagan children than of those who have grown up in unbelief under its light. And the Spirit, moving in a line with nature, is more likely to make it effectual to their hearts when the way is suitably prepared. Something of this may be the meaning of those words, "Wo unto thee, Chorazin;—for if the mighty works which were

done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago:" and "if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."

All this is said without reference to the abandonment of Gospel despisers by a judicial sentence. But this also is to be reckoned upon. In many instances the resistance of the Holy Spirit becomes the unpardonable sin. On all these accounts it may be calculated that heathen children are more likely to be brought in by Christian preachers, than some of those who have long resisted the calls of the Gospel, the tears of parents, and the prayers of the Church. And so it will happen that "many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." Many of the poor Osage children will be gathered in,\* while many of the children of the covenant will be cast out. The squalid sons of the southern islands, the sable sucklings of Ethiopia and India, will sing hosannas to the Son of David in the high courts of heaven, while many of the children of our prayers will be cast out into outer darkness. Ah, when they shall look up and see the children of the forest enjoying the bliss of heaven while they are cast out, there will indeed be "weeping and gnashing of teeth." When they shall look up and see their pious parents in heaven, and find themselves confined to the society of devils, ah, will there not be "weeping and gnashing of teeth?" When they shall look up and see that father who used to bend over them with so much solemnity when he warned and entreated them, and that mother so full of tenderness and love when she took them aside for prayer, ah, with what agony will they east themselves on the fiery pavement and tear their eyes and curse their folly and wish ten thousand times that they had never been born. O my dear children, you have done something to send the Gospel to the poor Indians, and the children of those heathen are coming in: is it that they may take your place in heaven and you be cast out? There is a sound from the forest, as though God was about to carry his kingdom to another people: is it that it may be

taken from you? Are the hopes which we have all had about the heathen to end in this? Have you been laboring only to bring forward a company of pagan children to receive the blessing which you have rejected? to take your place in the covenant and in heaven and to thrust you out? After all your animation and hopes for those poor pagan babes, and after all that you have done for them, are you never to go in with them? are you to see them take away your forfeited birthright? I rejoice that they are coming in even if you are cast out. But why, my dear children, need you lose your birthright to favor them? There is enough for both them and you. We naturally feel most for you, and we cannot bear to see the kingdom of God taken from you to be given to strangers. Let the strangers have it, but have it also yourselves. Detain it among you. Set it up in your hearts. Hasten to improve that Gospel which is about to take its flight to the wilderness. Hasten to submit to that Spirit who is about to stretch his wings towards the prairies of the setting sun. Hasten to benefit from your privileges before they are taken from you and transplanted into the forests of the west.

All this I have addressed to baptised children, who are emphatically "the children of the kingdom." But what shall I say to those, who, whether baptised or not, have grown up to manhood under the sound of the Gospel without improving it? who have been hardening against God and his calls for twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years? Tired out with your long and obstinate abuse of privileges, God seems now about to try an experiment upon another people. What will be the effect on your condition time must determine. But if it shall prove that you are to be stripped and abandoned at the same moment that the Gospel is carried to the heathen, it will be only analogous to the two instances which have been referred to; one, the treatment of God's ancient people and of the early Christian churches, the other, the predicted dispensations of the present day. Wherein do you essentially differ from the ancient Jews, who had long enjoyed the privileges of the Gospel but had never brought forth fruit? And wherein do you essentially differ from those who have adopted the Romish faith? They have had the Scriptures in their hands, but have

never improved them; so have you. They have brought forth nothing but sin under all the lights of the Gospel; so have you. They are God's enemies, and so are you. Indeed your light has transcended theirs, and your guilt on this account is increased. Why then may not God strip and abandon you when he carries his kingdom to the heathen, as well as Jews and Catholics? Have you not reason to fear it? Every account of a new mission established,—every account of the conversion of a pagan,—may well fill you with alarm. Perhaps it is your funeral knell, announcing your eternal death. Every such account should set in broad letters before you that awful sentence, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." This is a new source of fear. You knew that you had cause to fear when you looked to hell. You may have learnt that you had cause to fear when you looked to Calvary,—that you might hear from that awful spot a voice saying, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" But never perhaps before did you understand that you had reason to fear when you heard of the conversion of the heathen. Never perhaps before did you understand that this mighty movement on earth was as the knell of death to you. Dangers and threatenings are starting up from quarters where you least expected them. But the truth is that the whole universe is full of dangers for Gospel despisers. There are trains of causes secretly working your ruin in ten thousand circumstances where you never dreamed of their existing. Could the covering be taken off from all these latent dangers, you would see a sword pointed at your heart from every quarter of the universe. There is no safety anywhere for an enemy of God, for an abuser of the Gospel, for a wretch that can trample under foot a Saviour's blood. The heavens are ready to shower down vengeance; the earth on which you tread is stored with magazines of wrath; the blessings sent on others are full of curses for you; and even the conversion of the heathen has in it a voice of thunder which may well break the slumbers of the grave. Up before the kingdom is altogether taken from you. Prostrate yourselves in haste before the Author of a long abused Gospel,—before the God who has spoken in it unheard,—before the Saviour whom it has reported to you in vain.—Kneel down



in the dust before the God of all your privileges. What mean you to remain still erect? Is your heart of stone and is your brow of adamant? But that heart shall melt in the day that he shall deal with you, and that brow, hard as it is, shall be scarred with thunder.

Before the kingdom is quite departed, I will once more try the Gospel upon you. On that throne sits a pardoning God, bending over you with all the compassion of a Father, and, with a voice sweeter than an angel's harp, inviting you to his arms. On that cross hung your bleeding Lord, when he sunk under the burden of your sins and died to save your lives. His languishing eyes fix on Mary and then on you. Over the pollutions, of your sepulchre hovers the heavenly Dove, offering to brood the stagnant mass into life. Every energy of the Sacred Three stands ready to aid you; every compassion is prepared to receive you. All heaven says, Come. All the Church on earth says, Come. Come, for all things are ready. Come with all your guilt upon you and receive "without money and without price." In no way can you so gratify the compassions of a God; in no way can you so much gladden the heart that bled for you on the point of the spear; in no way can you waken up so animated a jubilee in heaven.

I have made the trial: and now if you again reject the Gospel, and the kingdom from this moment departs, all heaven and earth will say, Your blood be upon your own head. Amen.

# SERMON XV

## QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT

Quench not the Spirit. - 1 THESS. 5:19

The Spirit is compared to fire, on account of its enlightening and refining influence; and hence the implication that it may be quenched. It performs the two fold work of convincing and sanctifying. Christians for a time may quench the fervor of love produced by the sanctifying Spirit, by resisting the light thrown upon their minds by the convicting Spirit; and to Christians the text seems primarily addressed. But the general warning not to resist the Spirit, is addressed to all. The impenitent may resist the Spirit, not only by disobeying and disbelieving those Scriptures which he endited, but by rejecting the light which he throws upon their conscience. "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did so do ye."

I choose to consider the subject in reference to the impenitent, and in reference chiefly to the light shed upon their conscience.

All that the Spirit does to the impenitent, besides giving them the Scriptures, is to bring the truths of the Bible into contact with the sensibilities of their soul, and to make them felt, though not loved. Whether the operation is on the head or heart, or on which of the several powers ranged under these names, I cannot tell; nor how the truth that was well known before, can be brought more clearly into the mind's eye while the temper of the heart remains unchanged. All this is among the secrets of divine operations which men are probably never to understand. But thus much is certain: nothing is done in this matter but to carry light in and lay it before the eye of the mind, in a manner to make it felt. That light is susceptible of resistance, as much as the light which lies on the sacred page. It is

indeed the same light, but only more distinctly seen. And that resistance may be punished by the removal of the light, and by leaving the cloud of stupid unbelief to resettle upon the mind in still darker folds.

The Spirit could doubtless conquer this resistance by sanctifying power; but his object in mere conviction is to treat with the sinner as a moral agent, or as a creature bound to improve light. It is a part of the same system that furnished him with the external light of the Gospel. It is of the nature of an invitation whispered in his ear. But it no more follows that he must be sanctified, than that all must be sanctified who hear the Gospel. Let us contemplate,

I. The ways in which the Spirit is resisted;

II. The sin and danger of doing this;

III. Other reasons which ought to dissuade men from this course.

I. The ways in which the Spirit is resisted.

(1.) It is resisted by every kind of outward sin; by profaneness, by speaking against the work of the Spirit, by mocking or opposing it, by false or defamatory words, by profanation of the sabbath in conversation or conduct, by every unhallowed pleasure, by intemperance, by injustice in dealings, and by every failure to do to others as we would have others do to us.

(2.) It is resisted by harbored doubts of the truth of the Bible, of the Trinity, of future or of endless punishment, of regeneration. Disbelief of the Bible or of its leading truths, does not arise from want of evidence, but from wickedness of heart.

(3.) It is resisted by all unseasonable levity; such as levity in the house of God, or in the place of prayers, or just before entering either. A little boisterous mirth or play, or even a light word, while

one is under conviction, may banish the Spirit from him. A light remark about religion at such a time may banish it forever.

(4.) The Spirit is resisted by all attempts to throw off serious impressions, arising from direct aversion to God and his ways, from a selfish wish "to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," from a proud reluctance to give up prospects of worldly honor and gain, from a proud fear of the derision of the wicked, or from resentments at Christians for their harassing exhortations.

(5.) It is resisted by the neglect of means; by refusing to pray, by refusing to attend religious meetings, by refusing to be approached by Christians for religious conversation, by neglecting to read the Bible daily, by neglecting to meditate on divine subjects.

(6.) It is resisted by sluggish exertions,—half awake in prayer,—in prayer continued but for a few seconds,—listless under sermons, listless in reading and meditation; all evincing a heart unengaged, and even the absence of thorough conviction.

(7.) It is resisted, even in the most awakened, by the sins of the heart; by selfishness, pride, and idolatry; by want of holy love to man; by enmity against God; by unbelief, that excludes conviction, that excludes a sense of the desert of hell, that excludes a sense of the need of a Saviour; by that obstinate blindness and hardness that will not repent, that will not cast the soul upon Christ, that will not accept him for a Saviour, that will not believe in the reality and sincerity of his appointment; by that proud self-sufficiency that will not cast the soul upon the divine Spirit for all its moral strength, but relies on its own power to change the heart, and puts that power in the room of the Holy Ghost; by that self-righteousness which hopes by present duties to make amends for past neglects and sins, and to purchase eternal life, putting those duties in the room of Christ's atonement and obedience,—which hopes to move God by its prayers without respect to a Mediator, putting those prayers in the room of the intercession of Christ; by that obstinate rebellion which refuses to

devote to God and his service all the powers and possessions,—which refuses to render universal obedience or any obedience at all.

The awakened sinner does nothing which the Spirit invites him to, except the mere outward form. In every moral motion of his heart he resists the Spirit with the whole strength of his soul. All his exertions are selfish and proud. He cares nothing about the glory of God. Had no prospect of reward allured him, he would never have troubled himself about religion. Had interest prompted, he would with as much earnestness have blasphemed the name of God. The whole plan on which he acts is to find salvation without a Saviour,—to induce God, in some way or other by his own exertions, to confer on him pardon and eternal life. He often wonders why God is not moved by his duties, and his heart rises against him; and then he goes to work with increased earnestness, hoping to succeed better with a greater exertion of strength: but it is all without dependance on Christ or the Holy Spirit. He is constantly going farther and farther from God; and when the small still voice comes, it will be "a word behind" him, "saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." The prodigal never took one step towards home until "he came to himself." Nor will the sinner, with all his efforts, assist God in changing his heart. He will do nothing but oppose to the last. And his efforts, which nevertheless are all important, are chiefly necessary to convince him that he can do nothing.

II. Let us consider the sin and danger of this resistance.

(1.) It is an enormous sin against light. As the Holy Spirit puts into the eye of the mind the whole mass of revealed truth, this resistance is a direct opposition to the whole,—is a distinct rejection of the whole. It is a war against all the light that has come to our world respecting God and eternity,—respecting the work of redemption, and God as he appears in that work,—respecting Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—respecting the authority and love of God,—respecting his mercy and compassions as expressed in the invitations and promises of the Gospel,—respecting all that God has done for our

world and all his manifestations to men. All is brought near by the Holy Spirit: God, in all his authority and love, is brought near; and all is distinctly rejected.

That sin is aggravated by light, is no less a doctrine of Scripture than of common sense. "That servant which knew his lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin." "If ye were blind ye should have no sin, but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth." "Wo unto thee, Chorazin, wo unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee."

(2.) God has been at infinite expense to send you the Holy Spirit. The law had doomed our race to the curse of perpetual abandonment. The Son of God must come down and die on a cross to render it possible for the Spirit to get to our world in consistency with the honor of the law, and he must render perfect obedience, under circumstances the most difficult, to render that mission certain, and to give him a covenant claim to it. When he ascended on high he received this gift for men as his own reward, and sent it out on the day of Pentecost. And now for you to reject the ministry of the third Person in the adorable Trinity, procured for you by the obedience and death of Christ, is presumption and ingratitude that know no bounds.

It was infinite kindness in God to send down the Holy Spirit in the present most merciful visitation, and that he did not send you to hell

three months ago, but suffered you to live to share in this infinite grace. In this he gave you more than though he had bestowed upon you ten thousand worlds of gold. And yet you will not stoop to pick it up, nor thank him for it, nor listen to the message it brings, nor take any notice of it, except perhaps to resent the uneasiness it occasions. Let heaven and earth judge between you and God, and estimate the infinite ingratitude of such returns.

On these accounts the sin against the Holy Spirit is the greatest of all sins, and when carried to a certain extent and attended with sufficient knowledge and malice, is unpardonable, and is the only sin that is unpardonable.

That particular form of it which consists in wilfully opposing the work of the Spirit and speaking reproachfully of it, is very distinctly marked. The Pharisees maliciously ascribed the miracles of Jesus, wrought by the Holy Ghost, to the agency of Beelzebub, and this they did against their better judgment. The parable represents them as saying, "This is the heir; come let us kill him and—seize on the inheritance." "Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me and ye know whence I am." They malignantly took counsel to put Lazarus to death because he had been raised from the dead; and in every case their spite was more inflamed as the evidence increased. And at last, when the Roman soldiers came into the city, all breathless, and testified of the resurrection and the vision of angels, they went to the damning extreme of hiring them to perjure their souls by swearing that the disciples came by night and stole him away. This is a specimen of what the human heart can do: and it proves that when they ascribed the miracles of Christ to the power of Beelzebub, they lied against their own conscience; and therefore their sin was that "unto death."

There may be some who are acting the same part now; combining to stop this work of God and loading it with reproaches, though they know it is the work of the Holy Ghost. They were brought up perhaps by pious parents and cradled in revivals. If they had plunged into the

kennels of vice, they might have seared their conscience into infidelity; but this they have not done. They know the Bible is true, and that this revival is the work of God. They try to doubt, but they cannot doubt. Look at your late companions, no better than you, who are now at their prayers. Who has produced this wondrous change? You know it was the power of God: and yet you vilify and blaspheme. So far from doubting, you are enraged that others are taken and you are left. And yet how could you expect to be taken when you would not pray, nor do any thing but oppose with the fury of a fiend? Beware. You are treading, in the dark, near the verge of a pit, down which if you fall you rise no more. Some of you have probably already committed the unpardonable sin. And what are you doing? Trying to prevent the religion and the kingdom of heaven from spreading in the world, knowing them to be such: trying to prevent rebels from going over from Satan to the service of Christ, with your eyes open to what you are doing: trying to prevent your friends, whom you profess to love, from escaping from an eternal hell to an eternal heaven, because their conversion would torment your conscience; knowing all the time that you are committing this most flagitious of all murders. Never were men pursuing a course more hazardous or more diabolical.

But there are other forms of resisting the Holy Ghost which lead to death. The mere continuance in stupidity in such a day as this, hardens the heart. The refusal of the awakened to submit, banishes the Spirit from their minds. All their impressions suddenly disappear like the lightning of heaven, and the night becomes the darker for the momentary gleam of light. Many are given over to infidelity and to work all iniquity with greediness.—They go and take to themselves "seven other spirits more wicked than" themselves, "and the last state" of those men "is worse than the first."—There are doubtless many in the lowest dungeons of hell who in their life time trembled under strong convictions. Many, by going back, are sealed over to the eternal judgment. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,—if they shall fall away, to renew them



again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame." "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries."

III. There are other reasons which ought to dissuade you from this course.

You cannot prevail against God. You may harden yourselves in your pride and in the countenance of your ungodly companions; but when he shall enter into judgment with you, your strength and your courage will all melt away like wax. "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth," but "wo unto him that striveth with his Maker." If this struggle is continued between a worm and the infinite God, the worm must infallibly be crushed to death.

In resisting the Holy Ghost you resist not only the chief source of present comfort, but the only helper on the way to heaven. If you reject him you reject your all, and must inevitably perish.—Should the Holy Spirit forsake the best Christian on earth, even on the borders of heaven, that man would sink, with the rapidity of a falling star, into eternal darkness.

The Spirit will "not always strive with man." Many are left in early life. It has often been tauntingly said that the children of pious parents are worse than others. This is because it happens so in some cases. Those who, like Esau, have sold their birth-right, become, like the Jews, the wickeder for the privileges they have abused; and often find "no place of repentance, though" they seek it "carefully with tears." There are probably some abandoned in every revival. You are now therefore acting on the ridge of danger,—on the brink of fate. You have come to a most awful crisis. Every motion is in the midst of peril; every moment is pregnant with life or death. It behooves you to be fully awake. If ever you had occasion for all your powers, this is

the time. I bless God that it is not too late with you all. Notwithstanding your long resistance and delay, the Spirit is still hovering over you. Notwithstanding all your ingratitude and hardness, he still woos you and entreats you to come away, and offers to assist you with all his strength. He knocks at your door and says, "If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me." He stands under your window and cries, "Open to me,—for my head is filled with dew and my locks with the drops of the night." In this manner he has followed you "from a child." When in the dusk of evening you were driven into a secret place to pray; when by a new opened grave, or under a pungent sermon, or under the meltings of parental reproof, you were smitten with a sense of sin, or glanced an anxious eye into the eternal world; this was the Spirit calling a wayward child. If his calls have been less frequent as you have advanced in life, it is because you did not improve the first. If they have been less frequent, see you to that. But they are with you still in this day of the Spirit's power. Fail not to improve them now. What infinite ingratitude would be involved in such a failure! What danger that it would grieve him away to return no more!

I stop to exclaim, What evidence have we of the deep-rooted depravity of the human heart! It is a shame to man that there ever was need of a second word to persuade one of our race to love the blessed God: how much more, that all entreaties and means are insufficient, and that there is need of the special interposition of the Spirit. But,—"hear, O heavens and give ear, O earth!"—the sinner turns upon his heavenly helper as though he was an enemy, and resists to the last. The Spirit pleads and expostulates, but all is to a senseless block; and the ungrateful rebel would hold out forever if not conquered by superior power. And even after he is conquered, all that remains of the old man continues to resist, and the poor backward creature must be carried all the way to heaven in the arms of another. It is a wonder that the Spirit does not grow weary of his wayward charge. But so it is: he never forsakes the soul he has begun to sanctify; nor does the soul forsake its opposition any faster than it

is subdued. And even in the last struggles of nature, this sinful conflict still continues. On the borders of heaven, in distinct view of eternal glory, the soul still resists; and if left to itself, from that opening dawn of immortality would sink into a devil.

This is not a description of a soul of the baser sort, but of every one that ever descended from Adam. Who that reflects on this, "does not blush and hang his head to think himself a man?" And yet some deem it a pity to degrade human nature by a hint of total depravity; while others plead this very obstinacy as their excuse for not loving God.

Awakened sinners, you have been resisting the Spirit all your days, but never probably with so much guilt and danger as now. Self-righteousness often whispers to you that you are now doing something more acceptable to God; but you have never done any thing but resist the Spirit with the whole strength of your soul, except the mere outward form. What wonder that the heavenly visiter has not left you forever! Some of you, in all probability, will continue to resist until he is gone,—gone perhaps to return no more; and then you will mourn out a whole eternity that you threw away the infinite price in your hands. Some of you will probably in a few days be more stupid than you ever were before; for you never can again be as you have been: you must be better or worse. And if you die impenitent, your whole eternity will be more wretched for the call you are now slighting. Perhaps some of you have less feeling than you have had. This looks as if the Spirit was departing. Take the alarm. If salvation is not to be forever relinquished, take the alarm. Your all is at stake. Your condition was never so critical before. Hasten to a Saviour's feet. Whatever be your state of mind, hasten to a Saviour's feet. Put away that horrid resistance which you have always made to the divine Spirit. Submit to God without delay. Go not over that threshold until you have given him your heart and devoted to him your life. How long halt ye between two opinions? God is now waiting for your decision. What is your answer? Will you believe and

live, or will you disbelieve and die? You alone must determine that ponderous question. I leave you to make the great decision.

## **SERMON XVI**

### **EXHORTATION TO SERVE THE LORD**

And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul. - DEUT. 10:12

Complaints are often made against the ministers of Christ that their preaching is too close and pungent. I sincerely wish that the world might once see what discourses the eternal God would himself deliver should he undertake to preach to men.—What do I say? He has published a volume of discourses, and they have been more harshly treated than any of the sermons of his ministers. The words which I have read were taken from a sermon which God delivered in tones of awful grandeur from Mount Sinai, or else through the medium of Moses. If it seem hard to you to be required "to fear the Lord" your "God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord" your "God with all" your "heart and with all" your "soul," be it remembered that this is not imputable to ministers, but to God himself. If any murmur at this, I have no controversy with them; I leave it to be settled between them and their Maker. Having often preached with little effect myself, I would now retire and leave the God of Israel to preach to you. I would stand concealed in humble awe behind him, while he delivers his heavenly instructions to the people. Sermons are often heard as the words of men. It is difficult, to a distressing degree, to produce a realizing sense that the

truths we preach proceeded from the lips of God. In the present case I hope this difficulty will not be felt. Had you stood at the foot of Sinai and heard the trumpet and the thunders, and heard the words of our text issuing from the thick darkness, you would not have doubted that they came from God. But they were heard in substance by a million of people, who trembled and fled as these sentiments were poured upon their ears from the burning mount. And now, after the lapse of more than three thousand years, it is still as true as ever that they proceeded from the lips of God. Receive them therefore with as much veneration as though a throne were set in this house, and the God of glory were seated on it, and these words were sounded from his divine lips. "And now," my people, "what doth the Lord" your "God require of" you, "but to fear the Lord" your "God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord" your "God with all" your "heart and with all" your "soul?"

Who obeys this command? A part of my hearers obey it in some degree. They esteem God above every other object. They consider his glory as their highest interest, and communion with him as their supreme happiness. They would sooner forget father and mother than forget him. It is their greatest grief that their treacherous hearts are so prone to wander from him. Their most fervent desires pant after him. And when in a favored hour they find him whom their "soul loveth," they hold him fast and will not let him go. I have no reproaches for these. It is our Master's will that we should speak kindly to them and encourage them in his name. But are all such? Would to God all were. But charity herself would blush should we so far profane her sacred office as to lend her sanction to such an opinion. Charity herself must fear that in such a congregation as this there are many who have never yielded any service to God. Yet in most cases it is difficult to fix the charge where it ought to lie. So superficial are men's ideas of God's service, that they often think themselves his servants merely because they have been baptised, and attend public worship, and are charitable to the poor, and free from scandalous vices. But there is no service without love. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "Good," you say, "and I love the Lord. I should

be very sorry not to love so bountiful and good a God." Do you indeed? Do you indeed? Let us see. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other: ye cannot serve God and mammon." There is no love to God which is not habitually supreme. For though love enough to give a cup of cold water constitutes a disciple, none are disciples but those who love Christ supremely. "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Supreme love to God will certainly produce self-denial for his sake. It will habitually avoid every thing which he has forbidden, and obey, not a part, but all his commands. He that offends "in one point," knowingly and habitually, "is guilty of all." Supreme love will seek communion with its object more than any worldly pleasure. It will pant after him and after greater conformity to him; it will seek his glory as the highest interest; it will count him the most desirable portion; it will delight in thinking of him more than in any worldly thoughts; it will delight in prayer,—will renounce the world and idols and cultivate a heavenly mind. Unless we have that which will produce all these effects, we have no supreme love to God; and if we have no supreme love, we have no love at all; and if we have no love, as there is no neutral state, we are his enemies. "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." As humiliating as the thought is, we know that no man is otherwise than God's enemy until he is born again. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Hence it is that so many people who attend public worship and lead regular lives, are unmindful of God from day to day, neglect prayer, put eternal things out of view, and lose themselves in the eager pursuit of the world. They must be conscious, if they will but reflect, that the world engages more of their care than God or their souls, and is of course their supreme deity. They must be conscious that the sabbath is a burden unless devoted to sloth or amusement,—that prayer is a burden,—that

religious society is a burden,—that the thoughts of God which sometimes intrude are unwelcome,—that the divine service is not agreeable to their taste,—that they would rather be employed in business or pleasure than in religion, in reading an amusing story than in searching the Scriptures. Surely such people do not love God. Such minds could not be happy in heaven if admitted to the place. They must undergo a radical change or certainly they can find no happiness beyond the grave. Ah Lord God, how many such are to be found among us,—among the dearest friends of our hearts. It is distressing to look through our congregations and see how men neglect God; how they live without him in the world,—live as though there were no God. Is there no remedy for our lost brethren? Will nothing awaken them to their duty and danger? The necessity of making some attempt to rouse them is so pressing, that I trust christians will excuse me if I turn my attention altogether to these. Let them stand by and assist me with their prayers, while I attempt to recall from death this interesting multitude.

Come, my unhappy friends, and let us reason together. Lend your whole attention while one who hopes he is a friend to both parties, makes an humble attempt to reconcile you to your Maker. It is not an enemy you hear; not one who would needlessly disturb your peace. God knows I wish you nothing but happiness in time or eternity; and if the present address might be the instrument of making you all blest, I should account this the happiest day of my life. But in what language shall I address you? What new arguments shall I set before you? The enemy of God in your breast has resisted so many sermons, that those who love you are afraid that nothing will ever avail. O when shall it once be? Would God that this might be the sermon. But so many better discourses have been lost upon you, that I tremble for the fate of this. The longer you hear without improvement the longer you may. Every resisted sermon renders future resistance more easy and certain. And this very address, unless it softens will harden you; unless it proves a "savour of life," will become a "savour of death."— Shall I stop or shall I proceed? — I must proceed; but first let me entreat you to lift one earnest prayer to God that he would carry the

truth home to your hearts. You may have sometimes complained that your fears, rather than your reason, were addressed. You shall have no cause for this complaint now. I mean to appeal to your understandings and to treat you like rational beings. For such indeed you are,—rational beings, endowed with Godlike faculties, capable of enjoying and adorning the heavenly city; infinitely too precious to be lost and devoted to eternal blasphemy and pain.

The great reason of your insensibility is, that under the stupifying influence of unbelief, you have secretly doubted whether there is a God, or if there is, whether you have any thing to do with him or he with you. The thought has lurked in your heart, that if there is a God, he is so far from you, and so unconnected with you, that you have nothing more to do with him than with an inhabitant of another planet. You have never conceived that you owed him your whole heart and life. But now for God's sake attend.

"What dost thou here, Elijah?" Child of dust, what dost thou here in this world? Who sent you hither? and for what end? You are conscious that you did not create yourself, and your parents know that they did not create you. It was God that made you what you are, and put you into a world which he had richly furnished for your use. Have you nothing to do with him or he with you? You are absolutely his property, and he is your Lord and Master, and has a right to you and to the use of all your talents. What was the precise end for which he sent you into the world? I wish to draw your attention to this single point: for I am persuaded that if this one consideration could be fastened on your mind, you would be convinced that you have neglected the great end of your being. Do you imagine that he created you and raised you so much above the brutes, and put you into a world on which he had expended so much labor, that you might wander from him into the regions of darkness? that you might seek your happiness out of him, and live in rebellion against him? that you might spend your life only in preparing to live in this transitory state? or that you might live only to eat and drink? The latter the brutes are fitted to do; but can you imagine that you have



no higher end than they? Indulge no such fatal mistake. As God is true, he sent you into his world for the same end that a master sends a servant into his vineyard,—to labor for him. The sole reason that you are in this world rather than not here, is that you may have an opportunity to serve and enjoy God. He has sent you into the field abundantly furnished with powers and means to serve him, and has strictly commanded you to use these talents in his service. Say not that he is too far above you to be apprehended.

He has brought himself down and spread himself out before you in his works and word, and it is only to unbelief that he is invisible. As your Proprietor and Master, he has a right to expect that all your time and talents, all your wealth and influence, should be consecrated to his service; that your affections should all be engaged for him; that every motive and aim should be "holiness to the Lord;" that "whether" you "eat or drink or whatsoever" you "do," you should "do all to" his "glory;" that this should be the general scope of every action and the leading care of every hour.

Having sent you into his vineyard, he looks after you to see whether you are faithful or not. Has he nothing to do with you? His eyes are upon you every moment,—upon the very bottom of your heart. They follow you wherever you go, and mark you out and contemplate all you do, as though you were the only object of his attention in the universe. The fixed design for which they follow you is, to observe whether you perform or neglect the great business for which he sent you into the world. Dream not that he is too distant to concern himself with you; he is "not far from every one of us." He is by your side and on the very seat with you this moment. Has he nothing to do with you? In him you "live and move and have" your "being." For so many years he has sustained you out of hell, and suffered you to live on his earth and breathe his air. And why is all this? I beseech you to consider the end for which he has done all this for you. Why do you feed and clothe your indented servant? It is that he may not die but live and labor for you. And what would you think, if, while living at your expense and sharing your kindness, he should altogether

neglect your service? Should you assign him his task for a certain day in the field, and lie behind the hedge and watch him, and see him all day long doing nothing but wasting your property, what would be your feelings towards that servant? God has sent you into his field,—has solemnly charged you to be faithful to him,—has supported your life,—has fed and clothed you,—and from his invisible seat has kept his eye upon you through all the day of life; and now the day is drawing to a close, and you have not yet begun your work, but have been only marring his estate. And now you are about to return from the field with nothing done, to give in your account to your Master. And what, in the name of eternal justice, will your account be? How will your Master receive you? Ah think of it; it will be a serious hour.

Your Lord and Master, having sent you into his world to serve him,—having sustained you from year to year, with great expense and care, and kept you from the eternal pit, for the express purpose that you might live and labor for him; has added one mercy more which has astonished heaven and earth. At the expense of the life of his own Son he has redeemed you from death. And why was all this? For no other purpose than that you might yet live and labor for him. He has plied you with the means of grace,—has followed you with calls,—has offered to pardon the past if you will only be faithful in future,—has waited upon you and labored with you, with so much pains, for so many years, under so many discouragements, to see if you would not at length feel some ingenuous compunctions and return to his service; and yet, to the shame of all creation, you refuse to serve him still. These amazing kindnesses have well entitled him to the appellation of Father. He is your Father, and as such you owe him honor. He is your Redeemer, and as such you owe him the tenderest thanks that a grateful heart can render. And have you nothing to do with him? Is he so distant and unconnected with you, that you have no cause to move a thought towards him? Better to say that the inmost fibre of your heart is a stranger and foreigner. Better to sever the bonds of nature and turn off your dearest friends as outcasts from your love.

Did your Creator turn you loose into the world, to run wild in pursuit of your own imaginations, without law or restraint, intending to look no further after you, but to throw you out from his care? Wo to you if he had done this; though this, I fear, you have often wished. But he did no such thing. His intention was still to follow you with his cares, as beloved creatures whom his own hands had formed,—to exercise government over you,—to establish eternal communion with you,—to lead your desires up to him,—to fill you with his own sublime happiness, and to make you a part of an harmonious, blessed, and glorious kingdom. To accomplish these ends he put you under law,—a law admirably calculated to unite you to him and to consummate your happiness. As he is infinitely the greatest and best of beings, whom no man can hate and be happy; who, in order to an harmonious kingdom, must be acknowledged as the Head, and must be the centre of affection and the great bond of attraction; therefore he has commanded all his rational creatures to love him supremely. In this he has required no more than was his due, and the very least that it was for his honor to accept. Indeed he has conferred an infinite favor on creatures by making a law so essential to public order, and pointing out the only way to individual happiness. The unreasonable will complain of anything, and murmurs have filled the world because this law requires the heart. But were it otherwise,—were God to relinquish his claims on the heart and compound for outward service only, would it be better then? Could they be happy here, could they be happy in heaven, without a holy heart? They had better never been born than be excused from loving God. Should God give up his law, still they are wretches to eternity without love to him. The law enjoins nothing but what in the nature of things is essential to happiness. Have you nothing to do with God or he with you? You have forgotten that you are subjects under law, bound by all the authority of Jehovah. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." This comes to you under the great seal of heaven. It is the express command of the eternal God. Whatever you may think of it, neither the praise nor the blame of making or publishing it belongs to men. From this moment you must either renounce your Bible, or understand that God accounts you rebels for not loving and serving

him with all the heart and soul. He admits no excuse. Your plea that you cannot, is only pleading guilty. A heart that refuses to love the Creator and Redeemer of the world, is the very thing for which God condemns you,—is the vilest rebel in the universe.

And now have you nothing to do with God or he with you? Know ye, my unhappy hearers, that God will have to do with you through the interminable ages of eternity, and on his sovereign pleasure it depends whether you shall spend your eternity in heaven or hell. You cannot be disconnected from him if you would. You are in his hands, and you must remain in his hands to eternity.

O my dear hearers, my flesh and blood, you have not sufficiently considered these things. There is no realizing sense of one of these truths in minds that can remain at ease in a state of enmity against God. You have not considered who sent you into the world, and for what end,—who supports your lives, and for what end they are supported,—who redeemed you from death, and why you were redeemed. You have not considered what God has earnestly commanded you to do, and what connexion you must have with him to eternity. These things you have not considered; but God considers them all. He indeed keeps silence, because this is not the state of retribution, but of trial. He keeps silence, but is angry. He is angry, and he will one day speak. He will speak in a manner which does not admit of present description, but it will be such as fully to assert his rights and wipe off the stigma which his long silence has occasioned, that he is "altogether such a one as" yourselves. He will take account of his servants to whom he committed the talents. "Every work" shall be brought "into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good or—evil." At the close of all he will command them to cast "the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

And now what will you say to these things? Has not every word been calmly addressed to your reason, and been supported by positive declarations from the word of God? If then the Bible is not a fable,

—if it is the book by which you will be judged at the last day, your case is such as calls for immediate attention. God has a very heavy account against you. There is wrath gone out against you. It behooves you to get the sentence repealed without delay by deep contrition and application to the blood of atonement. Do you think it will answer for you to live any longer idle under the very eye of your Master? At this late hour ought any more time to be lost? I wish I knew what resolutions you are forming. My dear hearers, what do you intend to do? What use will you make of this exhortation when you retire? Some, I fear, will think no more of it until it meets them in judgment. Others may be impressed for a season and afterwards return to stupidity. But will not some one be wise enough this once to believe God? O God, if any are hesitating, interpose and fix their resolves! Nay, let not that thought arise again, When I have got a little more of the world I will attend. So thought Felix, but the thought was fatal. A resolution to postpone, is half a resolution to die as you are. If it were not so pressing a case, I would not be so pressing. But you have souls capable of amazing happiness or amazing wo, and they are now under sentence of eternal death. "He that believeth not is condemned already." Can a rational being rest in such a state? You see also what pressing claims your Creator and Redeemer has upon you. Most of you would be agonized at the thought of defrauding one of your fellow men. But will you be scrupulous to "render—unto Cesar the things which are Cesar's," and feel no concern to render "unto God the things that are God's?" O that this sentiment might vibrate in your ears and be deposited at the bottom of your hearts, "Render—unto God the things that are God's." Let every thing ingenuous in you be stirred up at the names of Father and Redeemer, and excite you to "render—unto God the things that are God's." Then will he no longer frown, but smile upon you as dear children, and our joy on your account will be full. Amen.

## **SERMON XVII**

## EXCUSES

And they all with one consent began to make excuse. - LUKE  
14:18

In the parables which describe the treatment that the Gospel receives from men, the Saviour drew several prominent features of the race. In one place he represents them as making light of the invitation, in another as getting rid of it by frivolous excuses. A man made a great supper and gave out an extensive invitation. When the guests were sent for, "they all with one consent began to make excuse." One had purchased a piece of ground, another had bought five yoke of oxen, another had married a wife; not one had leisure to attend. At this the master of the house was angry; and after filling his apartments from "the streets and lanes of the city,"—from "the highways and hedges,"—he lifted his hand and swore, that not one of those that were bidden should taste of his supper.

The parable plainly presents these three ideas:

- I. That all rejecters of the Gospel are prone to make excuses.
- II. That in the view of God all these excuses are frivolous and provoking.
- III. That they arise from no other cause than an aversion to the Gospel and an unwillingness to bear the blame of rejecting it.

I. All rejecters of the Gospel are prone to make excuses.

This is plainly taught in the parable. The whole Christian world are here divided into two classes; those who accept the calls of God and those who make excuses. It is expressly said of those who refused the invitation, "They all with one consent began to make excuse." It was foreseen that a resort to false pleas to get rid of the Gospel and of the blame of rejecting it, would be a general feature of the race; and the parable was intended to exhibit this universal feature in all its living

hues. What was foreseen has taken place, in every generation, in every land, in every house. Wherever you find a sinner who rejects the Gospel, there you find one, unless he is overwhelmed with conviction, as full of excuses as he is of sin. Besides those numberless pleas which he urges upon himself, such as that he is too young, that if he makes the attempt he shall probably fall away, that religion is a gloomy thing, that the world will mock; besides these, there are many excuses which he keeps on hand to protect himself against the attacks of others; such as that he cannot find evidence to convince him that the Gospel is true, that he cannot change his own heart and it is in vain to try, that he cannot get time to attend to the concerns of his soul, that there is no need to make so much ado about religion, that professors are no better than others, that many of the doctrines are hard and are difficult to be understood. Scores of such pleas are heard in every house as often as you urge upon the stupid an immediate attention to religion. They seem to think the pleas original; but they have been repeated and answered a million of times in every generation since the Christian era. Upon these pleas the Saviour had his eye when he drew the picture in the text. This certainly ought to produce a pause, and lead to greater caution in framing these self-protecting apologies.

II. In the view of God all these excuses are frivolous and provoking.

In no conceivable manner could this be set forth in stronger language than in the parable before us. After those who were invited had urged the most plausible pleas they could frame, the master of the house was angry, and solemnly declared that not one of them should taste of his supper. If the parable did justice to this system of excuse-making, it did not overlook a single plea which a mortal man can make. It takes up excuses in the mass and condemns them all. Not a hint of any exception,—of any privileged plea sent forth with a chartered right to insult the Majesty of heaven. If there is in the universe a licensed excuse, (where intellect and knowledge combine,) it is wronged exceedingly in not receiving a broad mark of distinction. Here the entire system of excuses receives a wholesale

reprobation. The parable is a grand proscription of them all. Its title might be written, No excuse, in any age or country, for rejecting the Gospel. If any man seriously thinks that he has an excuse that is worth a groat,—a plea that has a particle of reason in it,—let him come hither and get his judgment corrected. If any one has wrought himself up to the belief that he is an unfortunate man, under an oppressive government,—that he has real difficulties in the way of doing what is required, which call for pity rather than rebuke, let him come and stand and hear how the Judge of the world disposes of his case. Be it known then and remembered that this trade of excuse-making which is driven so extensively in modern times, was noticed and pointedly condemned by the Saviour of the world. These excuse-makers are wholly in the wrong. Their figleaf covering will not hide a particle of their shame. How could it be supposed that they could have a good excuse for neglecting what God has required? Do they mean to impeach him before all worlds? If there is a fair reason for neglecting an action, that action ought not to have been required. But the question is about neglecting what God has required. What he has not commanded is no part of his service; but the question is about neglecting his service. If a man has a good excuse for neglecting what is religion in others, it would not be religion in him, for it is not required of him if God is just. But if God has peremptorily required of every man who reads the Bible, to love him with all the heart, to repent and believe the Gospel, to be holy as he is holy, to die to this vain world, to profess Christ before men, to pray without ceasing, to be gentle, forgiving, candid, beneficent, to have the same mind that was in Christ;—if all these things are required of every man, (and none who reads the Bible will dare to deny it,) then no man can excuse himself from any part of this service without impeaching his Maker.

But let us examine these excuses one by one. You plead that you cannot find evidence to convince you that the Gospel is true. What, after the wisest and best men in all ages have examined and been convinced? Have the wisest and best been the deluded, and the ignorant and wicked only in the right? After millions have been



transformed from sin to holiness by the power of this Gospel? After the Gospel has produced all the real goodness and elevation of character which have been found in our world? Have you no eyes to see the holiness and heavenly sentiments of this book? Do you overlook the testimony of miracles and prophecies? Is it nothing to you that churches have existed with these Scriptures in their hands ever since the Christian era, proving the history to have been written at the time of the events, and to have made its appeal to multitudes of witnesses then living? or that the Jews have existed with their Scriptures in their hands ever since the days of Moses, and could not have been deceived as to the date or the author of the Pentateuch, nor as to the facts, which were witnessed by a million of people? Is it for want of evidence that you do not believe? No, you will not search for light with the earnestness and candor which the subject demands. You revolt at conviction, because the Bible is against you, and because it would divorce you from your idols. You would believe any other book with a hundredth part of the evidence. "You are constantly yielding to proofs incomparably less in support of other histories and reports, and in your daily transactions of business.

Assuming then, as I have a right to do, that the Scriptures are a revelation from heaven, I come to you with this book in my hands, and say to you, Thus saith the Lord, "Repent and believe the Gospel." I spread before you the hallowed page; I point you to the sacred canon, written with a pencil of light and guarded by a thousand thunders; "He that believeth not shall be damned."

You say, you cannot change your own heart and it is in vain to try. If this is meant as an excuse for a moral agent, it is saying that you cannot love, repent, and believe,—that you cannot do what God, upon penalty of eternal death, has required, and what he will actually send you to hell for neglecting. It is saying that he requires more than you can perform, and that he will torment you forever for not doing impossibilities. It is alleging that he is infinitely the greatest tyrant that ever appeared in the universe. And if this is not blasphemy, and treason, and war against God, what in the universe

can be? Still you plead that you are not his enemies,—that you love him, and would serve him if you could. But if this is not proof of the deadliest enmity, it is in vain to look for proof in any world.

You say, you cannot get time to attend to the concerns of your soul. That is, you cannot get time to do that for which all time was given you. Neglect your friends, neglect your sleep, neglect your food, but do not neglect the service of God. You say, you are commanded to provide for your own. Just as though men could not be Christians and do this. Just as though Christians did not provide for their own. It is not to give up your business, but to lay your business on the road to heaven, by pursuing it with proper motives. It takes no more time to transact business with a holy temper than with a worldly spirit. And as to the duties of devotion, if you would spend half the time in these that you waste in idle musings, in unprofitable talk, in vain amusements, you need no more. You can find leisure for all these, why then not for converse with God? If you loved devotion as you love your ease or wealth, this objection would never be heard.

You say, there is no need to make so much ado about religion. What ado? More, (I suppose you mean,) than you make. Now it is notorious that they who urge this profane excuse, do for the most part neglect religion altogether; and as to offering homage to God, or referring any thing to his will, or acting from a regard to his glory, or seeking his interest, they treat him with as much neglect as though they owed him no allegiance. Their only trinity is honor, pleasure, and gain. And is this enough? Is this so entirely all that God requires that more would be an unseemly ado? I care not how little noise you make about religion, if you will only love God and the Lord Jesus Christ supremely, and your neighbor as yourself. This is all I ask. Is this too much? Is this making an unreasonable ado about religion? Without as much as this, can you hope to escape the rebukes of your Judge?

You plead that professors of religion are no better than others. And what is that to you? You are not to take your law from professors.

Admit that you can find hypocrites in the Church: this is no more than what the Bible taught you to expect. That states that tares grow in every field. False professors only confirm the Scripture testimony. But the question is, does the Bible form characters no better than other men? You dare not say that. You know the holiness of that book, or you would not hate it as you do. For shame then dismiss your cavils; which to say the least, are both captious and unmanly. I know that hypocrites in the Church are no better than others. I know that they are worse, far worse, and more mischievous, and will sink to a lower hell. But what shall we say of those who eat up the sins of God's people as they eat bread and call not upon the name of the Lord? Have these nothing to fear?

You plead that many of the doctrines are hard and are difficult to be understood. But they are not hard or difficult to holy minds. "They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge." Why then are they hard and difficult to you? Let the Holy Ghost answer: "If our Gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not; lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The blame which ought to attach to yourself, you cast upon the doctrines. But what is the Scripture view of this subject? It was a reproach to the stony ground hearers that they heard the word and understood it not; and the Jews were rejected because that, seeing they saw not, and hearing they heard not, neither did they understand. "Without understanding," is numbered among the marks of pagan depravity. "Blind" is an epithet of strong reproach. It is the blindness of prejudice, the sightless eye of a depraved heart: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." The grand difficulty is that the truths of God are against you, and you are so prejudiced in your own favor that you cannot see them to be right. Thus a selfish man whose interest has been crossed by another, can never see that other to be right. The doctrines of the Gospel may be explained ever so clearly, but so long as they are

against you they will never seem to you consistent. While you dislike them they will always appear unjust.

But in another point of view your embarrassment is altogether from yourself. How little pains have you taken to acquire an accurate knowledge of divine truth. How little have you read or thought on the subject. How little have you prayed for light. How many months has your Bible lain neglected upon its shelf. How much more eagerly has your mind run on politics or science or business, than on those glorious mysteries in which your eternal salvation is involved,—mysteries whose grand and awful heights and depths engage the eager study of adoring angels. You can compass sea and land to obtain objects gratifying to your taste. Had you employed half the pains in candidly examining the doctrines of the Gospel, you would not have been thus ignorant and complaining that they are difficult to be understood. And now will you take advantage of your own wrong and urge this wilful ignorance as your excuse?

III. These excuses arise from no other cause than an aversion to the Gospel and an unwillingness to bear the blame of rejecting it.

Look at the parable again. Does it not plainly imply that those who made the excuses did it from a reluctance to accept the invitation, and from a desire to avoid the blame of refusing it? What else are we taught by the strong resentment awakened in the master of the house? That they did not wish to attend, is plain; and if they did not desire to avoid reproach, why any excuse at all?—Why not come boldly out with a plain avowal of their reluctance? If the parable has any meaning in it, it clearly supports the charge I have made.

But these two motives are obvious from the very nature of the case. If the excuses which sinners urge are frivolous, they are not those which influence the heart; and when a man offers reasons to excuse himself from duty, which the heart disowns, he can give no stronger proof of aversion to the duty. These excuses then betray the opposition which they seek to hide. And they certainly reveal an

unwillingness to bear the blame of refusing. They are doubtless intended as an apology for neglect; and what is the design of an apology but to prevent the imputation of blame? They betray an unwillingness in sinners to bear the blame in the sight of God,—a reluctance to take that low and guilty place under his eye which he assigns them. They often betray a reluctance to bear the blame in the sight of men,—taking a shape which clearly bespeaks a solicitude to preserve appearances.—But they are chiefly prompted by a reluctance to feel in their own minds the uneasiness of guilt. Sinners are neither willing to engage in the service of God, nor to endure the agonies of a troubled conscience; and therefore they seek to hide their guilt from their own view by the tapestry of their thousand excuses. Thus while they loudly profess a desire to be convicted, they are struggling against conviction with all their might; determined to live without disturbance while they live without God in the world.

From what has been said,

(1.) We see the wickedness, the folly, and the ruinous tendency of all these excuses. The wickedness, for they are prompted by pure opposition to the Gospel, and by a hardened determination not to bear the blame of rejecting it. They stand forth as sin's apologists and cast all the blame on God. The folly, for they defeat their own ends and betray the guilt they would conceal. The ruinous tendency, for they apply all their strength to resist conviction, and thus to prevent the possibility of an escape from death. If they can succeed the soul is inevitably lost.

(2.) We see that stupid sinners are in a most guilty, forlorn, and unprotected state. They are stripped of all excuse and left naked under the eye of an omniscient God. That pure and penetrating eye finds them without a covering and pierces them through and through. Not one word of apology can they offer for all their years of sin, for all their hatred of God, for all their hardened impenitence, for all their stubborn rejections of a Saviour. They have no plea to make. They must be "speechless." They must bear all the guilt forever. And

what a world of guilt it must be when every extenuating circumstance is removed.

(3.) Let me beseech my poor impenitent hearers never to make another excuse to eternity. It can do you no good. It will only betray your folly, and increase your guilt, and ruin your souls. If you have any pity on yourselves, instead of resisting, strive to increase conviction. Court it and do not repel it. Lie down under it and draw it over you with all your might. Take all the shame and blame to yourselves and clear your Maker. In no other way can you find pardon. You must be convicted thus or perish forever.

(4.) Here then you stand without one excuse for rejecting the Gospel another moment. Why then will you not accept it at once? Do you begin to name a reason? but that is taken from you. You have none left. Do you say, your wicked heart will not consent? But my business is with that wicked heart. Why will not you, O stubborn heart, now submit? Hardened rebel, why will not you lay down your arms? If you have no reason for holding out, why will you hold out any longer? O remember the conclusion of the parable. He lifted his hand and swore that not one of those that were bidden should taste of his supper. While you delay, that sentence may proceed against you. Remember the rebels in the wilderness. You are now brought to the border of the promised land. Refuse now and you die; accept now and you live forever. Amen.

## **SERMON XVIII**

### **LET US REASON TOGETHER**

Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool" - ISAI. 1:18

It is the boast of man that he is a reasonable being, and it is his duty and dignity to act a reasonable part. God addresses himself to that reason, and condescends to expostulate with his rebellious subjects. Standing with his commission in my hands, I have it in charge to pursue the same course,—to commend the service of my Master to the conscience of my hearers and to justify the ways of God to man.

Come then and let us reason together. My business at present is with impenitent sinners. I would single them out from the crowd, and take them aside, and say in their ear, "I have a message from the Lord to deliver to you. I am sent to reason with you in his name about the high concerns of a future world, about your interests a thousand ages hence, about the claims which the Sovereign of the world has upon you, and the long score of uncanceled charges which he has against you." Let Christians stand by and assist me with their prayers, while I attempt to recall from death this interesting multitude.

My poor hearers, you have often considered an address from the pulpit as a matter of course, and felt no personal interest in it. But it must not be so now. I have a solemn errand from the Lord to do to you one by one. While you are suspended between two eternities, I have one word from the Most High to say to you before your fate is decided. Drop every other care; lend me your whole attention; put your minds into a most solemn frame; and for a few moments feel as though you stood before the bar of God.

Here then you are, the creatures of God, bound to eternity, and destined to be happy or miserable forever. Raise your heads out of this infant state and look abroad on the amazing scenes before you. Here you lie crushed under the mountains of guilt, for which the God that made you has condemned you to eternal wo. Did ever man address an audience under more solemn circumstances? Your case is such as calls for an immediate remedy,—a remedy in which you yourselves must be active. What then is to be done? Will you lend me your whole attention?

I have it in charge from God to inform you with the utmost plainness what he would have you to do; to tell you that you must instantly drop the weapons of your rebellion and return to him with submission and love,—with a sweet and adoring sense of his perfections, of his moral government, of his superintending providence; that you must renounce every selfish passion, and expand the arms of a strong benevolence to embrace the human family, friends and foes; that you must fall at his feet with a broken heart for all your sins, without any further attempts to justify or extenuate them, clearing your Maker and taking all the shame and blame to yourselves, owning the justice of your condemnation, approving the holy strictness of his law, and grieving exceedingly that you should have sinned against so much goodness, against a government so righteous, a law so sublimely pure and glorious; that under a conviction how right it is for you to suffer, and how wrong it would be for you to be pardoned for any thing that you can do, you must feel that you are utterly undone and stand in perishing need of a Saviour; that you must heartily approve of the Saviour which God has provided and the way of salvation by him, and firmly believe in the divine sincerity in this whole arrangement, and choose that Redeemer for your own, and rest your souls upon him, and go to God through him, with earnest cries for mercy, with humble boldness, growing up into filial confidence, that can cry, "Abba Father,"—that can walk about the palace of God like a child at home, and admire all his works, and cheerfully repose upon his paternal love, his superintending care, his universal providence, his everlasting covenant, and cry, with a deliberate and lasting assurance, "My Lord and my God;" that you must enter on a life of steady devotion, a life of zeal in the service of God and his Church, a life of universal obedience, shown in the exercise of all the Christian graces and in the practice of all the Christian virtues; that you must die to this vain world and feel and act as citizens of another country, "looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."



This is the precise service,—the glorious and blessed course upon which I am sent to invite you to enter. Having delivered this part of my message, I have it furthermore in charge not to leave you till I have set before you, in such terms as the language of mortals will furnish, some of the reasons which urge you to an immediate compliance.

The great God has commanded it. This you know. His whole word is one system of precepts, laying upon you the different parts of this service with the whole strength of his authority. The God who made you has commanded it. The God in whom you live and move and have your being has commanded it. The God who will be your Judge at the last day has commanded it. The God before whose majesty and glory prostrate angels veil their faces, has commanded it. Will you withstand all this authority? Shall not the positive command of the eternal God bind you? Is he not your Sovereign? Will you say that this duty belongs to the Church? Can you escape out of his hands?

And is not this a most reasonable service, worthy of a God to require, and the very least that it would become a God of infinite holiness to accept? Is not universal love such a service as God should require of his rational offspring? Will you not aspire to the dignity of universal benevolence? Will you not love a God of infinite wisdom and goodness, whose only aim in all his works is to raise the universe to the highest pitch of prosperity,—a prosperity resting, as the highest prosperity must, upon holy order,—the universal exercise of justice and love? Will you not love a government whose only care is to protect this order, and thus promote the happiness of the whole intelligent family? How magnificent is this god-like law. What majesty and glory surround this sublime and holy sceptre. It fills all heaven with admiration and transport. And cannot you think it a happiness to be under the government of such a God? Will you deem it a hardship to obey such a law? to submit to such a providence? When you have broken in upon the order of the universe by violating this benevolent system of rules, will you think it a hardship to be called upon to repent? Shall you find it difficult to weep and break

your hearts? And since the Son of God has descended from heaven to sanction the principles of this government, to condemn sin, to pluck you from destruction by the sacrifice of himself, and to bear away the honors of your salvation, will you account it a hardship to accept and honor him? All that God requires is reasonable and for your good. In no part of his administration has he given you the slightest cause for complaint. On the contrary, he has followed you with a succession of mercies which have affected angels. On his arm have you all along been supported, and by his hand have you always been fed. He is your Creator, Proprietor, and Master. He made you what you are and gave you all your talents, and in a world which he had furnished for your use he placed you, with a solemn command to use these talents for him. Is it not reasonable that you should be his servants? that you should act in all things with a reference to his will? that whether you eat or drink or whatever you do you should do all to his glory? Is not this what a rational being ought to render? Are not these demands reasonably made on such creatures as you?

But you seek to excuse yourselves with the plea that you are not able. And are you thus excused? What then will you say of him who would not excuse you, but peremptorily commanded you to perform this service, and threatened you with eternal punishment if you refused? Do you mean solemnly to impeach him in the presence of all worlds? In proportion as you take away a tittle of your obligation and guilt, you support a dreadful impeachment against your Maker. As hard as your heart is, he still commands you to love and serve him, and declares that he will punish you forever if you refuse, and actually sends sinners to hell for no other reason. And is the service an impossibility? There is no difficulty in the way but that which constitutes the essence of all your guilt,—a heart opposed to God. If this rebellious heart may not be forbidden and punished, there is an end to all moral government,—there is an end to all distinction between sin and holiness,—and men are no more moral agents than the brutes and the stocks. If you shrink from this conclusion, you must go back and admit that wherever a rational soul is found that

knows its Maker's will, there is one who is bound to love and serve God, whether the Spirit sanctify him or not.

But if the service of God is reasonable, and reasonably required of such creatures as you, why do you withhold it? If it is reasonable in God to require it, it is unreasonable in you to refuse it. Why then do you act so unreasonable a part? You ought not to do it. You ought to give him your heart at once. You have no manner of excuse for withholding it a moment.

But you plead for some delay. "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." This is the very thing I feared. Men cannot resolve to die without religion, and strongly attached to other things, they cannot consent to enter upon it at once. This is the rock around which the bones of ship-wrecked millions are whitening. More probably have gone down to death from a Gospel land in this way than by any other stratagem of Satan. The arch-deceiver knows that if he should come out at once and boldly tell men never to become religious, his plot would be discovered and defeated. He knows that "in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." He takes a surer course. He tells them there is time enough yet. He urges them to put off till to-morrow. He keeps the phantom of a more convenient season before them, receding as they approach, and determines that they shall never overtake it. They see not the stratagem, and follow on as an ox to the slaughter, amusing themselves with the hope of a more convenient season, until they plunge into eternal death. Could you approach the margin of the burning lake and collect the history of the damned from their own lips, you would probably find that most of those who went down from a Gospel land were decoyed to ruin in this very way. In this same net your own feet are taken. Break that fatal snare or you yourselves are lost.

Consider too the wickedness and danger of this delay. All this time you are defrauding your Maker of the service which you owe him. All this time you are living in constant rebellion against God. If ever you

are bound to serve him you are bound to serve him now. If ever he is worthy of love he is worthy now. If you would shudder at the thought of remaining his enemies to eternity, why continue his enemies for a day? In this you are going directly in the face of his solemn, earnest commands and entreaties. "To day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts." Let me urge the danger too. All this time you are walking over the grave: and should you suddenly fall, where are you then? By such a tenure you would not consent to hold your temporal estate if in your power to obtain a better. If all your property was thus exposed you would not sleep. You would compass sea and land to make your title sure. How comes it then to pass that in the very case which calls loudest for anxiety, there you are the most secure? And consider, I pray you, that your hazard is daily increasing. Every hour lessens the chance of your salvation. Your hearts are growing harder; your enemies are intrenching themselves there; evil habits are becoming confirmed; the wall of separation between you and God is growing stronger and higher; the work of repentance and self-government is growing more and more difficult; the Spirit is departing, time is shortening, and death and hell approaching. If then you cannot now be persuaded, what reason have you to hope that you ever will? If you find it difficult to turn now, it will be more difficult at every future day. You hope for God's assistance hereafter; but what right have you to hope for that while you are rejecting the assistance which he now offers? He has never authorized that hope. He has not spoken of a to-morrow. On the contrary he has warned you that his Spirit shall not always strive with man. And his providence repeats this warning. So far as man can judge, few are sanctified after the middle of life, and by far the greater part under the age of twenty. With these dreadful prospects before you and these accumulating dangers around you, what infatuation to hope for a more convenient season and to fold up your arms as though all was well.

All this time you are depriving yourselves of the present joys of religion,—that tranquillity among the passions, that peace of conscience, that delightful communion with God, that transporting

sense of pardon, that beatific anticipation of future glory, which religion affords. The tempter has had the effrontery to tell you that religion would spoil your peace. And why did he not tell you that heaven was a dungeon? But ask those who have tried her power, and they, with one voice will testify, that "her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace."

And for what do you lose all these joys and sacrifice your souls? For husks that cannot satisfy; for idols full of tormenting stings; for a world of shadows; for riches which suffer not their possessors to sleep; for objects bearing about this label written with the finger of God, "Vanity and vexation of spirit." "The way of transgressors is hard," "and the way of peace have they not known." And even were it otherwise,—were every anguish extracted from their hearts,—yet what is there in all these objects worthy to engross the supreme desires of an immortal mind? What are these to God and Christ and heaven?

What are these to the interests of that soul which is destined to expand forever in the regions of light and life, or to sink eternally under the anguish of the never dying worm? O eternity! eternity! thy solemnities turn all the promises of time to a jest. Count the sands of the sea; multiply them by the leaves of the forest, and the spires upon the mountains, and the stars in heaven; and when so many ages have rolled away, your happiness or your misery will be but just begun. What is this world? "its pomp, its pleasures, and its nonsense all?" If I live three score years and ten on a dung hill, what is that to me if I may but obtain to the blessedness of everlasting ages. If I spend my seventy years begirt with imperial purple and rolling in the pleasures of a court, what is that to me if after all I must be imprisoned in hell as long as the throne of God endures.

My dear hearers, are you immortal? Are you to spend an eternity in heaven or hell? And are you losing yourselves among the vanities of this world? Will you never awake? Sleep on then and take your rest. But know you that the mists of death will soon gather around you.

You will be laid upon a dying bed. Time is gone and eternity has come. I see you lying there without a friend to help you in heaven or earth. I see you cast back your eyes on misspent sabbaths, on murdered privileges, on wasted time. You remember the calls you once rejected. I hear you cry, "I had a soul but prized it not, and now my soul is gone. Ten thousand worlds for one more year. Ten thousand worlds for one more sabbath in the house of God."—I look a little further, and I see the perturbations of the troubled sky. The sign of the Son of Man appears in heaven. The last trumpet sounds. That body which had been committed to the grave is organized afresh. It opens its eyes on the strange commotions of a dissolving world. It is forced to ascend. The judgment seat is set in the clouds of heaven and the books are opened. I hear you cry to rocks and to mountains to cover you; but rocks and mountains are sunk in the general ruin. The books are opened, and on a black page are spread out all the sins of your life. That page is held up before a frowning universe.—The judgment ended, the Judge prepares to speak. God of mercy save me from that hour! Eternal justice lowers upon his awful brow. His right hand grasps ten thousand thunders. With a look before which heaven and earth flee away, he turns full upon his foes: "Depart,—ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." — But I return, and, blessed be God, I still find myself on praying ground and my dear hearers about me. This is not the Judgment Day. But, my beloved friends, I expect soon to meet you at that bar and' give an account of my labors among you to day. It is in full view of that awful scene that I am speaking thus to you. I would not have you perish; but if you perish, I would clear my garments of your blood.

But you must not perish. The calls of mercy are still out. I have returned to my text and found it written, "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." These heavenly words, issuing from the eternal throne, still mingle their sounds about your ears. There is yet hope. You need not perish. The door of mercy is not yet closed. That Saviour whom you just now saw on the judgment seat, once

died on Calvary. Though you have so long trifled with his blood, though you have so long abused sermons and sabbaths, though you have ten thousand times been found in arms against the Sovereign of the world, yet in that blood all your stains may be washed out,—all your treasons purged. Only do not now seal your damnation by longer rejecting his mercy. Fall down now at his feet. Go not from this house till you have bathed them with your tears and wiped them with the hairs of your head. This is an awful moment. Heaven, earth, and hell are now opened before you. From the throne of God which is placed in the midst the invitation is still proceeding. Not man, but God himself is now speaking to you. If you turn away it will be like those who turned away when their feet touched the borders of the promised land. They could not be forgiven but must perish in the wilderness. Take care what you do, for you are now standing near the Shekinah. Drop the weapons from your bloody hands. With those trembling arms clasp his feet; resolving never to quit your hold;—that if he tread you down you will sink, but that you will never leave the spot till one look of peace assures you that your sins are forgiven. O could we see you thus!—Are you afraid to go? Why, it is the same Being that left the realms of glory to die for you. Go with greater confidence than you ever went to an earthly parent. Go with all your sins upon you. It is not to judge that he has now come. He has come to heal the broken-hearted and to preach deliverance to the captives. The love of Jesus looks out of his eye. His hands, bearing still the prints of the nails, are extended to receive you. Go, and give pleasure to that heart which bled on the point of the spear. Go and find your heaven in the sweetness of that embrace. Go:—you see him there,—O go!

## **SERMON XIX**

HOBAB

And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel, the Midianite, Moses' father in law; We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to my own Land and to my kindred. And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayst be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee. - NUM. 10:29-32

This Hobab, the son of Raguel, the Midianite, is thought by some to have been the brother-in-law of Moses; but others understood him to be called in this very passage the father-in-law. The Septuagint adopts the latter opinion. Assuming this to be the fact, Hobab was no other than Jethro, who is sometimes called Reuel. He was the priest or prince of Midian, and appears to have been a worshipper of the true God. In former days, when Moses had fled from Pharaoh, he came into the land of Midian, in the neighborhood of Mount Sinai, where he married the daughter of Jethro, and lived forty years. Called of God to return to Egypt, he took leave of his father-in-law and departed with his wife and children, but afterwards sent them back to Midian, and pursued his journey to Egypt alone. Soon after his return to Sinai with the Hebrew nation, Jethro brought his wife and children to him, and assisted him in arranging the civil affairs of the nation, and then took his leave and returned home. During the eleven months that the congregation was at Sinai, Moses might have frequent interviews with his father-in-law, who lived in the vicinity; and just before he commenced his journey to Canaan, he made the proposition contained in the text. Though the invitation was at first declined, yet being pressed it was not finally rejected; for the family of Hobab did accompany Israel. From their greater knowledge of the wilderness they were probably of essential service to a nation of strangers traversing that trackless desert, and in the language of Moses, were to them instead of eyes; and at the close of the forty



years they entered the land under Joshua, and had an inheritance assigned them in the tribe of Judah, where they continued a distinct family, under the name of Kenites, but enjoying all the privileges of the people of God, until the Babylonish captivity.

While many in these days are joining themselves to the Church of God and setting out for Canaan, I have selected this text as affording matter both interesting and seasonable.

When this invitation was given by Moses, the people of God had just separated themselves from all the other nations of the earth, and formed themselves into a church state by the solemn transactions at Sinai, and were then setting out for Canaan. All who did not accompany them would be left behind in a wretched heathen state. A strong line of division was thenceforth to be drawn between the people of God and the rest of the world. Under these circumstances it was the duty and privilege of Hobab and all good men to join themselves to Israel, that so they might live among religious ordinances, among sabbaths and tabernacles, and enjoy the presence of God in the shekinah, and worship him in the only way of his appointment. Before that day the true worshippers had been scattered; an Abraham in one nation, an Abimelech in another, a Job in a third, an Eliphaz, a Bildad, a Zophar, an Elihu, and a Jethro in others. And the presence of God had been manifested in all places where his worshippers had lived. In one place he would appear visibly, in another in dreams, in a third he would utter himself from the whirlwind. Before 'this no particular forms of worshipping and sacrificing were appointed, but all the varieties were accepted. But now the time had come when God would live abroad among the nations no more, but would confine his presence to the mercy seat which was to be established at Canaan. The particular forms in which he chose to be worshipped were minutely prescribed; a great part of which could be observed no where but in the city which he should choose to place his name in. His worshippers would thenceforth disappear from other countries, and the whole world would be given up to pagan darkness; while the light, collected to a point, would

shine with concentrated lustre among the chosen tribes. Under these circumstances it was the duty and privilege of Hobab to unite his destinies with the people of God and to follow them to the land of promise. Thus doing he would enjoy the blessings of the Church, and entail a glorious inheritance on his children, by bringing them to be of the household of faith, who otherwise would be left in the glooms of heathen darkness.

And now, my brethren, whilst thousands in these days are joining themselves to the Lord and publicly setting out for the heavenly Canaan, is it not the duty of all who wish to serve or be served of the God of Abraham, to go along with them? What countless blessings might they thus secure to themselves and to their children; their poor children who otherwise may perish for want of a father's faith and a mother's prayers. They must either accompany God's people or be left behind in wretchedness and ruin, like what awaited those who should linger in the fields of Midian.

When this invitation was given it was a time of jubilee and joy with the Church. They had just avouched the Almighty Jehovah for their God and Father; they had been graciously received as his family, and were then, under the brightest auspices, setting out for the happy land given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. What glorious prospects lay before the eye of Moses as he thus addressed his father Hobab. And with these prospects before him how could he bear to leave so dear a friend behind? How did his heart yearn to take all his kindred with him. His beloved friends from whom he had received so much kindness while a stranger among them, and with whom he had spent so many happy hours,—to see their face no more,—to leave them destitute of all the blessings of God's covenant! this was more than he could bear. And why should they lose so much? The way of Canaan was as open to them as to Moses. And of what urgent necessity it was that they should go at that time. If they did not set out then probably they never would follow after. Never again would they find such a company setting out together for the promised land. And must they never taste the delicious fruits of Canaan and the

spiritual blessings of Abraham's seed? Must they sink into the sins and perish under the ruins of the heathen world? How could Moses endure the thought? In his eyes I read his soul as he presses the invitation upon his father: "Come thou with us and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." What love and goodness glowed in this address. He wished Hobab and his family to go because such an accession to the Church would advance the glory of God,—because he regarded their happiness as human beings, and more especially as beloved friends,—because he coveted the pleasure of their society,—and because he calculated on the advantages to be derived from them by the way. For similar reasons do those who are setting out for the heavenly Canaan, earnestly desire their friends and acquaintance to go along with them. The greater the number the greater the glory to God. They have also a sincere desire for the best happiness of their fellow men. Their benevolence, expansive as the light, embraces the great family of man, and would fain bring them all home to their Father's house. It is not in their hearts to monopolize the blessings to themselves. Especially do they desire to have the friends of their heart accompany them. What agonizing throes agitate the bosoms of pious children for their ungodly parents,—for their unsanctified brothers and sisters,—of pious parents for their unregenerate children,—and of pious husbands and wives for their unrenewed partners. They long to see them happy after death, and they greatly desire the pleasure of their religious society and friendship. As soft as the dews of Hermon are the delights of Christian communion, especially with those whom the ties of nature have bound to our hearts. To tread with them the pleasant paths of wisdom, to mingle our sympathies and cares and joys and trials; this is a banquet next to the repast of heaven. How much is often lost in family circles for want of this heavenly fellowship. Another motive to wish that our friends may accompany us, is the advantage to be derived from their counsels, prayers, and watchful friendship. They may be to us instead of eyes. Religious friendship has peculiar advantages when shedding its benign influence upon the domestic relations. Two lovely sisters walking hand in hand in the ways of Zion;—a husband and wife holding sweet

communion together when they sit in the house and when they walk by the way; of what great advantage may they be in supporting and animating each other. And what a great assistance might youthful companions be to each other would they agree to set out together in the heavenly course. And why cannot such happy associations be formed on the high road to Zion? Why should parents be torn from children, husbands from wives, and brothers from brothers? Why need any be left behind? The road to Canaan is as open to them who loiter in Midian as to those who are on their way. And what opportunity so favorable to commence the journey as when such crowds are setting out for the happy country? Now they need not travel the long and difficult way alone. But the time will come when all the pilgrims will have got home, and this road will no longer be frequented. And then the cry will be, Alas that we did not set out in season!

There were strong reasons to enforce this invitation of Moses. He was not going to visit the inclement regions of Scythia, nor the sickly fens of Egypt; but to live under the healthful skies of Canaan,—in a country fair and fruitful, brightened with cheerful suns, and fanned with temperate and salubrious breezes. And God had spoken good concerning Israel. They were to enjoy the happiest commonwealth beneath the skies,—to live under laws framed by God himself. They were to enjoy the oracles of God, the ordinances of his worship, the tabernacle, sabbaths, and holy feasts; and all their institutions were to be stamped with God and religion. Their economy and order would be, throughout, a delicious banquet for a holy taste. How infinitely superior to the motley and irregular fabrics of pagan superstition. The God of the whole earth had engaged to be their God, to fix his residence among them, and to sit on the mercy seat between the cherubims, diffusing blessings around the land, pardoning their sins, hearing their prayers, and holding blessed communion with them. Here alone was the Gospel of peace to be heard and the great atonement to be displayed. Their sacrifices and all their holy rites were to be full of Christ. In a word, all that was precious in the manifestations of God,—all that was valuable in the

plan of grace revealed for the salvation of a ruined world,—all that was glorious in all creation,—in heaven and earth,—was, in a sense, to meet in a point in the Church, and to dwell among sacrifices streaming with blood, among tabernacles and temples and holy rites and praying thousands. In this nation the great Messiah was to appear, with all his blessings for men. Indeed God had spoken good concerning Israel. Great was to be the increase of their prosperity and joy; insomuch that every heart that loved the Church would thrill with transport. Israel was a name which should live in honor when all other nations should be blended in one common grave. Their prosperity was to rise and extend and lengthen, even through the ages of eternity. How did Balaam, when perched on Abarim, inflated with the big inspiration and rapt with the grandeur of his subject,—how did he soar and stretch to more than mortal height when descanting on the future glory of Israel. And this, all this, was the blessedness which Hobab was invited to partake.

With increased interest we shall now look upon the invitation again: "And Moses said unto—[his] father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." And when he hesitated, Moses pressed him: "Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayst be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee." How could he resist so tender, so pressing, so advantageous an offer? What a fatal calculation would it have been for him to have lingered in Midian. He could not stay. He did not resist the entreaties of the prophet. He went with him. He went, and he had no cause to repent it. He saw the glory of Israel. His posterity partook of the prosperity of the nation and the blessings of Abraham. And this day, we trust, he is rejoicing that he went with Moses.

And now, my dear brethren, with the voice of undissembled friendship I would apply this invitation to every person in the house

who is not on his way to the heavenly Canaan. In the name and behalf of that blessed company who are bound to the land of promise, I present you an affectionate invitation to come along with them. I know they greatly desire your company. They would not monopolize the blessings to themselves. They would fain impart to you a share of all that God bestows on them. They wish you to partake of their happiness for time and eternity. Indeed they know not how to leave you behind. As they cannot at present speak for themselves, I will address you as their organ, and wish the invitation may be received as coming from them.

Imagine that you hear the voice of some beloved child or parent or brother or sister or husband or wife, whose name is enrolled in the tablet of Israel, calling to you from the Church: We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come ye with us and we will do you good. We are bound, not to an earthly Canaan, but to the mount of vision, the Zion of the skies; to fairer fields than Moses saw from Pisgah; to the land of the rivers of life,—better watered than the plain of Jordan, more beautiful than Tirzah and Jerusalem, more fat than Gilead or the vale of Eshcol, more delectable than the vineyards of Engedi, stronger than the castles of the Anakims, and more magnificent than the mountains of Lebanon. This is the land of which the Lord hath said, I will give it you. Unworthy indeed we are; yet our Father hath suffered us to hope for a bright inheritance in the heavens. It is decreed that earth-born worms shall be rapt above the sun and stars, to fly with angels through the upper spheres, and to expand in regions of exhaustless life. Into his own hands hath he taken the charge to carry us through the windings of the wilderness, to subdue the giants, and to put us into peaceful possession of the blessed country. We hold the place by no uncertain tenure. It is made over to us by a covenant well ordered in all things and sure. And now we advertise you that our face is fixedly set to go up to this Jerusalem. Come ye with us and we will do you good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. Yea, glorious things are spoken of the city of our God. The most transporting prospects are spread out before the view of Christians.

Eye hath not seen nor ear heard what God hath prepared for them that love him. For these enchanting scenes we are toiling and pressing forward, and hope soon to enter the portals of the celestial city and leave all these lower worlds behind. Come ye with us and share in all our glory. There are seats enough around the throne for you, and we would not occupy them alone. The mountains and vales of Canaan are spacious enough to admit you and your little ones. Heaven is wide enough for all. There is room enough in the heart of God, merits enough in Christ, ministering angels enough to attend you. There is room enough in the Church to admit you, room enough at the table of the Lord to receive you, and room enough in the hearts of Christians to entertain you. Come ye with us from Midian and unite your destinies with the Israel of God. Theirs is the only interest which will stand when worlds decay; the only bark that will ride through the storms of conflicting elements and enter the blissful haven; the only thing that will rise unimpaired from amidst the ruins of dissolving worlds. Come then and embark your all on that bottom which supports the fortunes of Israel.—Unite your destinies with theirs, to rise as they rise, and to fall only when they fall. Come and take your chance with them, and say as Ruth did to Naomi, "Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

Come ye along with us. Think not, beloved friends, that we call you to venture among dangers which we will not encounter ourselves, or to engage in labors which we ourselves would shun, or that we are pressing a boon upon you which we despise. No, we offer you what we hold most dear, and what worlds should not purchase from us. We will cheerfully go with you through all your perils and toils. We will keep by your side in every extremity, and will never quit you in the hour of trial. We would not send you alone through unexplored ways. Only come with us and we will go with you.

Come ye with us and we will do you good. There is nothing in our power that we will not do for you. We will assist you by our counsels, we will cheer you by our sympathies, and employ for you our prayers.

Our heads, our hearts, our hands shall be ready to assist you. We will do what in us lies to support you in affliction and to strengthen you in temptation. We will watch over you with a brother's care; will rejoice when you rejoice and weep when you weep. We will unite our counsels with yours against the common foe, and will stand or fall with you. We will clinch hands and together break through the thickest ranks. Together will we conquer and together will we reign. Not death itself shall long divide us. We here, with great affection and desire, offer ourselves for your companions and assistants by the way. We seek and court your alliance. Take us and we are yours. We freely confess to you that we ourselves also want your assistance. Like the Hebrews, we are in a wilderness, surrounded by enemies and dangers; and you may be to us instead of eyes. Beset with difficulties and foes we call for your assistance. Come ye up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. We should be obliged by your counsels, sympathies, and prayers; and much should we value the pleasure of your society.

And it shall be, if you go with us, yea it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto you. You shall take part with us in the Gospel, in its precious promises, in the privilege of pardon, in all our consolations. We will welcome you to the table of the Lord, and there, as in a banqueting house, we will joyfully impart to you that sacred feast which we ourselves receive. You shall share in our labors, our watchings, our trials; and when we find a blossom by the way we will not fail to show it unto you. You shall have your full share in our final inheritance, in our crowns and diadems, and shall reign with us forever and ever. In all the good, for time and eternity, which we receive from the Lord, you, dear brethren, shall have your part. Only come along with us and share our fortunes with us. Come drink at our fountains, repose in our valleys, and bring your little ones to partake of our harvests, our sacred feasts, and the delights of our tabernacle. We shall rejoice to embrace you as brethren. With overflowing hearts we will welcome you to the maternal care of our mother, the Church. We shall delight to show you all the rare things which we discover in these new



climes, the mysterious regions of Zion. We will carry you around and show you the glory of the temple and all its sacred order. We will lead you to Calvary, and show you a Saviour reeking in blood. If we depart first, perhaps we may become your guardian spirits. And when we have attended you home, we will lead you around the upper skies, and show you the magnificence of the New Jerusalem. This done, we will choose out one common abode in some fair immortal field, and dwell together like one soul through the unmeasured ages of eternity. You see our hearts are ready to take part with you in all things. Only come and be with us and we will be with you.

And now who among you all will consent, and this day set out with us for the promised land? Will none consent? Must we go alone, and gather the grapes and reap the harvest of Canaan without you? We confess to you our whole souls,—we know not how to leave you behind. Often shall we look back and sigh for your company. O gratify our anxious desires and come along with us. Forsake your idol gods and your father's house, and come and take shelter under the wings of the God of Israel.

There is a voice gone out; an alarm is heard, that tempests are gathering over the land of Midian. I see the perturbations of the troubled sky,—the fury of the winds driving together the high-charged clouds; and now a general stillness holds the pulse of nature;—dreadful syncope before the bursting of the angry storm. "Up, get ye out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city." Vast and eternal will be the difference between those who set out for Canaan and those who stay behind. The impassable gulf will divide many a father's house; a parent on one side and a child on the other,—a brother on one side and a sister on the other; and what is most affecting of all, this line will break the nuptial tie and forever divide the husband from the wife of his bosom. Are none affected at the sight of such crowds setting out for Mount Zion while they are left behind? And why, my dear friends, will you not also go? Are not your souls as precious as theirs? Have you not as much need to go? Would it not be as much to your advantage? And have you not as good a

right? for all are equally invited to share in the promised land. Come ye then with us and we will do you good. And it shall be, if you go with us, yea it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto you. Amen.

## **SERMON XX**

### **RETURNING FROM THE CRUCIFIXION**

Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off beholding these things. - LUKE 23:47-49

At the time of our Saviour's advent the sceptre had so far departed from Judah, that all their civil affairs were managed by a Roman governor set over them without their consent. Though the sanhedrim was still invested with ecclesiastical authority, they no longer retained the power of life and death: and when the chief priests and elders had conspired to crucify the Son of God, they could not execute their purpose without the consent of the Roman governor.

In all the provinces of the Roman empire bodies of soldiers were stationed to keep the conquered nations in subjection. These were divided into companies of from sixty to a hundred and twenty, and each company was commanded by a first and second centurion. Such a one was Cornelius of Cesarea. Such a one was the believing; centurion of Capernaum whose servant Christ healed. And such a one was the man who commanded the ruffian band that insulted and crucified the Lord of glory.

The wicked Pilate, who had been reluctant to deliver up an innocent man to death, not more from love of justice than from an unaccommodating spirit towards the Jews, at length, for fear of being accused to Cesar, scourged him and resigned him to be crucified, and appointed his own soldiers to execute the horrid sentence. "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall," called the pretorium. There were four that acted as special executioners on this occasion; who, "when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part." These four are thought to have been those who were with the Roman lictors. The lictors were officers attendant on the Roman magistrates, who not only acted as marshals, but, by means of soldiers under them, arrested and executed criminals. But those who took Jesus into the pretorium "gathered unto him the whole band." That band, which we find under the command of a centurion, was deemed necessary to keep the peace and to guard as well as insult the prisoner. Whatever control an intermediate lictor might have had over the four executioners, the centurion is understood to have presided over the whole scene of mockery and torture.

As our Saviour was condemned for claiming to be the king of the Jews, the soldiers laid themselves out to insult this claim. They stripped him and put on him a scarlet or purple robe, and platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand for a sceptre, and bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews. And they spit upon him, and struck him with their hands, and smote him upon the head with the reed, driving the thorns into his temples. After this horrid mockery they took off the robe and put his own raiment on him and led him away to crucify him, bending under one end of his cross. When they arrived at Calvary they suspended him between two thieves, and drove the dreadful spikes through the live nerves of his hands and feet; and while the whole weight of his body hung suspended on these agonized cords, and the chief priests and the multitude were scoffing and wagging their heads, and the thieves were blaspheming, the soldiers insulted him with vinegar mingled with gall and with

wine mingled with myrrh, and cried in outrageous mockery, "If thou be the king of the Jews save thyself." And when they had done all this, they let him hang in agony and sat down over against the cross to watch him and to prevent his friends from coming to take him down.

This centurion must have had a hard and barbarous heart, or he could not have permitted his soldiers to treat the sufferer thus. For though he was obliged to see him executed, it cannot be doubted that he had power to restrain their wanton insults. With such a brutal heart he brought the divine victim to Calvary. With such a heart he presided over the erection of the cross and the driving of the nails. And with such a heart he sat down with his soldiers to watch him there. But while he sat there astonishing things appeared. It was nine in the morning when Jesus was nailed to the cross. After they had blasphemed and wagged their heads for three hours, a miraculous eclipse of the sun began at noon and continued till his death at three o'clock, in the time of the full moon. And darkness was over all the land until the ninth hour. This was enough to draw the attention of the centurion to every circumstance relating to this wondrous man. And as he listened to what should escape him, he heard him praying for his murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This was such a temper as he had never witnessed before. He further heard him calmly commit his mother to the beloved disciple: "Woman, behold thy son;" and to John, "Behold thy mother." Again he heard him with his last words claim God for his Father and resign himself into his hands: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." This did not look like an impostor. An impostor would not have remained steadfast during the agonies of a lingering death and gone into eternity with a lie in his right hand. But behold greater wonders yet. At the last convulsion of the expiring God a great earthquake heaves the mountain and rends asunder the rocks. "Now when the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, [to wit, that barbarous band,] saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God." Or as another evangelist says, "And when the centurion

which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God." Or as it is in our text, "Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man." He was fully convinced, and so were at least some of the soldiers, that they had been mocking and murdering the Son of God, and he at least was brought to glorify God. Considering the greatness of the occasion and the greatness of the grace, it is not too much to believe that that barbarous captain and some of his murderous band were subdued by the side of the cross they had reared, and washed white in the blood they had shed, and brought to cast their terrified souls on him whom they had so greatly insulted. Astonishing grace! Who will ever despair again?

We are further told that "all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned." These are distinguished in the text from "all his acquaintance and the women that followed him from Galilee;" who, instead of returning, lingered about the spot to which they were attracted by bleeding affection, though, from the fear of the Jews, they "stood afar off beholding these things." Those who returned smiting their breasts, had not come to Calvary to weep, but to enjoy the sight. They are described as "the people that came together to that sight." And their smiting their breasts is attributed, not to former convictions, but to convictions received that day. They "beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned." John and Mary, and the other disciples who followed him weeping, smote their breasts when they were going, but these only when they were returning. They were not the actors in the scene, but spectators; and are at one time marked as "the people that came together to that sight," at another, as "the people" who "stood beholding." But though not actors, they joined, like giddy spectators, in the blasphemous insult. "And the people stood beholding; and the rulers also, with them, derided him, saying, He saved others, let him save himself, if he be Christ the chosen of God." For three hours they mocked, until the darkness commenced. But the decisive proofs

which followed, of the Messiahship of Jesus, filled them with consternation for the enormous sin they had committed. It was not a few of the spectators who thus returned, but the whole mass. "All the people that came together to that sight,—smote their breasts and returned." All had come to see; and they had seen and were convinced. Not being committed by assuming the responsibility of that murder they were not wilfully braced against conviction, and therefore to a man fell under the overwhelming evidence that dropped like a noontide sun around the cross of Christ. Being from that time filled with distress, many of them were doubtless among those who, fifty-one days after, flocked to hear the Gospel at Pentecost, and were charged with having "by wicked hands—crucified and slain" the Son of God; and were among the three thousand who were pardoned by the agonies thus insulted. Again we cry, amazing grace! Let no Manasseh or Magdalene or Saul of Tarsus ever fear to apply to such a Saviour.

But the Jewish actors in this scene did not return smiting their breasts. They had sinned against so much light and with so much malice, that they were, for the most part, abandoned of God, and became proof against every thing. After the darkness had continued three hours, they were still mocking. When Christ in his last moments uttered the Hebrew words of the first verse of the twenty second Psalm, "Eli, eli, lama sabachthani?" one said, he calleth for Elias, and ran and filled a sponge of vinegar and offered it to him to drink. "The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him." And after all the miracles that had clustered around his death, they went to Pilate and besought that his legs might be broken and that the body might be taken away. The next day, though it was their sabbath, they went to Pilate again and said, "We remember that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day." Pilate gave them leave, and they went, on their sabbath, "and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch." The next morning, when the watch came in under the strongest agitation and testified of the earthquake and the resurrection and the

vision of angels, they hired them to perjure their souls by swearing that his disciples came by night while they slept, and stole him away. And they continued to rise up against all the miracles of the apostles, and to rage in proportion to the increase of evidence.

The principal actors among the Jews, and particularly the chief priests, knew that Jesus was the Messiah. "Then cried Jesus in the temple, [to the priests chiefly] as he taught, saying, Ye both know me and ye know whence I am." "When the husbandmen saw him, [the parable was spoken in the temple against "the chief priests and the scribes and the elders."] they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir, come let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours." They wished to be esteemed the most holy, and to impose their own traditions for laws, and to engross the worship of the people themselves; and they could not bear to have their hypocrisy exposed and their tyranny broken by the reformation which he was introducing. They slew the known heir that they might thus seize the inheritance.

But there were some among the crucifiers of Christ who had not this knowledge. "I wot that through ignorance ye did it as did also your rulers." "We speak the wisdom of God,—which none of the princes of this world knew; [Herod and Pilate particularly;] for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Indeed all that were susceptible of salvation were without this knowledge: for to take that high and malignant ground against a known Messiah, was the sin unto death. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Not one of the murderers that did know was prayed for." "I obtained mercy," says Paul, "because I did it ignorantly in unbelief;" implying that but for ignorance his opposition to Christ would have been unpardonable.

Here then were five descriptions of people at the cross and among these breaking wonders, and each with a different effect. The disciples, with profound grief and awe; the Roman soldiers stained with blood, and acknowledging with dreadful alarm, and in some

cases probably with true contrition, that they had mocked and murdered the Son of God; idle spectators, who came together to enjoy the sight, and mingled in with the impious scoffs, but went away in anguish smiting their breasts; Jewish actors in the scene who did not know the high character of their victim, but hated him because they had a Jewish heart; and the more knowing priests and scribes and elders who crucified him because he was the Messiah. We have no evidence that either of the last two classes were at all affected by the miracles; and know that the last class of all could not be affected otherwise than by being stirred up to greater rage. Pagan soldiers, after all their insults and murderous cruelty, can be conquered by evidence and brought to repentance: even Jews who have sinned against all their light, but have not actually joined in the crucifixion, can submit to evidence and smite their breasts: but Jews who have imbrued their hands in a Saviour's blood against all the light of their Scriptures, can view the miraculous eclipse, can feel the heaving earth, can see the rocks and the vail of the temple rent, can witness the greater miracle of such a death, and go away as stupid as brutes: and those who knew him to be the Messiah, could go away enraged the more at these attestations of heaven.

From this interesting piece of history we learn,

1. That a sudden discovery of the claims of Christ, connected with a sense of having rejected and crucified him, will cause men to tremble and smite their breasts. How transfixed to earth in dreadful astonishment were those wretches at the cross, when sudden conviction broke upon them that the being they had murdered was the Son of the great and dreadful God. Never was Cain worse confounded when taken by his Maker with his brother's blood in his skirts. So in these days, sinners are often arrested by the very side of the cross which they have reared, and by the very body which they have pierced. The claims of Jesus as the Messiah, and the awful fact that their sins caused his death, open upon them. And when they are thus seized and convicted, how do they beat their breasts and cry, "Wo is me! what mean these bloody hands? undone, undone forever!"



Rocks and mountains cover me! And reason is that they should weep and break their hearts. What have they done? Alas they knew not what they did. But now they know. Is it any wonder that they tremble? Blame not their tears. They have cause enough to weep. And so have we who may be now returning from the cross with the stupidity of the chief priests. We have been to Calvary, beholding a murdered Saviour: we have been viewing the darkness and the earthquake and the opening graves: and now as we return let us smite our breasts, for we too have conspired to murder him. It is at the cross that we must see sin in its most horrid forms: it is by the cross that sin must be crucified to us: and it is under the droppings of the cross that all our guilt must be purged away.

2. There are some whom no wonders can subdue or convince. Not the darkness nor the earthquake nor the rending of the vail nor the rending of the graves, nor all the wonders of eighteen hundred years, nor the great agitation which is now shaking the consciences of men, nor the resurrection of the spiritually dead, can bring them to smite their breasts. They have complete evidence before them of the existence of those identical wonders which convinced the centurion. Matthew wrote his Gospel but eight years after the crucifixion, and on the very ground. And he appealed to the whole nation, friends and foes, and to thousands of Jews who had come up to the feasts from all the known parts of the world, in proof of facts alleged to have been done before their eyes; such as the miraculous cures, the raising of the dead and casting out devils, the darkness, the earthquakes, the vision of angels, the resurrection, the appearances of the risen Saviour, once to five hundred at a time, and his ascension from Olivet, before Jerusalem, in the presence of a multitude. If these facts were not so, the impudent imposture would have been known to all men, and prevented a single convert, much more the thousands who flocked to Christ on that ground and in that day and sent their testimony convincingly through the world. If the records of the events were published in that day, the facts must have been as they are stated. If the records were forged and brought forward, say a hundred years afterwards, containing names and facts never heard of

before, the mention of churches in the most public cities in the world, and Epistles sent to those churches, when neither churches nor the name of Christianity had ever been heard of; they could not have been believed by man, woman, or child, much less by the best and most learned men of the age, who had evidence enough to convince the known world and to place Christianity shortly on the throne of the Cæsars.

We have therefore as much evidence of the facts as had the crucifiers of Christ; and if it could convince such hardened monsters and suddenly transform them into worshippers and martyrs, it ought to convince us.

We have more evidence than they. We have seen the Spirit of God applying the truths of the Bible, and the providence of God supporting the Church against all the corruptions of the world, for eighteen hundred years. Even now God is displaying before your eyes wonders of evidence in honor of his Son. That divine power which attends the Gospel, by which the blind are made to see and feel Bible truths, and by which wonderful transformations of heart and life are effected, producing all the real goodness which has appeared in our world since the advent, furnishes proof no less decisive than the darkness and the earthquake which attended the crucifixion. It is evidence for which we are not indebted to historical records, but which lies before our eyes as obviously as the miracles did before the spectators of the passion. By this power many are now convinced that they have been crucifying the Son of God, and are returning from their wickedness smiting their breasts. You see their tears, you hear their sighs: Let this great earthquake by which so many hearts are shaken, awaken all from the sleep of infidelity, and break off the covering of the graves that the spiritually dead may come forth.

But no evidence will bring man to submit without the effectual operation of almighty grace. Calvary may send forth a thousand wonders; Pentecost may speak with a thousand tongues; revivals of religion may stamp the attestations of the Holy Ghost upon revealed

truth; but all to no purpose to hearts resolved not to feel. And many, like the Jews, will continue to resist all the light that heaven and earth can yield, until wrath comes upon them to the uttermost.

Even those who are brought by conviction to smite their breasts, will hold out with stubborn perseverance against God. Nothing but all conquering power can bring them to apply for cleansing to the blood they have shed.

But there is another class who constitute the greatest wonder of the creation. They rank with the Jewish priests who opposed and crucified Jesus as the Messiah. It seems impossible that any but madmen should have pursued such a course. But we see the same thing acted out in modern times. Men oppose the truth, knowing it to be the truth of God, and reproach revivals, knowing them to be the work of God, and persecute Christians because they are the friends of God. Some of them struggle against their convictions and try to disbelieve. Others, without even an attempt to doubt, remain as stupid as animals without souls. Others, roused to a little more reflection, resolutely say to God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." They will not pray; they will not attend religious meetings; they will not meditate upon God. Others are rancorously opposed to God's law, to his decree of election, to the eternal punishment of the wicked; and cavil against him, and hate him and his service and his people, and openly oppose every thing that belongs to God, knowing all the time that it is God they oppose. They all sin in defiance of conscience. And many of them, by sinning malignantly against light, commit the sin unto death.

Unhappy men! can you hope to prevail against God? to put down his religion? to change his government? "Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Or do you hope to escape out of his hands? No, you have some indefinite purpose to be religious before you die,—to turn him off with the dregs of life—to serve him after you have done serving yourself. And do you hope that he will accept that service? After you have thrust him away with

contempt and rebelled against him thirty years, on the presumption that he will help you repent at last, can it be expected that he will help you? The manner in which he treats other aged sinners gives you little reason to hope. Seldom is an aged sinner converted. But the times are changing and greater grace may be expected, and more old sinners will be converted hereafter. No, the aged sinners who are now sometimes brought in, never sinned, when young, against such grace as you now abuse. You are likely soon to fill up the measure of your iniquity, and either to find an early grave, or be left, abandoned of God, to prepare for a deeper hell. Of all men you are among the most wicked, the most presumptuous, and the most exposed; and I may add, the most unwise. With all the accuracy of your reasoning on other subjects, here you reason like madmen. With all the boasted soundness of your calculations in other matters, here you are more wild than suicide itself. And it is all the unconquerable obduracy and daring of your heart. Your intellect plainly sees what your interests are; your conscience feels your obligations; and yet that hard and profligate heart rushes to its objects in defiance of the heavens and reckless of your eternal interests. You know what you are doing; you know whom you are provoking and challenging; and yet your implacable enmity to God and his ways carries you on. The great deceiver who whispers in your ear, and your own deceitful heart, suggest a thousand excuses, a thousand hopes of escape, and a thousand allurements to tempt you from anxious thought. And willingly you yield to the suggestions. You hear God invite and command, but you heed it not. You will not pray; you will not think. All the exhortations and entreaties of friends cannot persuade you once to bend the knee, or to read your Bible, or to attend the special religious meetings. There is no plea of inability in the case. These are things which you acknowledge you can do. But you will not. It is your deliberate choice not to become Christians at present. It would interfere with the plans of life which you have laid out. And those plans you will pursue whatever God says. You are determined that your own self shall be gratified, however much God is disobliged and offended. If he tells you of his Son who died on the torturing spikes for you, it does not move you to forego one gratification for him, nor

once to thank him, nor to repent of sin which made him bleed. It does not eclipse the disk of your joy, though it put out the sun. It does not shake your steadfastness, though it shook the mountains. It does not break the rock in your breast, though it rent the rocks of Calvary. It does not bring you to smite your breasts, though it thus affected the insulting Jews. It does not move a fibre of your callous heart, though it subdued Roman soldiers, with their bloody hands, into fear and contrition and an acknowledgement that he was the Son of God. Go then and pursue your ways and be the hardest of all men. Go and sink to a lower hell than Sodom found. Go and spend an eternity in longing to ascend to the sublime heights of Gomorrah. Is it any wonder that God has built an eternal hell? Is it any wonder that such obstinate contemners of dying love should sink lower than pagans,—lower than devils?

There are some who, though not yet brought to smite their breasts, are less hardened than these. To them I can come with greater hope. Here then we stand by the cross of Christ. Draw near and behold what your sins have done. View the Son of God dying for your offences, and go not away with the stupidity of the chief priests. Why should not that blood which is dripping from the cross dissolve your hearts? Why should not the darkness and the earthquake convince you? Shall spiteful Jews, shall Roman soldiers, shall a dying thief, sooner yield to evidence, and go into the kingdom of heaven before you? Fall down at the feet of a dying Saviour, and let your hearts bleed their life away for the treasons which have caused his death. Hasten to be baptised in his blood, and evince your gratitude by lives devoted to his service.

What did it avail the unbelieving Jews to shut their eyes to the claims of the Messiah? Could they always keep them closed? Eternity was appointed to do away their mistakes. And with what unutterable astonishment, when their eyes opened in eternity, did they find themselves at the bar of him who had stood at their tribunal. What now think you of him whom you insulted on the cross as unable to deliver himself? Who now shall deliver you out of his hands? Where

are Pilate and Herod now? Ah how changed the scene. And such a change, my poor hearers, will those eyes one day behold. When he who wept in the manger, who sweat in the garden, and bled on the cross; when he who has called in your streets and knocked at your doors, shall come in the clouds of heaven, arrayed in the brightness of a thousand suns; when the heavens shall flee away at his presence and worlds shall be enkindled by the breath of his mouth; when the dead shall awake at his voice, and every sinner in earth and hell shall be arraigned at his bar; then with another mind will you behold him whom you now reject. You cannot now drop a tear at the very foot of the cross; but then to purpose you will look on him whom you have pierced and mourn. He will not then come to plead, but to judge; not to suffer, but to inflict, more than he endured, on the authors of his death. What grief will then rive your heart that you did not apply to him in season. By all the nameless terrors of that day; by the pleading love which now follow you in the Gospel; by the pity which bled on the point of the spear and received the spittings of Roman soldiers; by the mercy which forgave his murderers before his blood was cold on their hands; I entreat, I beseech you to fall down at his feet and make your peace through his blood. Now it is offered to you without money and without price; to-morrow it may be too late. Go not from this house until you have accepted the great salvation. Why should you delay? Why need you delay? All heaven is waiting for your decision. The Church on earth is waiting for your decision. The authority of the eternal God presses upon you. He commands you now to repent. Infinite dangers lie couched under a moment's delay. A moment's delay deserves eternal burnings. Why will you commit that unbounded sin? Why will you throw upon a dying Saviour that measureless ingratitude? I hear a voice from the cross saying, "It is finished: if you ever come, come now." Amen.

# SERMON XXI

## JESUS OF NAZARETH PASSING BY

And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And behold two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord thou Son of David. And the multitude rebuked them because they should hold their peace; but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord thou Son of David. And Jesus stood still and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him. - MAT. 20:29-34

From comparing the accounts of the different evangelists, it appears that one of these unhappy men was Bartimeus,—that they sat by the road to ask alms,—that hearing the noise of the passing multitude they inquired the cause, and found that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by,—that when they raised their cries of suppliant distress, he sent messengers to call them,—that when their eyes were opened they "followed him, glorifying God," and that "all the people when they saw it, gave praise unto God."

The time of this transaction was awfully critical. He who came into the world to open the eyes of the blind, was now on his last journey to Jerusalem, where in a few days, he was to suffer death. He was at Jericho, but twenty miles from the scene of his sufferings. His stay in that city was ended, and he had just set out for the spot from which he was to leave the world. His work on earth was nearly finished. He never was to come that way again.

The bodily cures which Christ performed in the days of his flesh, were designed to announce him to the world as the great Physician of the soul, and to teach sinners how to apply to him for spiritual

healing. I am therefore authorized to employ this piece of history for such a purpose.

My first remark is, that it was necessary for these blind men to be by the way side while Jesus was passing by. Had they been any where else, they could not have received their sight. However fixed the event was in the counsels of heaven, their being by the way side was an established link in the chain leading to the happy change. Without that means, the end was never to be accomplished. And it was necessary for them to be there at the very punctum of time when Jesus was passing by. They might have sat there for years at any other time without effect. So it is necessary for ruined men to attend solemnly and earnestly and sincerely on all the means of grace, without which, they are not in the neighborhood of any way by which the Saviour is wont to pass. It is in the person of his Spirit that he passes, while the Gospel and its institutions are the chariot on which he rides or the way by which he goes. And it is specially important that men should keep by this way in those solemn seasons when the Saviour is passing in the more abundant power of his Spirit.

Being near the road, the blind men caught the first sound of the approaching Saviour, and wondering what it should mean, learnt, to their infinite advantage, that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. So men who are solemnly attentive to the means of grace, perceive in such a day as this, that the Saviour of sinners is passing by, and are far more likely than others to apply and receive their sight; while those who are buried in their farms and their merchandize, know not that a Saviour is passing, and lose the opportunity to make their application to him.

It was not enough for these blind men to sit idly by the way side while Jesus was passing, without faith or application to him. They might have sat thus till they died, and no benefit would have ensued. So men may carelessly attend on the means of grace, and for want of an earnest and believing application to the Son of David, may die blind.



These unhappy men, knowing themselves to be wholly unworthy of the Saviour's notice, made no demands, but only sued for mercy. And sinners, if they would succeed, must be far from thinking themselves justly entitled to salvation, and that they should be injured if refused. They must feel infinitely unworthy of this grace. They must abhor themselves, and repent in dust and ashes. They must get down into the deepest dust. They must look up, like Jonah, from the bottom of the mountains. They must send up their cry as from the bowels of hell,—and never name any thing but mercy,—free, rich, and amazing mercy,—boundless, self-moving mercy. On this they must cast themselves,—cast all their weight,—rest all their hopes,—ground all their confidence. Mercy, mercy, mercy,—this must be their only plea,—this must be their exclusive trust.

In the earnestness of these unfortunate men we see an affecting example for us. Hearing that the wondrous man was near who had healed so many, their hearts flutter with joy and great expectations, and go forth in the impassioned cry, "Have mercy on us, O Lord thou Son of David." You hear not a few faint words between jest and earnest. In all the fervor of heart-felt distress, and with no hope resting on any other, their bursting prayer still is, "Have mercy on us, O Lord thou Son of David."

Nor could they be silenced by all the frowns of the multitude, who, either considering them too mean for the Saviour's notice, or disgusted at their earnestness, commanded them to hold their peace. But they cried so much the more, "Have mercy on us, O Lord thou Son of David." And thus sinners who have discovered their guilt and perishing need of a Saviour, and who see that on him depends their eternal all, will not be silenced by all the frowns and criticisms of the world. Feeling that no other hand in heaven or earth can relieve them,—that the success or failure of their application will make or undo them for eternity, they are not to be kept back by the fastidiousness of the formal or the scoffs of the profane.

We cannot but notice the great difference between those who feel their necessities and those who are whole and know not their needs. How much more precious did Jesus appear in the eyes of Bartimeus than in those of his proud rebukers.

These blind men would not have been so pressing had they not deeply felt three things;—that they were blind and wretched, that Jesus was the Saviour, with full power to open their eyes, and that he was the only helper. Nor will sinners apply to him till they discover that they are utterly lost in themselves, that he is the very one appointed to deliver them and is able to save to the uttermost, that there is no other name given under heaven whereby they can be saved, that all the men on earth and all the angels in heaven cannot relieve them, and that their eternal all depends on the Son of David.

It is affecting to see the difference between the unfeeling multitude and the compassionate Saviour. No sooner did he hear the cry of these unfortunate men than he sent messengers to bring them to him. These messengers, like the preachers of the Gospel, bade them be of good cheer for he called them. The same blessed words do I this day proclaim in your ears. Is there a poor sinner in all those seats who has been raising his anxious cry to the Son of David? Blessed tidings, my friend. Put thine ear to the Gospel and listen. "He calleth thee."

When they approached him the condescending Saviour said to them, "What will ye that I shall do unto you?" I have it in my power to do whatever you desire. "They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened." We come not to ask for riches or honors, but Lord, that we may receive our sight. O that you would approach him with such direct desires for spiritual sight,—for the vision of God and the Lamb. But other things fill your minds. You are thinking more of the stripes you may receive, than of any glory which you wish to behold.

And were these humble suppliants denied? Without reluctance or delay, Jesus touched their eyes and restored their sight. And forever

blessed be his name, we do assuredly know that every sinner in this house would, upon due application, be relieved with equal readiness.

While the weary and heavy laden cast a wishful look towards this scene, and perceive how Jesus came by, and how easily the blind men applied and found relief, they are ready to say, O that I had lived in that day, or that it was as easy now to find relief. Unhappy man, form no hasty conclusion against yourself. Jesus of Nazareth is as present now as he was then, and as ready to heal. With open arms he stands ready to receive you. He is very near to you, and you may apply to him without going out of your way. Hark! poor desponding sinner, he calleth thee. Repair to him and hear what he will say. "Unhappy soul, what wilt thou that I should do unto thee? Dost thou want pardon, thou shalt have it; holiness, thou shalt have it; happiness, heaven, thou shalt have it all. What is thy petition, and what is thy request? and it shall be done unto thee, to the half, nay to the whole of my kingdom." Dost thou not hear him? Why then not let him know thy desire? Why not seize the critical moment and pour the fervid wish into his ear, Lord, that my eyes may be opened?

It was the last time that Jesus ever passed that way before he left the world. Had these unhappy men been a little out of the way at that moment, or having been by the way, had they suffered him to pass without raising their cries of distress, they must inevitably have died blind. The next hour would have been too late. It was their last chance.

This is a solemn reflection as it relates to you, my Christless hearers. The present passage of the Saviour may prove the last chance to many of you. You have very little prospect of being called in in stupid times. In such seasons, if two or three are converted in a year in a congregation, it is as much as is expected: but what is this to the salvation of the great mass of the people? What is this to the number of births in the same congregation in the course of a year? During the present generation, almost all who have been gathered into the American Church, especially in places favored with revivals, have

been brought in in seasons of revival. There is very little prospect therefore that you, individually considered, will be brought in in times of general stupidity. And before another revival of religion, many of you, in all probability, will be in eternity, and many of the rest hardened past recovery, or at least past the age of probable conversion. It has been generally calculated that by far the greater part of the elect are called in under the age of twenty, and very few after the middle of life, and next to none in old age.

You are all flattering yourselves that you shall be prepared before you die, or else you would be agitated with great alarm. You are so confident of this that you rest secure perhaps, as though no danger was before you. But take an unawakened youth of twenty, and separate him from any revival of religion, and it is much more likely that he has a miserable eternity before him, than that he will be saved. The question of chances is always to be tried by past experience. By this rule it is tried in all insurance offices, and indeed in all the business and calculations of society. By this rule of experience then try the question respecting the prospects of that careless youth of twenty. Have half of those who have lived without God till twenty, given evidence of being afterwards converted? If so, then more than half of the people over twenty are Christians, and have been so from age to age. I say, more than half, for you must add to that half all that were converted under twenty and are now above that age: and the greater part of the elect are supposed to be converted under twenty. Now go into the most favored town in the United States; go after the greatest revival that ever passed through it; and can you find the greater part of the people above twenty even professing religion? Such a community would be celebrated as a phenomenon throughout the Christian world. No such community was ever known. The inevitable conclusion is, that the greater part of those who live unsanctified till the age of twenty, do, even in our most favored towns, die in their sins. That careless youth then of twenty, is this moment more likely to spend his eternity in fire than on a throne of glory. This proposition is as true as that one half of the

American people are not likely to live to the age of a hundred. And both propositions are as true as that two and two make four.

But the case is still more discouraging. Do one in ten who have passed their twentieth year out of Christ ever profess religion? Look for yourselves. Select the most favored town within your knowledge. Compare the handful at the communion table with the swarms that fill the streets. Can you find the town in which one in ten above twenty years of age profess religion? I know not the proportions, but for the present argument say one in ten. Many of these are false professors, and many of the pious were converted under twenty. Say that such has been the proportion from time immemorial, and of course is likely to continue during the present generation. Then that careless youth of twenty stands more than ten chances to one to be eternally miserable.

The great deceiver has told you all that you would be prepared before you die. And so he told the last generation of wretches who went to hell. And so he has told every generation since Adam. But while he is soothing you with this lie, it is still an awful truth that a careless youth of twenty, or even of eighteen, is far more likely to spend his eternity in hell than in heaven. Tremendous thought! enough to overwhelm the soul.

And if this is true of a careless youth of eighteen or twenty, what shall we say of a careless man of thirty? what of a stupid sinner of forty? what, of a wretched unbeliever of fifty? There are probably people in this town against whom lie a hundred chances to one, who yet are as secure as though no danger was before them, and never lift a prayer to God. And yet they are not lunatics. This is one of the most unaccountable mysteries of the moral world.

Young people often calculate to put off religion till old age; but alas few in old age are brought home to God.

Such are your dangers now. There is some more hope for you on account of this revival. But should this heavenly call be rejected,—should this revival pass off unimproved,—the chances against you would be greater than they ever were before. This season will not leave you as it found you. You will never again be as you have been. You must be better or worse. Be you ever so stupid, this is a call from heaven to you. These wonders of grace which are spread around you,—these tears and entreaties which assail you,—these many opportunities afforded you to pray and to be instructed, are the voice of the Holy Spirit in your ears. You may array your pride and harden your hearts as you will, but this revival is still the voice of God to you, and you must account for an infinite privilege at the judgment of the great day. You may run from the place and seek to flee from the presence of God as Jonah did, but he will pursue you and hold you answerable for this slighted call. If you reject all this grace of God, your guilt and your danger will be what they never were before.

All this is true of the most stupid of you all; but it is pre-eminently true of the awakened. The louder the call the more certain that this is the crisis of your fate. God has said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." The most wicked and hazardous business that ever man attempted, was to resist the Holy Ghost. This, when carried to a certain extent and combined with malice, is the sin unto death that can never be forgiven. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,—if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame." It is likely that in every revival of any considerable extent, some, for their sin against the Holy Ghost, are sealed over to eternal death. It is more than probable that this will be the case with some at this time and place.

Select any one of this congregation who has arrived at years of discretion, and let him remain impenitent after this revival has passed away, and it will be much more likely that he will perish than that he will be saved. Has not this been fairly made out by past

experience as attested by the obvious state of society in every place? If so, then there is a high degree of probability that this is the turning point for eternity with that youth of eighteen or twenty; and there is almost a certainty that it is the turning point with that man of fifty or of forty. With both then it is likely to be the last time that Jesus will pass this way in season to open their eyes. O let the case of the blind men who were never to hear him pass that way again, their impassioned prayer, and their great relief, stand ever before you. Hear their cry which nothing can suppress, "Have mercy on us, O Lord thou son of David." Go ye and do likewise. Let not Jesus get out of the place before he has opened your eyes. Another revival may come before you die, but it will be likely to spend its chief force on those who are now children or unborn: revivals exhaust their power chiefly on the young. If not in your graves, you may be where an angel's voice could not break your slumbers. In such a crisis of your fate how is it possible for any of you to remain stupid? What dreams of madness are employing your sleeping fancy? What fumes from hell have bewildered your rational sense? If you have not deliberately resolved to lie down in eternal burnings, arise and take the kingdom of heaven by violence. Delay not a moment. Urge no excuse. By the worth of your never-dying souls I entreat you,—by the love and sorrows of Calvary I adjure you,—by the authority of the ever-living God I charge you, not to reject this mission of the Holy Ghost. Your everlasting all is at stake. It is likely to be your last chance. And if any thing is done you must rise up to an agony. These saunterings between jest and earnest are only trifling with the Spirit and will provoke him to leave you. Either fixedly resolve to perish, and set yourselves firmly to resist God and his people, or come up to the business with all your heart and soul. Halt no longer between two opinions. Do not stand at too awful a distance from the Saviour. Imitate the blind men and go up to him with confidence. Be of good cheer, "he calleth thee." By the soft whispers of his Spirit he calleth thee. And if he can call, you may venture to go. Shrink not on account of your poverty and pollution. It is the same Jesus still,—the same heart that pitied the blind men of Jericho. Go to him boldly, and when he would know your request, cry in his ears, Lord, that my eyes

may be opened. Why will you die when such a glorious Deliverer is so near? Why will ye go down to hell; like the dying thief, from the very side of an atoning Saviour? I call heaven and earth to witness that if you perish after this, your blood will be upon your own head. And if you go down from these streets through which the kindest of all Saviours is passing, you will wish ten thousand times that you had gone to hell before this revival,—that you had been in hell on the day that this sermon was preached. O that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter end. Turn ye; turn ye, for why will ye die? Why will ye die, O my flesh and blood?

## **SERMON XXII**

### **THE BRAZEN SERPENT**

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life. - JOHN 3:14, 15

Jesus and his salvation were the substance of all the ancient shadows, the end of all the Mosaic rites, and the burden of every prophet's song. They were the favorite theme of the Old Testament and the New. They are the subject of the highest songs of the upper world. They bring the purest joy to hearts on earth broken for sin.

There are few types of happier influence to illustrate the Gospel remedy and the manner of its application than the brazen serpent. When the Hebrews provoked God in the wilderness, he sent among them fiery serpents of a most deadly bite; so called either from their colour, or from the heat and thirst occasioned by the wound. They were probably of the species of the "fiery flying serpents" mentioned by Isaiah. It is supposed that they hovered in swarms over the camp and suddenly darted upon their prey; none of the congregation being



able while on their march, and few being able in their encampments, to defend themselves against the fell attack. What a scene of distress was here! Hundreds lying dead in the camp; hundreds more writhing in torture and crying in vain for relief; every one trembling for himself; now a child and then a wife and then a brother crying out under the tormenting bite; and swarms of the enemy still hovering over the camp. What could they do? They hasted away to Moses and said with tears, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee. Pray unto the Lord that he take away the serpents from us." And Moses prayed for the people, and the Lord said to him, "Make thee a fiery serpent, [that is, the image of a fiery serpent,] and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole, [so that it could be seen from every part of the camp:] and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived." Glorious emblem of him who was "lifted up that whosoever, believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life."

This brazen serpent was preserved with great veneration seven hundred years, until it had become so much the object of idolatrous worship, that Hezekiah broke it in pieces about a century before the Babylonish captivity.

Let us trace a little more particularly the resemblance between this type and the antitype.

1. It was provided for people in a condition somewhat resembling that of the race to whom the Saviour was sent. Many of them were groaning under the anguish of their wounds and ready to die, others heard the cries of their parents and children around them, and could neither snatch them from death nor afford them a moment's relief. Such is the state of those for whom a Saviour was provided. They are dying under the tormenting inflictions of sin; panting with restless desires which nothing can satisfy; or tossing under anguish of conscience and a "fearful looking for of judgment." They behold

around them the wide ruins which sin has made. They contemplate the present and endless misery of their parents and children, without being able to afford them any relief. The whole race lie in ruins, amidst the wide and frightful ravages of the curse,—amidst misery and death in a countless variety of forms; walking over clods once animated with human life,—seeing their brethren huddled together in the grave, and all the living going down after them,—sinking, sinking, till they are out of sight;—death temporal and death eternal swallowing up all. Such is the ruin of a world smitten with the curse of the Almighty. What need there was of a Saviour to seize a race going down to hell, to force death to resign its prey, and to call sleeping nations from the tomb.

Another resembling circumstance in the condition of the people was, that they appeared penitent. They confessed their sins and implored forgiveness. As soon as these symptoms of contrition appeared, (and nothing could be done before,) God ordered the remedy to be presented. In like manner the Saviour is revealed to none but to those who are humbled. He came to preach good tidings only to the meek, to bind up none but broken hearts.

2. The brazen serpent had the form of the fiery serpents, but not their poison. So Christ, though he came "in the likeness of sinful flesh," and possessed both the body and the soul of a man, had none of our depravity.

3. The bite of the serpents must be cured by the lifting up, not of an eagle, but of a serpent. So Christ must take upon himself, not "the nature of angels, but—the seed of Abraham." "In all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren." It must be man that is lifted up to atone for the sins of man.

The serpent must be lifted up conspicuously in the midst of the camp, where all the eyes of Israel might centre upon it: and the Son of man must be lifted up in the centre of the world, on the top of Jerusalem, environed with proofs drawn from heaven and earth,

brought in from the whole body of the Old Testament and confirmed by the miracles of the New; and there, in the midst of the world, in the centre of light, where all nations might see the reality and the divine appointment of the sacrifice, he made expiation for the sins of the world.

This is the chief meaning of his being lifted up. The phrase is twice used, in this sense, in other parts of the same Gospel. "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said signifying what death he should die. The people answered him, [for they understood him,] We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever, and how sayest thou, the Son of man must be lifted up?"

There is another sense in which the Son of man was to be lifted up in order to be the Saviour of the world. He was to be raised from the dead, and thus openly acquitted and accepted, that in his justification we might be acquitted and accepted. He "was raised again for our justification."

There is yet another sense in which he was to be lifted up. He was to ascend into heaven, there "to appear in the presence of God for us;" there to receive and distribute the whole inheritance; there to rule the universe and complete the salvation of his people. Thus he was to be exalted "to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

Had not the brazen serpent been lifted up, all who were bitten must have died. Not all the physicians in Israel could have brought relief. Had any caviller been disposed to say, "What is a brazen serpent? and cannot God heal his people without it?" yet, when bitten himself, he must have died if he had not looked to that remedy. And although the cross of Christ is to some "a stumbling block" and to others "foolishness," yet without it no child of Adam could have been saved; and without a believing application to it, all must perish still.

4. The serpent being thus erected in full view of the camp, the people, when bitten, had only to fix their eyes upon it and they lived. Wounded to death and racked with pain, they had only to cast their languishing eyes on this serpent of brass, and all the fire within them was quenched,—all their anguish relieved. Precious symbol of a precious Saviour! When the soul, under conviction of guilt, sees hell naked before it and destruction without a covering, let it then catch one view of Christ atoning for the sins of the world,—of Christ exalted to the seat of intercession and rule; let there be opened upon it one sun-shine of God's mercy and truth; and all its anguish and fear are soothed, and the dying sinner lives: his sense of guilt and wrath is changed to a sense of pardoning love,—his midnight darkness to a morning without clouds. Instead of lying, weak and helpless, under the feet of trampling foes, he feels omnipotence growing up within him, and he can march boldly against earth and hell combined. All that is wanting to bring everlasting relief to the most abject guilt and wretchedness, is to fix a believing eye on Christ,—is to embrace him as a complete Saviour, and to take, with him, all that God has tendered to men,—is to rely on him as the great High Priest appointed by God to atone and intercede, and whose offering God has sworn to accept,—is to confide in the sincerity of God in this appointment and oath. When these great truths open on the soul, and the glory of God is seen shining in the face of Jesus Christ, the believer sees that were his guilt doubled ten thousand times, he might easily be forgiven, and feels that if he had ten thousand souls he could venture them all upon a precious Saviour; that there is a fulness in him for the necessities of all the lost children of Adam: and he wonders why a whole world do not come to him and partake.

It is a great thing to believe these sublime realities. The heart of man is prone to unbelief. For God to pardon sins so enormous, and be so kind to enemies and rebels, is so unlike the human heart, that it is hard for men to believe it. And under the glooms of guilt it seems too good news to be true. And then they have but little confidence in God, and fear to trust him for so much. They are not in the habit of ascribing to him any great desires to make his creatures happy. But

when the wonders of his love open on the soul, and Christ is seen as a lamb upon the altar and a lamb in the midst of his father's throne, then the sinner forgets his pains; his glooms are fled; his conscience, purged "from dead works," is filled with peace,—with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The vilest sinner has a warrant thus to believe, thus to receive the Saviour, and thus to rejoice in him. For the offer is to all; and in believing all this he only believes the word and oath of God,—an oath sworn by himself and attested by miracles: he only believes Christ to be what he really is,—a highway paved to the throne of mercy, by which a whole world may go abreast. Such a view, attended, as it will be, with a willingness to receive him, and which will bring an instant consciousness of its own existence, cannot fail to produce a sense of safety. Christ is seen to be a rock on which the soul may rest, and on which it is conscious of resting. It knows that it has not a phantom in its embrace, but the very God of Israel.

One look at the brazen serpent was enough to relieve the most desperate case. Nothing in the patient,—nothing which he had done, or had been, or then was, could prevent his cure, provided it did not prevent him from looking. No merit was required for an efficacious look. The bad and the good might equally enjoy the privilege. That they were bitten was no prevention, but the very reason why they ought to look. In like manner faith in Christ will heal the vilest sinner that ever descended from Adam. There is nothing in any man,—nothing which he has done, has been, or is, which can prevent his cure, provided it does not prevent him from looking. No merit is required, nor any one virtue but what is involved in an operative faith. That men are sinners is no prevention. It is the very reason why they ought to look. All that is necessary to fit the vilest sinner for heaven, is faith in Christ; not a dead faith, but that faith which includes repentance, love, and good works; not a belief that Christ died for me in particular, without any thing above a selfish temper; but a holy approbation of all that appears of God in his law and works,—of all that appears of Christ in his gospel and providence. If

one's temper and life do not reflect the image of God, he never believed in him that was lifted up.

5. On what easy terms might the poor, distressed Hebrews live. They had not to search the world for physicians, and spend all they had and only grow worse. They had only to cast their eyes on the image that was lifted up; and this they might do without money or price, and without going out of their way. And equally easy it is to be healed of the wounds of sin. Wondrous grace! After men have raised such mountains between them and God, and lie buried under worlds of guilt, the weight of which is crushing them to the lowest hell; has heaven provided that they shall be so readily forgiven? Had they been permitted to hope after doing penance for years,—after wandering for ages through the world,—after giving their first born for their transgression, the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul,—even then the grace would have transcended thought: but to have the whole debt discharged with no other pain or expense to them than to look on him who was lifted up; this is indeed "the exceeding riches of his grace."

6. And in this way men must be pardoned if pardoned at all. Had God required them to make any part of the atonement; that is, to contribute a mite towards answering the purpose of their eternal punishment without enduring it; on that spot had been entombed the last hope of man;—there had been an end to all compact between heaven and earth. On the other hand, after the atonement is provided, there can be no salvation, to those who hear the Gospel, without faith. After the serpent had been erected, had the wounded Hebrews neglected to look at it, they would have remained in torments till they died. All the physicians in Israel could not have relieved them. No other remedy in heaven or earth was provided. And provided it might be, yet had they refused to look, it would have been in vain. Of what avail would it have been to say, "What is the use of looking at this thing? if virtue is in it cannot that be conveyed but through the eyes?" A thousand such cavils could not have mitigated their anguish nor gained for them a moment's respite from

death. There was indeed no such merit in looking. The efficacy depended on God's appointment, that was intended to set forth the efficacy of faith in a Saviour to come. And this Saviour may be provided,—may be displayed in our streets, yet if we do not fix our eyes upon him, we shall die none the better but all the worse for this provision. All the strictness of morality, all the prayers of ages, the giving of all our goods to feed the poor and our bodies to be burned as martyrs, would not avail without faith. It is of no use for unbelief to plead "How can I be benefited by looking on perfection which only shames my guilt?" What if there is no intrinsic merit in faith? By divine appointment it is made the condition of salvation. Nor was this appointment arbitrary. In the nature of things, without that holiness which, in the circumstances of men under the Gospel, cannot fail to embrace a Saviour, there can be no communion with God,—no heavenly happiness.—Further, it was calculated to familiarize to the universe the great fact of the substitution, for both parties, (God and the sinner,) to stand, as it were, together at the altar, and as the Lamb is slain, to consent mutually that its life should go for the life of the sinner. Without this consent on the part of man, the vicarious exhibition is far less distinct and impressive. Also, without this consent and the accompanying conviction of need, the sinner can never feel his indebtedness to the Saviour nor give the glory of his salvation to the Sacred Three, nor indeed be happy, if he is an adult under the Gospel. On these accounts faith in Christ is made the essential condition of salvation. When he was on earth, carrying about in his person the healing virtue of the brazen serpent, all who looked to him for a cure were healed; and it was his practice first to extort from them a profession of their faith: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?"

And now, my dear brethren, suffer me to hold up before you the antitype of the brazen serpent. If any of you are mourning under guilt and filled with anguish, raise your believing eyes to him who is lifted up in the midst of this assembly to-day; and one look will make you whole. Ye who are groping in darkness, look hither and be enlightened. Ye who are weak and polluted, look and be strong and

pure. Ye who complain of hardness of heart, cast your eyes upon him who hangs on the tree covered with sweat and blood, and be melted into contrition and love. Ye who are tempted, look and be delivered. Ye who are agonized with doubts respecting your adoption, look again and gain a clearer vision and a firmer assurance. Whatever be your infirmities or your sorrows, look,—from every part of the house look, to him who is lifted up in the midst of this congregation. As the serpent was erected in the centre of the camp, so Christ has been lifted up in the centre of the world, that all eyes from east, west, north, and south may centre there. There he hangs, and every lacerated vein bleeds balm for the healing of the nations. He sheds influence in every direction to heal all other wounds but his own. And from the top of the bloody tree I hear a voice trembling in death, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." While millions of eyes are turned thither from all the regions of the globe, and millions of souls are healed by a look, my heart exclaims, "How much is this like that wondrous scene in the wilderness!" I ascend the high and trembling mount, whence I have a view of a world gazing at the cross by which I stand. I see ten thousand eyes, glistening with joy and tears, meet in this centre, from Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. I see new faces turned this way. I see their distorted features settle into heavenly peace as they gaze: and now they brighten, and now they shine as Moses' did. I stand and enjoy the transports of nations. Ye kingdoms of redeemed sinners, roll hither the volume of your united praise. Shout, for the healer of the nations is lifted up.—I follow him up to heaven. I see him, with solemn formality, take his throne. Every eye which lately gazed at Calvary, follows him hither. He takes the reins of government, and a voice, deep as ten thousand thunders and sweet as the "influences of Pleiades," issues from the glorious throne, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." A mingled sound, as "of many waters," responds, "We come, Lord, we come." And let us go with them. Let us go and commit ourselves eternally to him who is our righteousness, our strength, our all in all. Amen.



# SERMON XXIII

## NOAH'S ARK

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith - HEB. 11:7

During the 1656 years which were before the flood, if men increased as fast in proportion to their longevity as they do now, a much greater population must have accumulated on the earth than there is at present. In that period when the age of man was more than 900 years, the temptation to put death out of view was great. A Church there was; but by intermarrying with the wicked world it had become corrupt, and at last almost extinct. This was the first illustration of the fatal consequence of too close a connexion between the Church and the world. The children of the Church became ambitious of power and fame, and sought renown by violence and war. By these means the Spirit of God was provoked to depart, and general licentiousness ensued. The Church became reduced to a single family, and the rest of the world sunk into infidelity and vice. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;"—that "the imagination of man's heart" was "evil from his youth." Thus the universal and complete effect of the fall was publicly ascertained. This done, God determined to cast away the world as ruined, and to make a new beginning on the foundation of grace, commencing a new stock in the family which included the whole church. This rejection of the world is expressed in the following strong eastern figure: "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

"And God said to Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me;— behold I will destroy them with the earth." Noah, who was born 69 years after the translation of his great grand father Enoch, was now 480 years old, and seems to have been childless. Except his grandfather Methuselah, who, though born 243 years before the death of Adam, lived till the year of the flood, and his father Lamech, who, born 56 years before the death of Adam, died five years before the deluge, he was perhaps the only religious man on earth. But though God determined that his Spirit should "not always strive with man," he graciously allowed the antediluvian sinners a respite of "a hundred and twenty years;" and in the meantime ordained Noah "a preacher of righteousness" to them. At the same time he directed him to construct an ark of gopher wood, about 547 feet long, 91 broad, and 55 feet high. This immense building, which covered considerably more than an acre of ground and was three stories high, was capacious enough to hold "eight" persons, with a pair of every sort of unclean beasts and unclean fowls and creeping things, and seven pair of every sort of clean beasts and clean fowls, and provisions for their support for more than a year.

For a hundred and twenty years "the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing." The history leads us to suppose that the whole of this period was taken up in building the ark, as we cannot reckon the hundred and twenty years of respite from any other date than the issuing of the command to commence the building. In the infancy of the arts such a vessel must have cost immense labor, and it was so unpopular an undertaking that few if any besides the family of Noah would be induced to engage in the the work. His sons were born about twenty years after the building commenced, and for a long time could afford him no assistance. Cheered by the society and counsel of his venerable father and grandfather, he wore out the hundred and twenty years in patiently waiting for the fulfilment of the prediction.

When the ark was finished, God brought all the creatures into it and shut Noah and his family in.

In the account which follows, there is so obvious a proof of the division of time into weeks, and consequently of the existence of a sabbath, that I cannot pass it by unnoticed. If we knew the day of the week on which Noah entered into the ark, we could tell the day of the week on which almost every event took place till he came out. Suppose then it was Tuesday. And this seems perhaps the most probable. For after the devotions of the sabbath to prepare for the solemn scene, one day was sufficient for God to collect the animals that were to enter. On Tuesday then, let us suppose, Noah and his family entered the ark. After seven days' that is, on the following Tuesday, the rains commenced; which after a continuance of forty days, ended on the sabbath, the day of blessings from the beginning. On Friday, exactly five months, of 30 days each, from the commencement of the rain, the ark rested on Ararat. In better than ten weeks more, on Tuesday, just 33 weeks after the family entered the ark, and just 32 weeks after the rains commenced, the lesser mountains appeared. Near six weeks after, just 32 weeks after the rains had ceased, on the morning of the blessed sabbath, Noah opened the window of the ark and sent out the raven and the dove. The next sabbath he sent out the dove again, which returned in the evening with the olive leaf of peace. The next sabbath he sent out the dove the third time, which returned no more. This was on the 25th day of the 11th month, just 34 weeks after the rains had ceased.

Hitherto we have proceeded on sure grounds; but now we are to pass the end of the year and find the next event on new year's day. We ought therefore to know how long the year was. All the most ancient nations known to us, the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, the Chinese, the Hindoos, had a year of 360 days, divided into 12 months of 30 days each. But afterwards they added, at an early period, five intercalary days to the end of the year. It is manifest from the account before us, that the antediluvian year was divided into months of 30 days each, and must have consisted of twelve such months, either with or without the five intercalary days. I will make the calculation on both suppositions.

In case no intercalation was made, Noah, after sending forth the dove the third time, waited five weeks, and then, after spending the sabbath in thanksgiving and prayer preparatory to the event, on Monday he removed the covering of the ark. He waited eight weeks longer, and then, after the solemnities of another sabbath, on Monday he left the ark and entered once more with his family into the world, having been immured 54 weeks wanting a day. If the five intercalary days were added, he waited after the last mission of the dove, near six weeks, and then, on Saturday, preparatory to a day of joyful thanksgiving and rest, he removed the covering of the ark. He waited eight weeks longer, and then, on Saturday, he went forth and made preparations, and devoted the first day in the new world to the exultations and doxologies of a blessed sabbath; having been immured 54 weeks and four days.

Whether I have referred the events to the right days of the week or not, the division of time into weeks, and consequently the existence of a sabbath, lies on the very face of this account.

A new world now commenced. Noah lived to within two years of the birth of Abraham; and Shem, who was 98 years old when Methuselah died, lived ten years after the marriage of Isaac. So that the same man that conversed with Abraham and Isaac, had conversed with one who had conversed with Adam.

But I proceed to other remarks. The ark is admitted by the apostle to have been a distinguished type of Christ. The old world is devoted to destruction. The waters are to rise and rage above the highest mountains. No vessel has yet been invented to ride the waves. How can any escape? God only can find out the way. He causes an ark to be constructed, in which his friends find refuge while the waves of wrath sweep a wicked world. Who that turns his eye towards this scene, is not reminded of that spiritual ark in which the friends of God are sheltered while the floods of vengeance sweep an unbelieving world?

This prepares the way for us to meditate on the conduct of Noah while laboring for that refuge, and the conduct of that profligate generation who cast contempt on the august design. The things most worthy of notice in respect to Noah, are his faith, his obedience, his patience, his self-denial, and his fortitude.

(1.) His faith. While he sat at rest in his house, pursuing a life of devotion, and mourning over the abounding wickedness of the times, he heard a voice;—a voice declaring that the end of all flesh was at hand;—a voice which fixed the event and the manner, but concealed the time. The voice assured him that the wicked should be destroyed, and that the only safety for him was in an ark, which he must at once set about preparing. All this was strange, and different from any thing he had experienced. Yet the patriarch believed God. He did not doubt because he had never seen such a thing before, nor because the events predicted might be at a considerable distance. He admitted a realizing belief that the wicked would be destroyed, and that his only safety was in an ark. His faith was sufficient to influence his conduct and to lead him to the labor of 120 years. Not knowing how near the deluge might be, and contemplating so vast a work before him, he saw that he had no time to lose. He felt the urgent call for haste, apprehending that if he delayed, the deluge might come before he was ready; at the same time trusting in God that if he was diligent the judgment would be deferred till he was prepared. Here were all the trials of faith which good men experience now. O that they could as fully believe the threats and promises of God; and while they feel the pressing need of haste, could trust in him to connect their diligence with the promised salvation. Let them not doubt because the events foretold differ from their past experience, nor because they are a few years distant.

Noah believed God because his mind was not blinded by sin; but his contemporaries were blinded. This was the difference between them. He believed God's threatenings and promises, and they believed not. Hence he could consume the labor of 120 years in building an ark, and they could spend that solemn time in mocking at his sacred toil.

They could not have acted thus had they believed that a flood was coming on the world. This is the difficulty with sinners now. Though God has foretold the destruction of the wicked, they do not believe it. Did they verily believe that the destruction would come, and that there is no safety but in the spiritual ark, they could not thus reject a Saviour and sleep out life in mad security.

(2.) Let us consider the obedience of the patriarch. God ordained him to provide for his safety by constructing an ark; he did not hesitate a moment: he entered on the work at once, and consumed 120 years in one unbroken course of obedience. And let us who are commanded to secure the spiritual ark, obey, and devote our whole lives to the attainment of this end.

(3.) Consider his patience under labors and sufferings the length of which he could not foresee. There is no account of his impatience under the hardships of 120 years, nor of his complaining that the time was long, though it probably proved much longer than he had expected. Possibly at no time during the whole period did he look upon the flood as far distant; and yet deliverance continued to fly. But his patience never failed. O that christians could now as patiently submit to the labors and trials of the spiritual warfare half as long, without complaining that their hardships have no end.

(4.) Contemplate his self-denial. He possessed great wealth, or he could not have built such an ark. Before this command came he was probably engaged in extensive business, and found his wealth flowing in from every quarter. But at the command of God he gave up all other employments and consumed his wealth upon that immense building, which could be of no other use than to save him and his family and the animal tribes from the threatened destruction. He forsook all, and was content to wait for his remuneration in the new world,—in the world that succeeded the flood. This was as great a self-denial as for christians now to abandon all their possessions for Christ, and to wait for the recompense of another world.

(5.) Contemplate his fortitude. Except his father and grandfather and the rest of his own family, he stood alone against a frowning world. It is hard for christians now, with millions on their side, to stem the torrent of angry opposition, especially in places where that opposition triumphs. How hard then for the patriarch, with all the sensibilities of a man, to encounter, single-handed, a contending and triumphant world. He submitted to the scoffs of his acquaintance, his superiors in rank and fortune, his inferiors, his relations, his enemies; and heard, undismayed, their endless charges of bigotry, superstition, intolerance, and the like. He was a preacher of righteousness; but he preached without success, and drew taunts instead of tears. He never seems to have made a single convert in 120 years. The uniform tenor of his address must have been that of warning and condemnation. The case admitted of no other. His daily labor upon the ark carried also the strong language of reprobation, "by the which he condemned the world." It constantly proclaimed the approaching destruction of the world for their wickedness. Such an unheard of enterprise as the construction of an enormous vessel to ride the waves,—the construction of it in the midst of the dry land,—under the idea that a flood was coming upon the world; a singularity fraught with apparent folly, and calculated to excite scorn as well as wrath; could not fail to call forth the highest contempt and indignation of a world. How often was he called a madman and a fool! Those who passed by would insultingly wag their heads. Others would curse him. The children would shoot out the lip at him as he walked the streets, and load him with the epithets which they had heard their fathers use. All the wit and raillery of the age would be levelled against him. The fame of his undertaking would travel to remote nations, and from all quarters derision and reproaches would come in. All this time he had no man beyond the bounds of his own family to whom he could impart his cares or on whose bosom he could repose. He could ask no counsel. He could go no where, he could look no where, without meeting the blasting frown of a world. His character was totally ruined with every person on earth except his own family. He was shut out from all society except what he found at home. The question would often be asked, who made him

wiser and better than all the world besides? That question, had he not been supported by faith as well as fortitude, would have crushed him. Losing sight of the divine testimony and commission, and looking only at himself, he would shrink into nothing, and say, "Who am I to be the reprover of a world?"

But faith joined to fortitude, supported him. His unconquered mind rose above the opinion of a united race. He would not think that sterling which all men approved, nor that vile which all men condemned. He rested on a higher decision.

The reproaches of the wicked would become more and more triumphant and insufferable the longer the event was delayed. To see the madman, as they would call him, foretelling destruction year after year, without any prospect of a fulfilment; to see him laboring to rear an enormous vessel for ten, twenty, forty, eighty, a hundred years, without any symptom of a deluge, though he might have expected it long before, and might have intimated that expectation; how high must their contempt and triumph have arisen! How often would they load him with the titles of false prophet, impostor, liar! How often would they tauntingly ask, Where is the destruction so long foretold? "for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning." But this heroic saint, far from being conquered by reproaches, resolved to believe and obey God rather than man. With astonishing fortitude he held fast his integrity for 120 years.

At length the long expected day arrived which was to show that his labors and hopes were not in vain,—which was to put an eternal end to the scoffs and exultations of his enemies. The tremendous morning began to lour. The heavens gathered blackness. Angry tempests conflicted in the skies. The red lightnings curled over the world. Word was spread that Noah and his family had entered into the ark. The world began to look serious.



Presently floods of water pour from the sky. Some now begin to turn their eyes towards the ark; others stand doubting; others dare still to scoff.

The waters go on to increase. The channels of the rivers are full and overflowing. The waters begin to rise in the streets. Some flee into their houses; others, more intimidated, hasten to the hills; others are convinced, and with the paleness of death are seen wading towards the ark.

The fountains of the great deep are now broken up. The waters rise more rapidly, and begin to rush with impetuous force. With difficulty they stand against the stream. They struggle for their lives to reach the ark. Thousands come; some wading, some swimming, some sinking, some hanging to the ark with the grasp of death; all screaming for admission. But it is too late. Time was when the ark was open and they might have entered in; but that time is past. Where are now those tongues which derided the enormous vessel and the man that made it? What now think you of him who for more than a century has borne the character of a madman? A thousand worlds for his condition now. Those nearest the ark cry and plead for admission, but in vain. The waters roar; the ark is taken up; they sink and are seen no more.

By this time every wretch on earth is convinced. Hear their cries from the tops of the houses, which are answered by lamentations from the hills. See the armies that are collected on the mountains. How like frightened sheep they crowd together! Now the waters, roaring and foaming, have reached their feet. They flee back to the highest ridge; the floods pursue them there. Some few climb the lofty oaks; the waves overtake them there. They flee to the highest branches, and for a while have time to reflect on their former madness. "How could I disbelieve the prophet of the Lord? Where is now the ark which I scorned? Whither am I going? O eternity! eternity! What a dreadful God have I despised!" On the topmost bough the impetuous torrent sweeps them. Their hold is broken, and

they rise no more. The ark comes by. That blessed family are safe. They sail over the heads of their revilers and persecutors, until they rest on Ararat.

The same terrors will seize an unbelieving world when the Son of man appears. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days which were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of man be.

When we reflect on the wretched antediluvians, we perceive their folly in not believing God, and are ready to say with the Jews, If we had lived in their days we should not have done thus. But sinners repeat the same folly now. God has told them that he will destroy the world;—that in less than 120 years all the wicked of the present generation shall be overwhelmed in a flood of wrath. To convince them that the destruction is coming, he has set forth a spiritual ark. He has sent out preachers of righteousness to warn them. Every circumstance is the same. The destruction is as certain; it is as near; and there is no escape but in the ark. But sinners will not believe. They spend their time perhaps in scoffing at the serious apprehensions of christians, and in contemning the ark. Greater madness never existed before the flood. The time is coming when christians will not be deemed mad men for their concern to secure an interest in Christ; when it will appear that they did not believe and labor and bear reproaches in vain. Time is coming when they who are now as secure, as hardy, as those stupid wretches before the flood, would give ten thousand worlds for the place of the meanest christian whom they now despise. When the door of the kingdom shall be shut and there is no more entering in; when they shall stand without and say, Lord, Lord, open to us, and he shall answer, I know you not; when the sluices of vengeance shall be unstopped; when the heavens shall be on fire above their heads, and the earth shall rock beneath their feet; when the sea shall rage and rise and invade the

distant land; when all the elements shall make war on man; when they shall flee from the waves and the flames shall devour them,—from the prodigies in the heavens, and the opening earth shall engulf them; when they shall stretch out their hands to God, and find him only a consuming fire; when more piteous shrieks shall be heard from every quarter than were heard in the days of the flood; when they shall see the Noahs whom they despised riding above their heads, and themselves sinking in surges of fire; ah, what will be their sensations then? O sinners, if you will believe God in season, now is your time to avoid the terrors of that day. Seize the ark and make sure of Ararat. By all the solemnities of that coming scene I entreat, I beseech you to hasten into the ark. Come, for the floods are rising. Come quickly, or the next hour may be too late.

## **SERMON XXIV**

### **A FRIEND CLOSER THAN A BROTHER**

A man that hath friends must show himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. - PROV. 18:24

It is a law of the physical world that a particle of matter which is not attracted to others, cannot attract others to itself. A similar law prevails in the social world. The Ishmael whose hand is against every man, will find every man's hand against him. One of the few things in which mankind are agreed, is to detest the wretch who loves none but himself. This indeed is no more than just: for who has a right to claim more than he is willing to render? "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly." To such a one the willing tribute of love is paid. The man whose heart can melt at others' woes, whose hand is ready to relieve their wants, whose life is devoted to offices of kindness,—though envy and hatred of the truth may create him enemies, will always have friends. Two virtuous minds of kindred

tempers, are susceptible of a union more tender and indissoluble than that which is formed by nature. "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Such a friendship subsisted between Jonathan and David. But turn your eyes to Calvary, and behold a greater than a Jonathan is here. Here more than any where else is seen the "friend that sticketh closer than a brother." This is the friend to whom I would call your attention. And in doing this I shall,

I. Describe this friend.

II. Show that he is such a friend.

III. Prove that we must show ourselves friendly if we would enjoy his friendship.

IV. Consider our need of him.

I. I am to describe this friend.

But who is equal to this task? Happy is the man who, by the power of faith, can form even a faint conception of his glories. Millions of ages hence the highest seraph will not have completed the discovery of these.

To form any just conception of his character we must contemplate him as God, as man, and as Mediator. He was one of the eternal Persons of the Godhead, co-equal with the Father; and yet he became truly man by being personally united with a human body and soul. By forming this union, and by sustaining an agency wholly distinct from that of the Father, (as distinct as that of an appeasing Mediator from that of an offended Sovereign,) and by bringing out the distinct agency of the Spirit in the work of conviction and sanctification, and by frequently applying to the three, in the language and hearing of men, the three personal pronouns, he revealed the great mystery of the Trinity, which could not have been brought to light by any other conceivable means.

As a man he was marked by a supreme regard for his Father's glory, unerring obedience to his commands, perfect submission to his will, self-denial, patience, and fortitude that knew no bounds; gentleness, meekness, and humility; unconquerable love to men with a godlike faithfulness to reprove their vices; unwearied labors for their instruction and reformation; the most compassionate toils to heal the sick, to raise the dead, and to cast out devils; sometimes weeping over Jerusalem; full of devotion;—spending whole nights in prayer upon the bleak mountains, and sometimes rejoicing in spirit and saying, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes." Not a human excellence that shone not perfect and unrivalled in him.

As Mediator he came to reveal God to the creation and to fill the universe with his glory. And "the glory of God" which shines "in the face of Jesus Christ," in other words, which is displayed in the person and work of the Saviour, is the principal glory which God has ever set before the eyes of creatures. One part of this revelation consists in the instruction which Christ imparts as a Prophet, comprehending all that has come, from the beginning of the world, through patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and a Gospel ministry.

As a Priest he came to promote the cause of holiness among a universe of creatures throughout eternity. He came to "magnify the law and make it honorable," and to give energy to a moral government by supporting the empire of a moral law. This he did by obeying that law under circumstances the most trying,—obeying it "unto death, even the death of the cross." When he says in reference to his death, "This commandment have I received of my Father," he alludes to no precept distinct from the moral law; for that law which requires us to "love the Lord" our "God with all" the "heart" and our "neighbor as" ourselves, binds us, when the providence of God renders it necessary, "to lay down our lives for the brethren." This obedience, by which he earned, and received as his own reward, all the positive blessings intended for Adam's race, gave God an

opportunity to bestow all positive good as the reward of a perfect obedience to his law, and to refuse to grant the least blessing on any other terms. This had been the rule of Eden and of heaven; for in both cases the least transgression forfeited every blessing. And the adherence to this rule prevented "one jot or one tittle" of the law from being given up. But the chief support yielded to the law was by his sufferings and death in our stead, by which he answered all the purposes of our punishment and rendered the infliction no longer necessary. What is the design of punishment? It is to uphold the authority of the law by showing the unalterable determination of the lawgiver to execute its penalty on future offenders. And when the beloved Son of God took the place of sinners, and the Father would not spare him, but drained out his life to the very dregs, it showed the inflexible certainty of punishment, more than the eternal destruction of Adam's race would have done. It proclaimed in the ears of heaven and earth, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" This was the atonement.

But the enemies of the atonement profanely say, that his death was designed merely to confirm his doctrines. What then is the meaning of texts like these, which cover the pages of the Old Testament and the New? "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.—He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.—The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.—For the transgression of my people was he stricken.—When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed.—He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.—By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.—He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors." "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, —to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. —And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "Who

was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.—For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die; but God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

Indeed if the death of Christ had no other use than to confirm his doctrines, what can be the meaning of that whole system of typical, vicarious, and atoning sacrifices which are set forth in the Old Testament, and constantly displayed in every part of the worship of the Hebrew Church for near fifteen hundred years? When a man had sinned, he brought his victim to the altar, whose life was accepted in the room of his life, and the sinner lived. This was expressly called an atonement. The word is every where applied to the sacrifices of the ancient Church. And what could be meant when the high priest brought the scape-goat, and laid both his hands upon his head, and confessed "over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat and" sending "him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness;" the goat, as it is expressly said, bearing "upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited?"

Having thus fulfilled the office of a Priest in the outer tabernacle, Christ entered into the inner sanctuary "to appear in the presence of God for us;" and there "he ever liveth to make intercession for" us.

He ascended also to reign as a King over the Church and over the universe;—to take the charge of the sanctification and protection of his people, to employ angels to minister to them, to curb and counteract the rage of devils, to manage the whole world in reference to their interests, and to bring them safely home to glory. Thus he administers the divine government in a Person that can be seen and

apprehended by creatures. That same Person will judge the world. And "when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power," he then will deliver "up the kingdom to God, even the Father,—that God may be all in all."

In his whole mediatorial character he is "the chiefest among ten thousand" and "altogether lovely." In him the lost and helpless children of Adam have precisely what they need. Not a want can be named but he has enough to supply it. Are you dead in trespasses and sins? He that called Lazarus from the sepulchre can reanimate you. Are you fast bound in the snares of Satan? He that could expel seven devils from one and a legion from another, can deliver you. Are you mourning under guilt? He who bore your sins in his own body on the tree, can make your scarlet stains as snow and your crimson spots like wool. Do you complain of a heart of stone? He that could subdue a Saul of Tarsus, can soften you. Are you blind to spiritual glory? He who restored sight to the blind men of Jericho, can make you see. Do you groan under ignorance and confusion of thought respecting the way of salvation? He who composed the madness of the men among the tombs,—who brought so many bewildered Jews to clear conceptions of Gospel truth,—who has sent forth all the light which for six thousand years has cheered the abodes of Zion, can dispel your confusion and change your darkness into day. Are you falling before your spiritual enemies? He nailed them all to his cross and triumphed over them when he arose.

Poor, helpless, diseased mortals, come and hear the joyful tidings, that an all-sufficient Saviour is provided, at whose word guilt, diseases and demons fly; who restores the whole man,—eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, light to the bewildered, and life to the dead. There is balm in Gilead and an able physician there: O that you would go to him and be healed.

II. I am to show that he is a friend which sticketh closer than a brother.



But where shall I begin or where shall I end? His whole Gospel is one unequalled expression of kindness for a dying world. The tenderest assurances of his love are enstamped on every page. Nor has he stopped at mere professions. His conduct has uniformly proved him sincere. His descent from infinite glory to the manger, proved him sincere. His incessant toil for the instruction of his enemies, proved him sincere. His agony and bloody sweat in the garden, proved him sincere. His sufferings upon the cross, the effusion from his bleeding heart, every crimson nail print, his dying prayer for his enemies, all proved him to be a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Where is the brother who would lose his own to save a brother's life? Where is the brother who, from a self-existent God, ever descended into the fetters of death, that his unfriendly brother might live forever? Do you ask for further proof? Follow him then to the empyreal heavens: see him interceding for a world that had rejected him and chased him back to glory. See him showing the prints of his wounds and pleading, Father spare them, I have died. Do you wish for more? Listen then to the tones of entreaty with which he follows a world stained with his blood. "O my people, what have I done unto thee and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me." "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel, a land of darkness?" "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace." "As I live—I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye,—for why will ye die?" "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" Not the vilest sinners are excepted in his invitations and entreaties. Methinks I hear him say, Ho ye my abusers and murderers who spit in my face and nailed me to the cross, come and taste the fruits of the sufferings your own hands inflicted. Come, thou that didst pierce my side, and let the very sin which forced the blood to flow, find in that blood its purification and pardon.

Nor does he give over his suit when all the calls of his word are rejected. He comes again to earth in the person of his Spirit, and

renews his entreaties at the sinner's door. "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me." "Open to me,—for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." Will the master whom thou servest reward thee as I would do? Has he done for thee what I have done? Did he ever for thee become "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"? From the tenderest love to thee I left the honors of my Father's house to suffer and die on Calvary. And now my bowels of mercy have brought me to thy door to plead with thee to be happy. I have no unfriendly designs against thee; I only seek thy peace. And wilt thou spurn me from thee to admit another who only seeks thy hurt? Have I deserved such treatment at thy hands? O sinner, have I thus treated thee?

And is he not "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother"?

III. If we would enjoy his friendship we must show ourselves friendly.

In the nature of things it is impossible for us to enjoy the good which he came to purchase, while we are his enemies. How can we have communion with him and his Father while in such a state? How in such a state can we love and obey that law which he came to support, and enjoy that holy order which he came to establish? How can one relish the religious society of heaven while disgusted with religious society on earth? or the sacredness of an eternal sabbath, to whom every sabbath is a burden? or the holy employments of the upper sanctuary, when prayer and all religious exercises are irksome?

And if it were otherwise, is it reasonable that the Son of God should exercise love for us while we refuse to make him any returns? that he should lay down his life for us, while we refuse to lay aside even our sins for him? What are we that we should expect so much more from him than we are willing to render? Can he discover more beauty in us than we can in him? Has he more need of our friendship than we have of his? Can we reward his attention as he can ours?

At any rate the explicit terms of the Gospel exclude all who are not from the heart the friends of Christ and of God. "Follow—holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." "He that believeth not shall be damned." "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you,—when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." "The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." "Then shall he say also unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every man, according to their works.—And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire."

Universalists, especially those who deny any punishment after death, would make out that Christ came to take the part of men while trampling under foot the law of God, and to shield them while rioting in that rebellion. But upon this principle he came, not to magnify the law, but to ruin it; not to sustain a moral government, but to destroy it; not to glorify God, but to tarnish the divine glory forever. But it is not so. He that would have this Friend must "show himself friendly." This is settled, and it leads us to consider,

#### IV. Our absolute need of him.

We need him as a Prophet to prevent us, by his instructions, from falling into fatal errors of doctrine, and from embracing that delusive hope which, instead of being "an anchor" to keep us from the tossings of the tempest, is an anchor which, grasped by the drowning man, holds him down to death.

We need him as an atoning and interceding Priest. Could a perishing world have been saved without that propitiatory sacrifice, he who made the heavens would not have consented to die the death of a Roman malefactor. He was not so lavish of his blood as to spend it without necessity. Do you doubt the need of his atonement? How then are you to be saved? Millions of transgressions, each of which is loaded with the curse of the law, stand charged against you. The measure of your guilt cannot be calculated by angels. By what means then can you hope to make atonement? Should you henceforth yield perfect obedience, you would only do your duty for the time to come. There would be no surplusage of merit to make up for past deficiencies. What then can be hoped from that imperfect obedience which is the utmost that is rendered by the best of men? This instead of atoning for what is past, needs an atonement for itself. And even this imperfect obedience will not be rendered without help from Christ. Unless he, by his Spirit, work "in you both to will and to do," you will retain that "carnal mind" which is "enmity against God,"—that "heart" which "is fully set" in you "to do evil." Talk not of your selfish reformations and prayers. For even these are not likely to be produced without the convicting Spirit; and if produced, are only "the sacrifice of the wicked." Thus every hope of making atonement is withered; and nothing remains for you but to lie down in everlasting sorrows, or depend entirely on the atonement of Christ.

You also need Jesus as a King, to sanctify and subdue you. You need him, first, to interpose by his awakening influence, to prevent you from sleeping life away. And when reflection is awakened, you need him to slay the enmity of your heart and to impress his image there.

And after all this is effected, you will daily need his sanctifying grace to keep you from apostacy. You need the Captain of the Lord's host to protect you against your spiritual enemies. You have the world with all its frowns, and what is more, with all its seductive blandishments, to encounter. You have the flesh with all its importunate lusts. And you have to contend with principalities and powers. Hosts of infuriated enemies stand crowded in all the way to heaven. The ascent is arduous. Your own nature is of the earth earthy, and strongly gravitates downwards. These enemies have long been entrenching themselves in the way, and some of their spies are lodged in your very bosom, waiting for a favorable opportunity to betray you into their hands. Thus beset from without and from within, you may well say with the good Jehoshaphat, "We have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee." Your enemies not only assault you openly, but lurk in secret ambuscades, whence they shoot their silent arrows, which, without alarming, destroy. Their shafts are barbed and hard to be extracted. They are tipped with poison, and give those deadly wounds which nothing can heal but the balm of Gilead and the great Physician of souls.

You will greatly need this friend in the gloomy shades of adversity. None can hope to see many days on earth without being conversant with scenes of affliction. "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." Disappointments and crosses will come; infirmities and pains will assail; the friends of our heart will close their dying eyes on our tears, and, deaf to all our lamentations, will hide themselves under the clods of the valley. At such times we shall greatly need "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother;" a friend who, when "father and mother forsake" us, will kindly "take" us "up." If such a friend is not secured, we are poorly fitted to traverse the mazes of this thorny wilderness.

And when these mazes are past, we shall greatly need this friend in a dying hour. O unbeliever, when you lie gasping on that edge of time which divides the two worlds, looking back with remorse and

forward with terror, about to take the fearful plunge whence there is no return; when you shall cry to your vicious companions, and in answer only see their faces pale with terror,—and extend your hands to a weeping parent and brother, and read in their tears, "Dear, dying friend, we cannot help thee;" then how greatly will you need that friend which sticketh closer than a brother. How sweet would it be in that hour to see him standing by your side, supporting your weary head, and ready to bear you in his arms to the heavenly rest. But in that extremity, to find no friend in heaven or earth to speak a healing word; to go unbefriended and alone through the gloomy valley, without one ray of light to point the way to glory; this indeed would be distress unspeakable. How would it then seem to hear Jesus say, "I would have been thy friend, but thou wouldst not receive me. And now, though thou call, I will not answer. Get thee to thine idols for help. Cry to thine own chosen master, whom thou didst prefer to me; and see whether he will do better by thee than I would have done." O it cannot, must not be endured.

Another day will come when you will equally need his friendship; a day when "the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll," the earth shall be on fire, the trump shall sound, the dead shall rise, the Son of man, with his angels, shall descend, and three worlds shall be assembled at his bar. No longer a weeping infant in the manger, or a bleeding sufferer on the cross; no longer an humble suitor at the door of your hearts, he appears the sovereign Judge, arrayed in all the glories of the Godhead. No longer is his blood to be slighted, his Spirit resisted, and his sacred person insulted by an ungrateful world. For different purposes has he made his second appearance; to judge the world, to call sinners to a strict account, to scrutinize every action and thought from Adam to his youngest son, and to execute the long delayed sentence of his righteous law. Then, when all your sins shall be displayed before assembled worlds, and the curse fastened to each shall be ready to fall upon your defenceless head, and nothing to arrest the rushing war but the mediatorial shield, and your earthly friends unable to help either you or themselves; then will you in the fullest sense, though alas too late, feel your need of

that friend which sticketh closer than a brother. You would then give ten thousand worlds for that interest in him which you now refuse.

And will your need of him end here? No, it will continue to all eternity. When friends and riches and honors and pleasures shall be no more; when for former comforts shall be substituted the torments of the never dying worm,—a conscience lashing you with torturing reproaches, a memory furnishing the most poignant stings, and your passions, let loose, shall rend you with the fury of whirlwinds; when you shall look up and behold some of your former friends in heaven, regaling themselves at the immortal banquet, while you pine in eternal want; then will you "mourn at the last, when" your "flesh and" your "body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof!"

O sinners, I adjure you in the name of God, not to treat this warning as you have treated all that are past. Retire to your closets and let these solemn realities pass in review before you. Place yourselves before the bar of God, and anticipate the awful scenes of the final judgment. Ponder upon your guilt: look at the readiness of Christ to save you, and let the charming echo of his invitations still sound in your ears. And at the conclusion solemnly ask yourselves, Why will I die? O wretched men, are not the glories of heaven worth a few serious thoughts? If you could continue blind forever, I should not be so importunate. But light will break in upon your anguished sight; and those lids which were obstinately closed, will be forced and held open to gaze at the tormenting glare of light while God and truth remain. O reflect before reflection shall come too late. Why should you exchange your souls for toys, your God for mammon, and your glory for despair? Why should the great enemy of man be served for the recompense of damnation, rather than this divine friend for the reward of heaven? Should you, after so long a time, resolve this day to take the counsel now offered, do you think you would repent it in a dying hour? Would you repent it at the judgment day, or in any one moment of your immortal existence? I can say no more. "If thou be

wise thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest thou alone shalt bear it." Amen.

## **SERMON XXV**

### **CHRIST A COVERT FROM THE TEMPEST**

And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. - ISAI. 32:2

This prediction, which was uttered in the days of Ahaz, is thought to have had primary reference to Hezekiah, and to the relief from wicked magistrates which would be experienced in his reign. But in the opinion of the best commentators it had ultimate reference to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the person of our Redeemer, who is very man as well as God, it is fulfilled that "a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

In a serene day when no wind is up, when no rain is falling, a man may see by the way-side a shelving rock and may pass by it without emotion. Not so the weary traveller who is fleeing before the rising storm or the beating tempest. In a season of rain or in a land of waters, one may pass by a river with little interest. Not so a traveller in the Arabian deserts, surrounded with burning sands, fainting with heat and parched with thirst. The sight of a stream of water, and especially of "rivers of water," in such a place, would transport him. In a country covered with wood or pinched with cold, a huge rock might offer its shade unwelcome; but amidst the parched wastes of Arabia, where the weary traveller, exposed all day to the intense heat of a vertical sun, sees not a tree nor a shrub, but only one boundless



waste of burning sand,—there a cool retreat beneath the shade of an over-hanging cliff,—there "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," would be most welcome.

These observations suggest a principal reason why the Saviour of the world, whose very name ought to be music to every human ear, is treated with such cruel indifference by the greater part of mankind. It is because they do not feel their guilt and misery and need of a Saviour. They are blind to the infinite majesty and holiness and loveliness of God, and to the immense obligations by which they are bound to him; and therefore they do not see the infinite guilt of rebelling against all his commands, all his mercies, all his glories and interests; and therefore they are not pressed down under a sense of their awful condemnation and ruin. Hell is not laid open before them as their proper punishment. They do not stand amazed at the patience which has kept them out of it so long. They do not see themselves to be utterly ruined, and utterly helpless and hopeless without a Saviour. And therefore his precious Gospel, which ought to fill the world with wonder and delight, with gratitude and praise, is cast aside as an idle tale, and the name of Jesus is treated with the most dreadful indifference.

But let a man be thoroughly convicted of sin; let him see himself covered with pollution from the head to the foot; let him stand in sight of the eternal judgment, and apprehend that divine justice has no choice but to crush him into everlasting torment; let him see himself just about to receive the descending wrath of God with the weight of a thousand worlds: in that awful moment let him obtain a glimpse of Jesus, who came to "save his people from their sins;" let him lift his trembling eye to a God reconciled in Christ and smiling upon him: I ask that man, "What" now "think" you "of Christ?" O, says he,—but language fails. A sacred reverence settles upon his countenance; his uplifted eye speaks unutterable things. I see it glisten,—I see it weep. O, says he.—His hands are clinched and forcibly raised to his breast. The opening of the last judgment could not add solemnity to a single feature. O the height and the depth, the

length and the breadth of the love of Christ! Where has this glorious mystery lain hid that I have never seen it before? To such an eye how precious does the Saviour appear as the great medium through which the love of God has come down to men,—as the Word by which all the wonders of the eternal Mind are expressed,—as the great Prophet who has brought down all the instructions that have blessed the world from the days of Eden,—as the Priest whose atonement and intercession have astonished heaven and earth,—as the King who has governed the world from the beginning, and has always protected and provided for his people, and has all their interests in his hands, and all the treasures of the universe to impart. To one who is indifferent to the blessedness of communion with God and of conformity to him, there appears no form or comeliness in Christ why he should desire him. But to one who feels an insatiable eagerness to rise from this dark world to a knowledge of all the grand and interesting things which are taking place in the kingdom of God,—who longs to be united to all holy beings, and to share in their immortal friendship and blessedness and honors,—who has no desire so great as to be good and conformed to the God he loves;—to such a one Jesus must appear exceedingly precious as the one appointed to open the universe to view, to pour all its light upon the eye, and to exalt the soul to all its purity, to all its dignity, to all its happiness.

To an anxious and afflicted soul the Saviour appears peculiarly interesting in the light in which he is exhibited in the text. In the charming simplicity of eastern figure, he is presented "as a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Here are three separate figures, very striking to an eastern ear, which admit of distinct illustrations.

"A hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest." This is but one figure: for the latter clause, as is common in eastern poetry, is only the echo of the former; presenting a hiding place and covert from the windy storm and tempest. Jesus is found to be the best

hiding place and covert from the winds and tempests of affliction. A poor disconsolate soul, after it has been chased through the world by the frowns of pursuing fortune,—after it has been hunted from place to place, and not suffered to rest in any corner of creation,—will find in Christ that protection and repose which all other places denied it. The weather-beaten wretch, after bearing the storms of this inclement world through the long night of affliction, may find in him a shelter under which he may hear the tempest howl without, and feel it not.

Jesus is the best hiding place and covert from the tempest of an agitated conscience. When the lightning of conviction flashes upon the soul, and guilt with its thundering voice spreads its dark folds over the mind, no where but in Jesus can be found a covert from the bursting storm. To what other refuge can a sinner fly when the horrid nature of his rebellion is laid open before him? At what time his ingratitude to the God that made, redeemed and preserves him appears; at what time he is terrified and confounded by the frequent repetition of his sins and the obstinacy of his corruptions; at what time guilt, superadded to guilt, rolls its dark wreaths over the soul, like clouds that "return after the rain," no where but in Jesus can he find a refuge from the gathering tempest. The blood of Christ, sprinkling his conscience from dead works, has a wonderful power to relieve from the pangs of conscious guilt. It is the most sovereign balm to a wounded spirit. "Give me Jesus or I die," cries the agonized soul. "None but Christ, none but Christ. Take away that cloud that I may see him, and I shall live." What other refuge can a soul find that is racked with guilt? Let him go to his wealth, his honors, his pleasures; they are all unsavory ashes in the mouth of a man dying with hunger. Let him go to philosophy, it is a stranger to his case, and knows nothing either of his griefs or his wants. Let him go to speculative divinity, it is no physician, but only a corpse laid by the side of a dying man. Let him go to the courts of the Lord,—let him go to his Bible, to his knees, and all without Christ are nothing. Let him go to God, and God out of Christ "is a consuming fire." But let him only come in sight of Jesus, and get near enough to "touch" if it be

but "the hem of his garment," and all his pains are instantly relieved, —the fire in his conscience is quenched, and he is as much at ease as though he never felt a pain.

Jesus is also the best covert from the tempest of fear when it agitates the soul. There is a material difference between conscious guilt and the apprehension of punishment, although, like light and heat, they generally go together. I see a sinner convulsed with the fear of a judgment to come. With an eye wildly rolling and marked with horror, I hear him cry, "Who" can dwell with—devouring fire? who" can inhabit "everlasting burnings?" His anxious eye looks above and beneath and searches creation through, but not a ray of hope can it find,—nothing but clouds and darkness and tempests. At length it falls on Jesus. Instantly the heavens are calm; the sound of the distant storm dies upon his soothed ear, and every care is still.

Jesus is the only hiding-place from the tempest of divine wrath. A rock of adamant he stood, and suffered this storm to spend its force on him; while his people, enclosed "in him," lay hid from the beating tempest. The storm is past, and now their faith looks abroad and sees an unclouded sky, and all nature smiling in fresher beauties than though no storm had been.

To finish the illustration of this figure, Jesus is the only hiding-place from the storms and tempests which forever beat upon the regions of the damned. Not to them is he a covert. They rejected the canopy of his grace when he would willingly have spread it over them; and now he is nothing to them. But to his own dear people, he will forever be a covert from the hail which will eternally lash the howling millions of the damned.

It is time to make a transition to the next figure. "As rivers of water in a dry place." The most obvious idea on the face of this figure is, that Jesus conveys satisfaction and refreshment to those who can find them no where else. There is a thirst for happiness in the soul of man, but there is a drought in all things but in God,—and for human

souls, a drought in all things but in the God that shines "in the face of Jesus Christ." Such is the constitution of things, that no man can find satisfaction but in the Christ of God. Nor will any ever find it there but those who despair of finding it any where else. But "when the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them: I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water." When one has ranged creation through in search of happiness; has sought it in the field and in the city, in the haunts of business and in the circles of pleasure,—and has met with nothing but disappointment and rebuffs; when he has wandered restless from scene to scene, from employment to employment, perhaps from country to country; when, a pilgrim in the deserts of life, he finds himself "in a dry and thirsty land where no water is," and faints to think that happiness is no where to be found; then the Gospel meets him and thus accosts him: Wherefore seekest thou "the living among the dead?" It is not here. Return from thine idle pursuit. There is but one point whence refreshment can come. Lift thine eyes to the Saviour of sinners. He lifts his eyes; he lifts his heart; and finds "waters" breaking out "in the wilderness—and streams in the desert." Ah, says he, this is where I should have come before. It would have saved me many sore disappointments and many years of anguish.

When one is plucked and crushed by the hand of adversity,—has found nothing but grief and perplexity in his connexion with the world,—carries the aching wounds where friends that have been torn away once grew to his heart,—mourns alone without father or mother, without brother or sister, without wife or child,—unpitied by the crowd of strangers that gaze upon him and pass him by,—while his tattered garments remind him of better days;—I hasten to the turf where he sits weeping, and gently, (lest I should alarm the ear of grief,) say to him, Hath no man pitied thee? Ah, says he, I am "in a dry and thirsty land where no water is;" no satisfaction or refreshment for a wretch crushed beneath misfortune. From my soul

I pity you, but do not despair. Let me lead you to the mourner's Friend. I bring him to Jesus: and when I see the balm applied to his wounds, and the countenance of the sufferer beginning to brighten, I bow and take my leave, and return to my house with delicious sensations that an infidel never knew.

Here is another pressed under a sense of heavy guilt. He also is in a land where no water is. He has sought on all sides for relief, but sought in vain. His thirst is for reconciliation with God. In quest of this he has applied to external reformation, to outward duties, to the means of grace. He has sought the counsel of ministers and christians, and has tried to repose on the good opinions of others. He has made the desperate attempt to rest on universalism, and even on infidelity; but all to no purpose. The fever of his mind remains. His thirst for pardon and peace is unabated; but no where can he find any thing to allay it, till at last he approaches the Gospel. He hears it say, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." His attention is strongly arrested. He examines the passage. It is the voice of the Saviour himself. He ultimately seizes the invitation and goes to him: and his astonished soul finds this way of salvation exactly suited to his wants. He finds within "him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The last figure employed, though appropriate and striking, conveys no meaning materially different from the other two. The idea is that of rest in a cool and refreshing place. "As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." The figure represents a traveller in one of the eastern deserts, burnt with intense heat, worn out with toil, fainting for water, for shade. His resolution and strength fail. He abandons the hope of ever reaching the end of the desert; when all at once he discovers before him a high impending rock, under the cavity of whose side he finds a refreshing shelter from the scorching sun and burning sand. Such a retreat does our dear Redeemer afford to those who are fainting under the labors and discouragements of this wearisome life. This vale of tears may well be called a weary land. There are many in it who are ready to faint under the load of

affliction, and can say with Job, "My soul is weary of my life." Many are weary of sin,—wearied out with a long course of painful struggles with the world, the flesh, and the devil,—are often discouraged with the greatness of the contest, and sink under the apprehension that they shall never get through with safety. These evils press them so hard that they often sigh for the grave where the weary are at rest. But a nearer and more delightful retreat is to be found in him who says, "The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." "I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul." When his Church wandered forty years in the Arabian wilderness, among burning sands, without a shelter or a shade, he covered them by day with a pillar of cloud. What this was intended to signify, appears from the application made of it by the prophet: "The Lord shall create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and a smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from the storm and from the rain."

At what time a poor fainting soul, weary of affliction, weary of sin, weary of temptation, casts itself under the shadow of this rock, he feels a sensation of relief which nothing else can bring and which none can fully describe.

My brethren, what everlasting thanks do we owe to God for providing such a refuge from the beating tempest,—such rivers of refreshment in a dry and thirsty land. What could the weather-beaten pilgrim, what could the faint and weary traveller do without them in such a world as this? How greatly does this view tend to endear the Saviour to us. What new motives rush upon the mind to abide in him, that we may every hour enjoy a "hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest,"—that we may constantly lie at the fountain of living waters, and feel the permanent shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Why do the people of God find so little

relief from the distresses of life and the troubles of conscience, but because they abide no more in their everlasting refuge?

How surprising it is that in a world where a covert from the tempest is so much needed, it is so much neglected, and that even by those who have often found it a shelter when every other refuge failed. Would it not be strange to see a person ready to die with heat and thirst by the very side of a cooling fountain, and by the shade of an overhanging rock? Yet a still greater wonder is witnessed here.

May not these sweet and heavenly truths be allowed to "light up a smile in the aspect of wo?" Will not mourners in Zion come to this refuge and dry up their tears? Were you confined to these stormy regions without a shelter, you might well beat your breasts like one distracted. But now what need? I am speaking to those who know the truth of what I say. You have often found refuge here, and seen the agitations of the tempest composed, and all the fury of the storm appeased. The same shelter is ever at hand and is always offered to you; and at what time you are afraid you may always find in Christ a sure retreat. What occasion have you then for these desponding griefs? What abundant reason have you to "rejoice evermore." And while we thus enjoy the blessed fruits of a Saviour's dying love, let our souls arise and praise him; let a thousand tender recollections rise up in our hearts; let us renewedly devote ourselves to his service, resolving to live to his glory and to die with an eye fixed upon his cross. Amen.

## **SERMON XXVI**

### **THE HIGH PRIEST**

For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the



heavens.- HEB. 7:26

When believers get to heaven, much of their happiness will arise from views of Christ which they will wonder they did not more fully possess on earth. Their most ravishing views will be those of his priestly office. Any being, (had wisdom so appointed,) might have instructed the world as a prophet, and perhaps governed it as a king; but to bring a guilty race to God by sacrifice and intercession, this is the mystery into which the angels desire to look. A cordial belief of this is the principal attribute of saving faith.

Probably the priesthood of Christ is not sufficiently dwelt upon in the contemplations of christians or in the preaching of ministers. Some are always poring upon divine government; others, upon the general grace of God to men, without considering the medium through which it comes. But the priesthood of Christ is so much the pivot on which the whole system of Christianity turns, that it ought to hold a conspicuous place in the religion of the Church. Great stress is laid upon it in the writings of the apostles. At every turn they introduce it as the only basis of the christian's hope. This is the case especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews. This Epistle was addressed to the Israelites who were strongly attached to the law of Moses, and was designed to remove that attachment by showing them that the rites connected with the Levitical priesthood were only types of what Christ was to perform in his pontifical character. Thus these types not only prefigured to the Jews a Saviour to come, but are made to assist the weak apprehensions of Christians to the end of the world, and serve as steps by which they may climb to see the high and transcendent mysteries of the atonement. In this Epistle the most remarkable and instructive types are pressed into the service of the christian church, and are employed to illustrate a point so difficult of apprehension as the office work of our great high priest.

Aaron was the high priest of one nation; Christ is the high priest of a world. It belonged to the Jewish high priest to instruct the people; and Christ, as a prophet, instructs the world. It belonged to the

Jewish high priest to rule over the house of God; and Christ is exalted to dominion over the church and over the universe. The names of the twelve tribes were engraven on the stones of the ephod and borne upon the shoulders of the high priest; and Christ supports his people with a strength that never tires. But the more appropriate business of the Jewish high priest was to appease the wrath of God by sacrifice and intercession. Let us trace a little more particularly the resemblance between the type and the antitype in this and other respects.

1. It was a circumstance of vital importance that the Jewish high priest was not self-appointed, but ordained of God. "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." As the Jewish high priest was divinely appointed, it happened of course that when he offered sacrifice and intercession for the people, God accepted the offering, and in his providence treated the people like a Father. This was the sure effect of his being ordained of God. But this circumstance gives still greater confidence in the case of Christ; "inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest. For those priests were made without an oath, but this with an oath, by him that said unto him, The Lord swore and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." By a similar oath God has confirmed the promise to the church. "For when God made promise to Abraham, [of the blessings which should come to the world through his Seed,] because he could swear by no greater he swore by himself;—that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

The appointment of Christ to the priestly office was then God's own act, confirmed by an oath. We may therefore be assured that it will answer the purpose, and that his offering as a priest will certainly be accepted in behalf of all who believe. If we cannot see the ends which

are answered by this substitution, we may rest assured that God had fully weighed every circumstance before he ordained his Son to the office and swore to accept his offering. If we cannot apprehend, can we not believe God?

2. The Jewish high priest was not of a foreign world or nation, but a brother of the same flesh and blood with those for whom he mediated. And he could "have compassion on the ignorant and on them that" were "out of the way, for that he himself also" was "compassed with infirmity." And Christ, that he might suffer in the nature that had sinned, and that he might know by experience how to sympathize with us in all our trials, "took not on him the nature of angels, but—the seed of Abraham." "Forasmuch—as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them.—In all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

3. The Jewish high priest, when he came before God, must wash himself in water, and put on clean raiment, and offer only those victims which were without blemish. And "such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled," and "separate from sinners." Had he been otherwise, for the same reason that divine purity could not receive a sinful world without a high priest, it must have rejected such a high priest and his offering. His wonderful filial obedience, which rendered him infinitely dear to the Father, was not only needful for his atonement, as it made the stroke which fell on him far more expressive, but it earned the whole inheritance, which he now holds as "the first born among many brethren," for the benefit of the "joint heirs."

4. The Jewish high priest was clothed with great dignity, which was set forth by his wonderfully rich and dazzling robes. And "such a high priest became us, who is—made higher than the heavens;" not only exalted, as a reward, to the management and distribution of the whole estate, (which was of vital importance,) but exalted in his own divine nature above all heights. It would not have answered for an angel to have undertaken to mediate. It required a sacrifice infinitely dear to the Father to make an expression, as strong as the eternal destruction of Adam's race would have done, that God was determined to execute the penalty of his law on future offenders. We indeed wanted a high priest in our own nature, that we might be united to him as a brother, and be emboldened to apply to him, and that by experiencing our trials, he might be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. But we wanted a high priest of infinite dignity, that his mediation might prevail. These wide extremes meet in the person of our Redeemer. We see him supporting John on his laboring bosom, conversing and weeping with his disciples; we are emboldened to embrace him. We look again, and this compassionate Saviour is expanded into infinity; and we can now trust him to advocate our cause with the Father and to manage all our interests in both worlds.

5. The most important work of the Jewish high priest was to offer sacrifice for sin; and that picture of the great substitution was so formed as to set forth the antitype in a very familiar and impressive light: and the manner in which this picture is explained by the Holy Ghost in this very Epistle, renders the whole most intelligible and affecting. It is here said, "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." The

lasting efficacy of his one offering and the eternity of his priesthood are strongly set forth in contrast with the insufficiency and consequent repetition of the typical offerings and the change of the typical priesthood from hand to hand. Having no other use than to prefigure a Priest and an atonement to come, these last had the same need of being repeated that our sacraments have which point to a Saviour already come. "The law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never—make the comers thereunto perfect: for then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins.—But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." "Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice;" "for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood."

6. Another part of the business of the Jewish high priest was to intercede for the people. On the twelve stones of his breast-plate were engraven the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; and these he bore upon his heart when he appeared before God. So "Christ is—entered—into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us," bearing all his people upon his heart. "Wherefore he is able—to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." There he stands to introduce our confessions and our prayers to God. There he stands to introduce our free-will offerings of praise. It is repeatedly asserted in this Epistle that the Jewish high priest offered "both gifts and sacrifices." These gifts, which were presented by the people and offered by the priest, were designed for thanksgiving, and were commonly of the fruits of the earth; in allusion to which the apostle says, "By him—let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." Our very praises are too polluted to be accepted till they are perfumed by the breath of the Intercessor.

The influence both of his intercession and atonement is remarkably set forth in the entrance of the high priest "into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true," namely of that heaven into which Christ has entered "to appear in the presence of God for us." In that part of the tabernacle which lay within the veil, the Shekinah, or visible glory of God, sat enthroned on the mercy seat. So awful was the presence of a holy God, that no mortal eye but that of the high priest might ever pass the veil, nor his except on one day in a year: and then he must first wash himself with water, and put on clean linen garments, and slay his sin-offerings, and carry their blood in to sprinkle the mercy seat. And he must take a censor full of live coals in one hand, and sweet incense in the other; and the moment he passed the veil, he must put the incense upon the coals, that the smoke might conceal the glory of the great and dreadful God from his view: for if his polluted eyes once fell upon the Shekinah, that moment he must die. So solemn a thing it was to approach a holy God. By this shutting up of the inner tabernacle the Holy Ghost signified "that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest while—the first tabernacle was yet standing;" that is to say, while the veil remained which was a type of Christ's flesh, by the rending of which flesh the veil was taken away. At his death the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; by which was signified that the way to God and the mercy seat was then opened. Without that atonement God was a consuming fire, and to approach him was instant death. "But Christ being come, a high priest of good things to come" not "by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood—entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.—Having therefore—boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near—in full assurance of faith." We have now a hope "both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us entered," to open a way for us to God and to the heaven of heavens.

Of all divine truths the priesthood of Christ is the one of most difficult apprehension. It is a truth not only which reason could not have discovered, but which lies the most remote from the apprehension of reason. Flesh and blood cannot reveal it to the soul. Nothing can but that divine illumination which accompanies faith. No reasoning on the necessity or nature of the atonement can bring the true sense. A child may have it, and a well read divine may want it. Christians do not obtain it by the niceties of speculation, but by a hearty belief in the testimony which God has given of his Son. We must credit that oath by which the Son was consecrated high priest forever. We must believe that God is sincere in all that he has spoken, and is not trifling with the miseries of a wretched world. We must obtain a sense of this glorious mystery, if I may so say, by the passiveness of faith,—by lying down on the word and oath of God. We may make researches, but reason should not go one step alone. The moment it attempts to do this, it degenerates into dark, frigid, proud speculation, unproductive, and even preventive, of the true sense. Much darkness, substantial enough to be moulded into form, appears in the shape of human systems. Would men assist their apprehensions of this matter by reading, let them look with a believing eye on those aspects which the priesthood of Christ assumes in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The representations of the Holy Ghost are better calculated to produce the true sense, than stiff, systematic phrases or artificial modes of thinking. The pencil of inspiration points more to the life. Without confining ourselves to streams which have gathered defilement in their course, we may here drink at the fountain. The Scriptures are wonderfully adapted to the weakness of our apprehensions and to the nature of the things expressed.

It is impossible to possess a right sense of the priesthood of Christ without a simultaneous view of the holiness of God, bringing with it a sense of our guilt and unfitness to make direct approaches to him. We must be convinced of these things before we can see the glory of such a high priest, and the most effectual means to produce this conviction is to consider, not so much what we have done, as what

God is. When we discover God to be so holy and glorious that a bare neglect to love him deserves eternal wo, and that no conceivable punishment is great enough for those who sin against him;—when we view him turning the angels out of heaven for sin,—turning Adam out of Eden,—turning a beautiful world into a prison house of groans,—turning millions into hell,—and more than all, thrusting his sword through the heart of his own Son; then we discover the awful majesty of his holiness, and that to approach him without a Mediator is rushing into a consuming fire. We look anxiously about and ask, Where is Jesus now? We espy him. We see him to be the very medium we want. We dare not move a wish but in his name. And now we cry with joys unknown before, "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Well it is for me that there is one whom a holy God can accept in my behalf; for surely he could not accept me." Now it appears an unspeakable honor to the holiness of God that he will not accept sinners but through a Mediator. The priesthood of Christ is now seen to be a wondrous reality. All the supposed opposition between the Father and Son has disappeared. The Father, in appointing the high priest and in freely receiving sinners through him, appears as much the friend of man as does the Son; and the Son, in cheerfully undertaking a mediation so honorable to the divine holiness, appears as much the friend of holiness as does the Father. The suitableness of the priesthood is seen to arise from the unapproachable purity of God. On the other hand the purity of God is most clearly seen in the face of Jesus Christ. The soul has now no wish to take its own part, or that Christ should take its part, against the divine law. It as highly approves of the ground taken by the Father, as of that taken by the Son. It sees the plan of salvation to be glorious in all its parts, and wishes to be saved in no other way. It sees Christ to be a medium through which a whole world may come, and longs that all men should go to God by him. It feels secure, and sees that however vile it has been, it may readily be accepted through Christ. It is amazed and delighted. It seems not to have wrought itself up to these feelings, but to He still and receive them. The more unworthy it feels the happier it is,



because the more it feels its unworthiness the more it relishes this glorious high priest; and on the other hand, the more it sees the glories of Christ, the more it feels its own pollution. It greatly wishes to recommend a holy God and Saviour to all, but is unable to express the sense it feels. It seems like one who has found a great treasure and wishes all men to partake. It is grieved that any should lose so much; and longs that every eye on earth should behold the glories of the Saviour, and that every heart should love and honor him. It sees that the kingdom is and ought to be the Lord's, and feels that the subjection of a single event to the decision of another would be unreasonable.

Under these views the christian feels that he is not his own but bought with a price, and longs to devote himself forever to the service of his God and Saviour. He is willing to bear reproaches and even to die for his name's sake. The seasons of worship which he enjoys, he values more as opportunities to honor God than as occasions of obtaining blessings for himself. He longs for clearer views. "O for more faith and less dependance on reason. Give me communion with Christ and I desire no more." He finds these views of a holy God and Saviour the most effectual antidote against sin, and sees that if sin is ever crucified it must be by the cross of Christ.

The priesthood of Christ, thus disclosed, is the sun which illumines every other subject;—the perfections of God, his love and mercy, his common bounties, our obligations to universal holiness, our ingratitude and guilt. Whichever way we turn, all is light around. The Bible, wherever it is opened, appears luminous. The world is full of matter to think of, to pray about, and to be thankful for. The mercies of God, swelled to an incalculable amount, appear most amazing; and the vanquished creature, unable to make any returns, puts himself down for an everlasting bankrupt.

He now discovers that it is a very different thing to approach God from what he formerly thought; that his sense of the atonement which had depended on former reasonings, was not the true sense;

that it is one thing to talk about religion and another to feel it; that many truths which he had correctly expressed, are far different from what he had conceived them to be; and that in regard to others, he had not only conceived of them imperfectly, but expressed them awkwardly,—preserving a stiff, systematic form, and overlooking the life and soul of the things themselves.

These direct views of God and the glorious high priest, and none but these, can bring "the full assurance of hope." In them the believer sees a sufficient ground of everlasting confidence. Formerly his hope arose from meltings of soul, but now from an open view of God in Christ and from the truth of the everlasting covenant. He places unwavering confidence in the faithfulness of him in whom he is now conscious of believing, and is sure of being guided by his counsel until he is received to glory.

"And am I chosen," says he, "by eternal love? Am I redeemed by blood and owned as a child? Are all my crimson stains washed out? Am I to reign on an eternal throne, while my companions in sin welter in hell? O grace, grace! O the ocean without a bottom or a shore!"

My brethren, how much calmer, brighter, happier our lives might pass in this communion with Christ and in this assurance of a blessed immortality, than by degenerating into pride and worldliness, filled with darkness and shaken with fears. How much better to be an humble, heavenly minded christian, dead to the world and bearing the cross, whatever mortifications it may bring, than to be a Caesar in all his glory. Ah how different is religion from nature! How different is the sanctified from the unsanctified part in every feeling, view, motive, and motion!

This knowledge of Christ is most precious.—This to repentance from dead works, is what manhood is to infancy. How many, by frequently laying again the foundation of such repentance, are continued babes.

Others get before them and are pressing towards the mark, while they are lagging far behind.

It is the cross of Christ that must crucify a wicked world. That is commonly the best preaching which has the most of Christ in it. Paul in his ministry knew nothing "save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And all preachers are to draw their most powerful motives, and to draw them often, from the cross of Christ. But they need spiritual discernment to do this skilfully and with effect. Without this they will be in danger of speaking of these high and mysterious things in a manner either awkward and frigid, or light and frivolous. Before the uncovered majesty of these sublime and awful truths, how do the little arts of seizing the passions by loosely and lightly, and I had almost said, profanely, talking of Christ's scars and sighs, bow and flee away! In how unhallowed a manner, O my soul, hast thou treated this infinitely dignified, this holy and heavenly theme! We ought to bow in humble awe before the substance, and not be always playing with the shadows.

By this high priest all the ends of the earth may approach God and be saved. How lamentable that any should spurn the infinite blessing and lie down in everlasting sorrows. How can any think it a privilege to be excused from using this medium in their approach to God? Do they not know that God without Christ is a consuming fire? What a heaven of delight would break upon the soul that should open its eyes upon this glorious Saviour! They who refuse, lose more in the present life than all creation can bestow. I would rather sit at his feet and see his glory, than to reign eternal emperor of this lower world.

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession." Firmly believe the testimony of God concerning him. Place unwavering confidence in him; "looking to" him as "the author and finisher of" your "faith." Let his love fill your hearts. "Let" your "mouth be filled with" his "praise and with" his "honor all the day." Devote to him your ransomed lives. "Ye are not your own,—ye are bought with a

price." Shrink not from "the reproach of Christ." "For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burnt without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." "For the joy that was set before him, [he] endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." And it will be no grief of heart to us, when we shall sit down with him on his throne, that we took up the cross and followed him, and became followers of others who through faith and patience inherited the promises. Amen.

## **SERMON XXVII**

### **CHRIST THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE**

Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live. - JOHN  
11:25

There are certain expressions in the Scriptures which seem to contain a sermon in themselves, and cannot be dilated or put into different words without losing much of their fullness and force. Like the bow in the clouds, they display a beauty formed of different shades, which charm the eye more than the shades separately viewed. Hence when we analyze the compound thought, and in a sermon give you the ideas one by one, we do not increase the pleasure of the first impression. The mind turns from the exposition and delights to dwell on the text itself.

Such, I apprehend, is the character of the text which I have just read in your ears. I know not in what manner I can expand it without

weakening its force. And I expect that after I have done, my spiritual hearers, forgetful of the sermon, will still be dwelling on the text, and repeating over and over again, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

The occasion on which these words were spoken was as follows. There was in Bethany, about two miles east of Jerusalem, an interesting family who received Christ as the Messiah, and whom he and his disciples very tenderly loved. This family consisted of Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha. This was that Mary who at a former time, when her sister had received Jesus into her house and was providing him a supper, sat at his feet and heard his words; and who afterwards, a few days before his death, anointed his feet with ointment and wiped them with the hair of her head. And this was that Martha who, after she had hospitably invited Jesus to her house, complained to him that her sister had left her to serve alone. Martha, while she was truly pious, appears to have been ardent, resolute, active in domestic business, and full of words. Mary was still, humble, affectionate, and heavenly minded. She was the more interesting character, and appears to have been more dear to her neighbors and to Jesus. Lazarus was a very worthy, pious man, and tenderly beloved by Christ and his disciples.

It happened at a time when Jesus was in the country on the east of Jordan, that Lazarus fell sick. His sisters, who doted on him, seeing him at the point of death, despatched a messenger to Jesus, saying, "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." They had no doubt that their Messiah could save his life. Jesus delayed returning that he might have an opportunity to give a striking proof that he was "the Resurrection and the Life." He stayed two days in the place where he was, and then told his disciples that Lazarus was dead. They were so affected that they said one to another, "Let us go that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he found that Lazarus had lain in the grave four days. The two afflicted sisters were at that time in the

house, with numerous friends who had come from Jerusalem to comfort them. Martha, having secret information that Jesus was near the town, went out with all her natural eagerness to meet him; but Mary abode still in the house, silently pressed with her grief. "Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died. But I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God God will give it thee;" intimating perhaps some half formed hope that her brother might yet be raised. "Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life.[I carry with me power to raise the dead.] He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. And when she had so said she went her way, [leaving Jesus still without the town,] and called Mary, her sister, secretly; saying, The Master is come and calleth for thee." As soon as Mary heard that, she arose quickly and came to Jesus. The friends who had come to console her, "when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at his feet, [observe the sweet and lovely saint,] saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." Her heart was more tender and her grief more silent and deep than that of her sister. "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept." How tender was the heart of that blessed man. "Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him.—Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone." Martha, who was always full of words, objected that the body was putrefied. "Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid." And Jesus

lifted up his eyes and addressed his heavenly Father. O what a countenance was there! Could a painter draw it to the life, would it not be what one never saw before? What a trembling, awful moment was that to the sisters' hearts. Look to that spot, ye ends of the earth. Ye who wish to learn the power of our Jesus to pluck the prey from the very jaws of death;—who wish to see him attack death in his strong hold, in the sepulchre itself;—ye who would learn whether he can rescue the prey shut up four days in the grave; turn your eyes hither. And Jesus "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him and let him go." Methinks I see him fall into his sisters' arms. I see their arms strained fast around their brother's neck, and their tears of transport streaming upon his cheek. I see a sister on either side leading a brother home, triumphantly repeating, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

What blessed words are these! One could dwell upon them forever. What a glorious hope has Jesus brought to our world by coming among the dead to be "the Resurrection and the Life!" After this specimen of his power to raise the dead, who will ever despair? They have no cause to despair who have long been spiritually dead, shut up in the darkness of the sepulchre, with a great stone upon it,—bound with grave clothes and covered with putrefaction. Where can you find a wretched sinner that is conscious of worse than this? Yet with all this he need not be discouraged. All this, and less than this, may well drive him to despair of help from himself; but all this, and more than this, (if more could be,) should not dishearten him from looking with confidence to the Saviour of the world. In Christ, (let it be distinctly realized,) there is an overflowing supply for all our wants. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

The work which Christ came to accomplish was a most difficult, and to the eye of sense an impossible task. It was nothing less than to

raise the dead. He saw a world completely sunk under the dominion of a three-fold death, and utterly and forever lost. First, he saw them, by the apostacy of their first father, plunged into spiritual death,—“dead in trespasses and sins.” Dreadful state! more loathsome than the grave of Lazarus. Every holy principle extinct,—their souls dead to every emotion of love to God,—to every impulse of gratitude; as insensible to mercies, to divine love and beauty, as the bones that are mouldering under the clods of the valley,—and doomed by the law of God to an eternal abandonment to such a state. Secondly, he saw them condemned to temporal death;—their bodies filled with disease and pain, gradually wasting into food for worms, preparing to expire in agonies and to rot in the grave. He saw decay and death wither on all the enjoyments of man,—on his father and mother, on his wife and children, on his houses and lands, on the very fabric of nature, which for the sin of man was doomed to dissolution. Thirdly, he saw them actually consigned by the sentence of the law to eternal death. O the insupportable ignominy! to be judged unworthy to live in the light of heaven,—unworthy to share in the love of infinite Love itself,—unfit for the society of holy beings, and fit only to be company for devils and fuel for the flames. He saw them condemned to welter under the wrath of the Almighty to all eternity.

Thus he saw the world sunk under the dominion of a three-fold death. And from this state no finite power could redeem them. Nor had they ability to redeem themselves, any more than Lazarus had to tear off his grave clothes and come forth.

In that hour Jesus saw and pitied us and hastened to our relief. He came to destroy the works of the devil,—to break this triple chain which bound the world to death,—and in a three-fold sense to be “the Resurrection and the Life.” As these three kinds of death were entailed by the first Adam, and as the redemption by the second Adam was a redemption from the three; all these deaths, as well as the corresponding resurrections, are often thrown together in a sort of mystical confusion, and a transition is made from one to another in the same discourse, not easily understood by one unapprized of all



this. An instance of such a transition appears in our context. "Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day;" referring to the resurrection of the body. "Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live; [referring to a resurrection from a three-fold death:] and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die," spiritually and eternally.

The second Person in the Trinity, having undertaken this great work, was, in the subordinate character of Mediator, qualified to be "the Resurrection and the Life" by receiving power and authority to distribute life as he pleases. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;" and "as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."

Thus qualified, the Mediator proceeded in his work; the sum of which was to be "the Resurrection and the Life" in a three-fold sense.

1. He becomes "the Resurrection and the Life" by raising his people from the death of sin to the life of holiness. This he does in a double sense. First, by his death he rendered it consistent with the honor of the law to repeal the curse of abandonment pronounced on the race, and by his obedience he obtained the gift of the Spirit to our world. Secondly, having received the administration of the Spirit, he sends out that divine Agent to quicken his people according to his own will: a strong proof, by the by, of his proper divinity, whether the Holy Ghost be a divine Person or only the power of God; for it would be preposterous to suppose that a mere creature should direct God. He promised to send the Comforter to his disciples to testify of him. And when he got home, he did send out the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, by whose power three thousand were raised from death at once.

This great work of raising a world from the death of sin, he is accomplishing every day. It is the Spirit of Jesus that awakens every careless sinner, that convinces every awakened sinner, that converts every convinced sinner, or in the language of Ezekiel, which breathes life into the dead body in which bone has come to its bone and the flesh and sinews have been gathered thereupon. It is to the power of Jesus alone that parents can look for the resurrection of their dead children,—that ministers can look for the resurrection of their dead hearers,—that sinners can look for the resurrection of their own souls.

He is not only "the Resurrection," but "the Life" also; and when he has raised his people from the death of sin, he continues to support their spiritual existence. This is not only directly asserted, but set forth by various figures. He is the Head to the members, and the Vine which constantly gives life to the branches. The same truth is most delightfully illustrated by the vision of Zachariah. He saw a golden candlestick, with a bowl on the top for the oil. From the bowl seven golden pipes led to seven lamps. On each side of the candlestick was an olive tree, whose principal branch, through a golden pipe, constantly discharged oil into the bowl and fed the lamps, which of course never went out. Thus there is, as it were, a golden pipe laid from Christ to the believer's heart, through which flow constant supplies of life, light, and comfort. Hence it is that the life and light of Christians continue to shine, notwithstanding all the damps and floods of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and continue, in the language of another, as great a miracle as a candle kept lighted from age to age in the bowels of the ocean. By this unceasing operation countless multitudes will be recovered from the death of sin to the perfection of holiness. And when the blessed assembly shall be displayed together, it will be such a multitude as no man can number, shouting and pointing to Jesus, and rapturously repeating his delightful words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

2. Christ is "the Resurrection and the Life" by raising his people from eternal death to everlasting life. The flames of their hell were extinguished by his blood, which procured and sealed their pardon; and his meritorious obedience purchased for them the inheritance of glory. In him and in him only poor sinners are complete. "There is—now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Because he lives they shall live also. Jesus is the life of the world,—the living bread which came down from heaven, which if a man eat he shall never hunger. He came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. The most abandoned sinner, who is condemned by the law to the lowest hell, by faith in him may be acquitted of all his guilt. There is the last hope of an expiring race. There is the only hope which anxious parents can have for their perishing offspring, and dying sinners for their own souls. There is the only hope for saints on earth, and the only security for saints in heaven. And there is hope enough. How many times every day do christians lift their eyes to Jesus, and with every hope centering in him, call him their Resurrection and their Life. And how eminently will he thus appear when he shall display before his throne, in one vast assembly, the immense columns of human beings who were once the heirs of hell, but were raised to life eternal by his mediation and power. Will not heaven forever ring with the music of these delightful words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

3. Jesus is, "the Resurrection and the Life" by eventually raising the bodies of his people from the grave. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The apostle, in proof of the resurrection, quotes a verse from the 110th Psalm, purporting that Christ must hold the mediatorial government until all his enemies are put under his feet; and then alleging death to be an enemy, he brings his argument for the resurrection to a point by saying, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

How precious is our Redeemer, viewed, in this sense, as "the Resurrection and the Life." What a joyous hope is this when we stand

around the dying beds of our friends,—when we commit them to the grave,—when we contemplate those whom we tenderly loved, as masses of putrefaction or entirely dissolved. Jesus is "the Resurrection and the Life," and we shall see our friends again. And what a hope is this when we ourselves are entering the region of the shadow of death. We are not to be lost in eternal oblivion, but may look through the dark region to the light of a glorious resurrection. Jesus has shed a cheerful ray on the precincts of the tomb and diffused a light through the womb of the grave. He will recover all his sleeping saints from the dust. In that glorious morning when the trump shall sound, they shall spring to light from every grave yard, and find death, their last enemy, destroyed. And when they shall awake and find this last foe dead at their feet, and themselves recovered to immortal life; when they shall look up and see the glorious retinue of their descending Saviour and mark the strange commotions in heaven and earth; then, as they are caught up to meet their Lord in the air, with what raptures will they sing as they ascend, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

In that day the whole fabric of the universe,—the earth and the visible heavens,—will be dissolved, and fall into that utter ruin to which they were consigned for the sin of man. There, then, will be the last opportunity for Christ to, appear "the Resurrection," though he will always be "the Life." Out of the ashes of the old, his power will raise new heavens and a new earth, while he pronounces, "Behold I make all things new." And while the saints and angels come out to view the new worlds which the great Restorer has reared, every harp in heaven will sound, and angels and men will fill the new heavens and earth with the hallowed song, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

And shall those lips which will then be vocal, now be sealed in silence? No, let us now begin the praise. Saviour of men, let us delight to triumph in thee, who art to us "the Resurrection and the Life." O let his name and his love be forever on our lips. Let our

tongue cleave to the roof of our mouth ere we forget him who restores our souls,—who renovates a world. Amen.

## **SERMON XXVIII**

### **THE ASCENSION AND DOMINION OF CHRIST**

And he led them out as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. -  
LUKE 24:50, 51

We have often, when assembled round the sacramental table, remembered him who died; let us now remember him who rose again, who "ascended on high" leading "captivity captive," who sat down on the right hand of God, who lives and reigns in heaven. This sacred institution was intended to make us more intimately acquainted with our blessed Saviour in his whole character; to awaken a stronger faith in him, not only as a Priest, but as a Prophet and King. No time is more proper than the present to enter deeply into the glorious plan of salvation, and to search the wonders which fill it in all its infinite length and breadth.

When one has labored long to obtain a clear conception of the priesthood of Christ, and is filled with the subject, it is sometimes difficult to apprehend the propriety of his kingly office; that one whose business it is to stand as an intercessor between God and sinners, should hold the reigns of government; that one whom the mind has delighted to contemplate as a high priest, standing on earth to make atonement, standing in heaven to introduce our persons and prayers to God, should also be the king of heaven and earth. Viewed solely as a high priest, the mind may easily apprehend him and his work; but when that atoning interceding priest is stated to be the

sovereign of the universe, some confusion is apt to arise. What connexion between the sacerdotal office and regal government? What necessity that the work of governing or of instructing should be committed to the high priest? No such absolute necessity as there was for the atonement. Justice would not have complained if the Father had acted as prophet and king; but wisdom saw fit to invest the same person with the three offices, and to commit the whole redemption and management of a ruined world to the hands of the Mediator. The world had lost the knowledge of God and sunk into ignorance gross enough to worship stocks and stones: one thing to be done was to teach them the knowledge of God. This was the business of a prophet. They had fallen under the curse of the law: another part of the work of their redemption consisted in atonement and intercession. This was the business of a priest. Still their redemption was not complete. Instruction might have been given and atonement made; but if nothing more was done, not a human soul would have been saved. The hearts of sinners must be subdued by the power of a king. And even then, no less than a divine king must continue to defend them from the world, the flesh, and the devil. As Christ undertook to rescue a world from the tyranny of Satan, it was proper that he should be invested with the authority of a king, that he might subdue and bind his enemy and have the glory of an illustrious triumph.

Immediately after the fall he entered upon these three offices. As a prophet he instructed the world by his revelations, his ordinances, his servants, his providence, and his Spirit. By anticipating the results of his obedience and death, he procured the salvation of the saints under the Old Testament; presenting to the eye of their faith his priestly office under the shadow of a typical priesthood and typical sacrifices. By anticipating the reward of his obedience, he entered upon his kingly government, and exercised dominion over the Church and the world from the beginning. But now the time had come when he was to be a prophet, priest, and king in his own proper person and in a more visible manner. He appeared on earth to instruct the world by his own lips, by apostles and ministers holding

commissions stamped with his hand and seal, and by the Spirit which he avowedly sent forth. He came to offer, in his own person and in open view of heaven and earth, a sacrifice to atone for the sins of the world, and then to enter into heaven, "to appear in the presence of God for us." He came to earn and more manifestly to receive the kingdom and the inheritance. His three offices had never before been understood by men or angels. Not a person on earth, not even the eleven disciples, had any proper idea of these things before the day of Pentecost. And long after that day the angels were bending to look into this newly discovered method of grace. The apostle speaks of "the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets—made known to all nations;" "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God;" even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to the saints;" "of which salvation," says another apostle, "the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow; unto whom it was revealed that, not unto themselves but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

To make this new and great display, the second person in the Trinity united himself with the infant of Bethlehem. Angels announced his birth, and a new star guided the wise men from the east to lay their homage at his feet. For thirty years he lived in obscurity, the hope of his parents, increasing "in wisdom and in favor with God and man," laboring in an humble trade; his divine dignity concealed, or shining only in the spotless purity of his life. At the age of thirty he was

inducted into his public ministry, perhaps I may say, into his visible priesthood, by the baptism of John; in imitation of the Jewish custom of inducting their priests to office at the age of thirty by washing them with water. At the same time he was anointed with the Holy Ghost, as the Jewish priests were with oil. The Holy Ghost descended upon him "in a bodily shape like a dove," conveying, no doubt, a vast increase of light and wisdom to his human soul. From that time he began to speak as "never man spoke," and to display supernatural wisdom and power. For about three years and a half he executed this public office, proclaiming himself the long-expected Messiah, reproofing the corruptions of the church, "preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God," healing the sick, raising the dead, and casting out devils. At length the time approached for which all time was made. On the evening of Thursday, the fourteenth day of the first month, answering to our March, he eat the passover with his disciples, and at the close instituted the supper which we are about to celebrate. The same evening he retired to the garden of Gethsemane, at the foot of the Mount of Olives, where he endured his agony and bloody sweat. On Friday he expired upon the cross. On Saturday, which was the Jewish sabbath, the first sheaf of the barley harvest was waved. After this, seven weeks were allowed to reap their barley and wheat harvest, and to return to Jerusalem to hold a thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth. This thanksgiving was called Pentecost, because it was held on the fiftieth day after the first sheaf was waved. This, therefore, must have fallen on the first day of the week. Meantime the Lord of life and glory lay in the sepulchre from Friday evening till the morning of the christian sabbath. All this time the disciples were confounded and knew not what to think; for they had never dreamed that he was to die. Early on the first day of the week he burst the bands of death and appeared to some of his disciples. They were filled with amazement and joy; for when they saw him die they had no idea that he would rise again. As they were Galileans, and lived towards a hundred miles from Jerusalem, he directed them to return home, and appointed a certain mountain in Galilee where he would meet them. As they were about to leave their families to carry the gospel through the world, he graciously suffered them to be



at home, gathering their harvest, and setting their affairs in order, while he was giving them the necessary instructions respecting the religion they were to teach and the churches they were to establish. They were very ignorant; and during the four or five weeks that they spent in Galilee, he repeatedly conversed with them and unfolded divine truth as they could bear it. Their harvest being ended, they returned to Jerusalem more than a week before Pentecost. There Jesus met them, and "commanded them" not to "depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise" of the Holy Ghost, with which, he assured them, they should soon be baptised. After all the instructions which they had received, they returned to Jerusalem with minds still filled with hopes of an earthly kingdom. "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" They had no idea that he was to ascend into heaven, but expected him to reign in Jerusalem over all nations. During the forty days he had appeared to them in an immortal body, of the same structure with the bodies of the saints at the resurrection, but with no external lustre; for they could not have borne the dazzling splendor. He appeared to them just as he had done before his death, with the same countenance, with a real body having flesh and bones, yet immortal. At length on Friday, just six weeks after his crucifixion, and nine days before Pentecost, "he led them out as far as to Bethany," (they not suspecting what was about to happen;) "and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven;" and "while they beheld,—a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." "And they worshipped him," (now more than ever convinced that he was the Son of God,) "and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room," probably the same that they had eaten the passover and the supper in. Here the eleven abode, and "continued

with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." That continued prayer was a prelude to the glorious descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. And they "were continually in the temple," (at the hours of prayer,) "praising and blessing God." As soon as they had leisure for reflection, they proceeded to choose Matthias by lot to fill the place of Judas. This is all that is recorded of their transactions during the nine days which preceded Pentecost.

Let us now return to the ascending Saviour. At the moment that he was parted from his disciples on Mount Olivet, his body was surrounded with no visible lustre. But having completed his work on earth, he was now to enter on his glorified state. Perhaps the cloud which received him out of their sight, contained the habiliments of glory with which he was ever afterwards to be arrayed. There he decked himself in his royal robes and began his triumphant march; returning in state like a glorious conqueror to his royal city. I see him attended with "thousands of angels" and with "twenty thousand chariots of God," leading "captivity captive," with death and hell chained to his chariot wheels. That was the most glorious display that heaven had ever seen. Methinks I hear the voice of myriads of angels shouting his triumph. Methinks I see the saints of the Old Testament, who had been saved by his death, but never before had fully understood the way, coming out to lay their honors at his feet and to welcome the Conqueror home. There is Enoch and Noah and Abraham and David and Isaiah and Daniel pressing forward to hail their Deliverer. Now I hear them sing, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." With these shouts they introduce him to the heavenly city and see him seated on the highest visible throne in glory, a throne surrounded with indescribable splendor. There for the first time the inhabitants of heaven beheld a created nature on the throne of the

universe. There for the first time did the God-man-Mediator appear visibly as King of Zion and King of the whole creation. The glory to which his human nature was now advanced, consisted, not only in the dignity of being united with his divinity in the government of the universe, but in the outward splendor with which it was arrayed. The best idea that we can form of this splendor is drawn from his transfiguration on Mount Tabor and his appearance in Patmos. In the former case "the fashion of his countenance was altered," "and his face did shine as the sun," "and his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth" could "white them." In the latter instance he was not so changed but that John knew him; nevertheless "his head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters,—and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." Similar will be the glorified bodies of the saints in the resurrection, when they shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father;" for they shall "be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Such bodies did Moses and Elias probably exhibit on the mount of transfiguration; for it is said, they "appeared in glory."

The exalted Saviour now openly took upon himself the government of the Church, with power to quicken whom he would. He was "exalted—to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." He was openly declared "Heir of all things," and received the inheritance as "the First-born among many brethren," who are constituted "joint heirs" with him. In the most public manner he received the government of the whole universe, that he might manage all things in heaven, earth, and hell for the good of his people. Thus God "put all things under his feet and gave him to be Head over all things to the Church." He received the empire over devils, that he might bind them continually and finally subdue and judge and punish them. He received the empire over angels, that he might employ them as "ministering spirits" to those who should "be heirs of salvation;" and he sends them forth to watch and defend his people by night and by day. He received the empire

over wicked men, that he might subdue his elect by sanctifying grace and break the rest in pieces like a potter's vessel. He was appointed to reign until he should make all his enemies his footstool. He received the empire over winds and waves, over seed time and harvest, over storms and tempests, pestilence and famine, that he might manage all things in the natural world for the good of his people, and that they might have nothing to hope or to fear but from Jesus their Saviour. He received the empire over his elect, that he might sanctify, comfort, and defend them, and complete their salvation. His people are wholly in his hands, with all their interests and trials. Every thing in the government of the world goes through the head and heart of the Mediator, from the falling of a sparrow to the revolutions of empire. This is a new proof of his proper divinity: for the head which contrives and the heart which decrees everything in the universe, must be divine.

Let us turn again to his disciples from whom he had parted on Mount Olivet. Not all the glories of heaven could divert his thoughts from the beloved family which he had left on earth. He had promised to send them the Holy Spirit. This was the great instrument of instruction which he as a prophet was to employ, the great blessing which by his obedient offering as a priest he had procured, and the great treasure which as a king he was to bestow. Nine days were sufficient for his journey from Mount Olivet to the third heaven and for all the subsequent preparations on earth; and nine days elapsed between the time of his leaving the earth and the arrival of the Comforter. "When the day of Pentecost was fully come," the disciples "were all with one accord in one place;" probably in the same "upper room" into which they had entered on their return from Bethany, and where they had probably before eaten the passover and the supper. This remarkable day was the first day of the week, which, being distinguished both by the resurrection of Christ and the descent of the Holy Ghost, obtained the appellation of the Lord's day, and has ever since been observed as the Christian sabbath. While they were all assembled "with one accord in one place," suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it

filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, [an emblem of the gift of tongues which they then received,] and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Instantly their understandings were enlightened; the whole plan of the Gospel opened to their view; the prophecies of the Old Testament were brought to their remembrance and explained; and Peter, standing up, was able for the first time to unfold to the astonished thousands the Gospel and kingdom of God. This was the first day that the plan of salvation was ever understood on earth. Though prophets had sung of Messiah's reign, and the saints of the Old Testament had died in the faith of a Saviour to come; though Christ had taught his disciples during his public ministry, and for forty days after his resurrection; and though they had seen him ascend from Olivet; yet till that day the plan of salvation and the nature of the kingdom of Christ had never been understood on earth. On that day too commenced the glorious triumphs of the cross; for the Holy Ghost had come. Three thousand were converted to the Christian faith at once and added to the Church. From that day a great revival of religion commenced, which spread into all parts of the known world, and suddenly gave to the king of Zion, who had obtained a throne in heaven, an extended kingdom on earth. Once more he triumphed over principalities and powers. Satan was driven from vast regions of the heathen world; his throne and temples were overturned; and the Conqueror received, as the reward of his obedience "unto death," a glorious kingdom upon earth, such as he never had enjoyed before.

This dominion at present is the dominion, not of God, but of the Mediator. In this subordinate office the second Person acknowledges the first as his superior, and administers the government, not by original right, but as his reward. But while the supreme right of the Father is acknowledged, no agency but that of the Son, the Mediator, is known to the inhabitants of heaven or to the Church on earth. Thus will Christ continue to administer the government till he has gathered in all the elect and brought the great plan of redemption to

a glorious issue. The last act of his universal mediatorial government will be to judge the world. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father.—Then shall the Son—himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." From that time to eternity the general government will be administered by God in his own proper character. But the Saviour will still sit on the throne of Zion, and continue to be the medium of all communications to the redeemed Church, and of all the praises which will ascend from them. It will be Jesus of Nazareth still,—the same countenance, the same compassionate eyes, the same hands and feet, bearing still the prints of the nails. O how will they surround his throne and gaze upon him, and look down to hell and see from what he delivered them, and look up to his scars, and then cast their crowns at his feet and shout and sing, "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation.—Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.—Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever." His name will be the sweetest music to their ears. They will hang upon his lips, and gaze upon his eyes, and dwell upon his lovely name, and adore and praise and love as the ages of eternity go round.

This is the dear and blessed name which we are to commemorate in the sacrament to day. When we shall stand around his throne we shall not need such a remembrancer; we shall have him always present to our view. Then we shall see him face to face, but now we must view him through the glass of ordinances. Come, gather around his board, and remember him who was born in Bethlehem, who died on Calvary, who ascended from Olivet, and now lives and reigns in glory. Come and remember him who is made king of angels, and sends them forth daily to minister to you, to preserve your dwellings from fire, to fan the pestilence from your door, to drive away the evil spirits, and to preserve your persons and possessions from every evil. What has not Jesus done for you? He not only died for you, but has

sent his holy angels to attend you. Have you considered, when engaged in your daily occupations, how honorably you are attended? When kings go forth they are accompanied by a band of soldiers, but you by a band of angels. And it is because Jesus loveth you. Come and remember him who has spread all the beautiful scenery around you, who gives you food and raiment, and under whose mediatorial government you hourly repose. O did you know, when you murmured against providence, that it was the providence of Jesus? Come to his board and rejoice that the world is under the government of your Saviour, that all your friends and interests are in his hands, that it is his province to manage all your spiritual concerns,—to carry on and complete your salvation. Every thing is fixed precisely as infinite wisdom and love would have it, for all things are under the management of Jesus. What could you wish for more? What change can you desire? In what single circumstance would you move for an alteration? Our blessed Jesus governs all. Would you take the government of a single event out of his hands? To whom then would you commit it? To angels? They never loved like Jesus. To chance? There is no such love in chance. To men? Men never died to save your lives. To yourselves? Jesus loves you better than you love yourselves, and knows infinitely better what is for your good. Come then to his board and rejoice that this redeemed world is governed by the matchless love of him who died to deliver it from Satan's oppression. Come and give up your souls to this dear exalted Saviour. And O may that Spirit which on Pentecost descended, like "a rushing mighty wind," into the room where this feast of love was first ordained, descend where it is kept to day. Make this a little Pentecost to us, O thou risen Saviour, and breathe upon us as thou didst upon the disciples in the upper chamber, for thy name's sake. Amen.

## **SERMON XXIX**

### **THE PATIENCE OF CHRIST**

Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. - 1  
TIM. 1:16

Unbelief represents God as acting from mere calculation, without any of that direct love which exists among creatures. The principal end of Christ's mediatorial work was to dispel this delusion with every other, and to bring forth the real character of God to view. He "is the image of God," held out to show creatures what God is. The better to do this he appeared in a nature capable of feeling all the passions of men, and in that nature felt, in every moral respect, precisely like God. It was a man taken into personal union with the Deity, that so his feelings might be a public and full exposition of the heart of God. It was God acting with human sensibilities, to show more familiarly how the eternal Father feels,—how men, with their tastes and passions, ought to feel,—and to reveal the moral contrast between men and God. It was God set forth to view in a visible and tangible form, with all the wants, sensibilities, and temptations of men. It was eternal purity and love laid out upon a human scale.

Amidst the divine glories which shine in the person and work of Christ, my attention now fixes on his patience. To this I am led by the grateful acknowledgment of that wondrous man who, converted from a bloody persecutor to an apostle, had been pardoned at the foot of the cross. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

Passing by other views, I am disposed to contemplate the patience of Christ,

I. As it appeared before Pilate and the Jews.



II. As it appears in his long suffering towards his people, both before and after their conversion.

III. As it appears in his consent to atone, and in a sense to answer, for all their sins against himself.

I. I am to consider his patience as it appeared before Pilate and the Jews.

Bishop Horsely remarks, that properly to consider the example of Christ, is one of the last things which a mature faith achieves. I will add, that no man is fully prepared to admire the patience of Christ till he has had an opportunity to feel how hard it is to bear malignity and scorn. How does the great apostle of the Gentiles, (probably the holiest mere man that ever lived,) fade in comparison with him who stood before Pilate and the Jews. When the high priests, at the head of the Sanhedrim, commanded one to smite him on the mouth, Paul answered with spirit, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" But when, in a similar condition, one actually smote Christ, as he would a slave, with the palm of his hand, you hear only this meek reply: "If I have spoken evil bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" He was arrested, arraigned, and interrogated as a criminal; but nothing could irritate or discompose him.—They brought false witnesses against him; they accused him of blasphemy, and pronounced him worthy of death. They spit in his face; they mocked and buffeted him; they blindfolded him and smote him on the face with "the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" The very servants treated him in this insulting manner. His "disciples forsook him and fled." The chief one of them, overcome by the dreadful scene, denied him in his very presence with oaths and curses. Still he remained unruffled. He was sent bound to Pilate, and thence to Herod. Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and insultingly arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him back to Pilate. In the presence of Pilate a robber was preferred before him.

"They cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him." Pilate then having scourged him, (an operation to the last degree torturing and cruel,) delivered him up to be crucified. The whole band of soldiers then gathered around him, and stripped his mangled body, and put on him a robe of mock royalty and a crown of thorns, and placed a reed in his right hand for a sceptre, and spit in his face, and smote him with their hands, and with the reed drove the thorns into his temples, and contemptuously bowed the knee before him and hailed him king of the Jews. Still he was calm. He talked composedly at different times during the whole scene. Nothing could exasperate him; nothing could hurry his spirits; nothing could flush his cheek or fire his eye; nothing could discompose a feature. His temper, like omnipotence itself, was proof against everything that an enemy could do. The fortitude of an Alexander vanishes here. It was unspeakably harder to bear these insults than to break through embattled legions. And to bear them with such a temper, was more difficult still. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." Well might the apostle beseech men "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." When they had dragged him to Calvary, they suspended him on the torturing spikes between two thieves; they mocked him with vinegar and gall; they insulted his agony with the most cruel sarcasms and the most provoking triumphs. "They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads." Still not a threat nor a reproach could they extort from him. The very thieves who were dying with him, insulted and blasphemed him. One of them he converted and pardoned almost before the blasphemies were silent on his tongue. At last, lifting his languishing eye to heaven, he poured out his expiring breath in prayer for his murderers: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." If his former patience outdid that of a man, this was indeed the patience of a God. Here was displayed before a wondering universe the perfect spirit of the divine law,—the real temper of the eternal God,—and precisely what men ought to be.

But there is another view of his patience which must by no means be omitted. All these trials dwindle into nothing compared with that

which is yet to be mentioned. In that fearful hour, not only were the powers of earth and hell let loose upon him, but his Father withdrew from him the light of his countenance. That paternal countenance which had been wont to beam upon him with ineffable tenderness, was now darkened with an awful frown. When the wondrous phenomenon occurred that God the Father frowned on God the Son, no wonder that the sun of our system veiled itself in darkness,—that the earth trembled and quaked. The repose of the sleeping dead was disturbed; all nature was convulsed, and the heaven of heavens was wrapt in amazement and concern. But amidst this strange commotion of the universe, the meek-eyed Jesus was composed and calm. The Lamb of God submitted without a murmur, and with but one exclamation of distress, to the stroke of almighty vengeance. For six long hours he hung on the ragged irons without an impatient feeling. He meekly bore the sin of man and the tokens of his Father's wrath. He bore it, penitent sinner, he bore it all for you.

II. Let us contemplate his patience as it appears in his long suffering towards his people, both before and after their conversion.

Many of his elect were engaged in that horrid scene,—many whom he had loved with an everlasting love. Did he strike them dead? Did he change his electing decree? No, he loved them still, and notwithstanding this infernal malice, was willing to die for their redemption. Before his body was removed from the cross, he sent his Spirit to bring some of those murderers to repentance, and following it up with his pardoning love, washed them white in the blood they had shed. The centurion who had commanded that brutal band,—who had presided over that whole scene of horrid mockery, and ordered every nail to be driven; he, and some of his blood stained crew, were convinced by the darkness and the earthquake, were transfixed by fear and remorse, and before they left the spot were brought to repentance, and glorified God, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God." "And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned." Forty-nine days after this, when an immense concourse of

these murderers were assembled on the day of Pentecost, Peter charged home upon them the atrocious deed: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." While he spoke, the Holy Ghost, sent out by the risen Saviour, fell upon them, and brought to repentance and to mercy three thousand of these murderers at once. A few days after, the same apostle made the same charge against a vast multitude assembled in the temple. And "many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand." And if eight thousand were brought to repentance under the first two sermons, what multitudes received the same grace before that generation passed away. A great many thousands who had consented to the most atrocious deed that was ever perpetrated by men or devils, were admitted to the bosom they had pierced, and received from the face which they had smitten and marred, nothing but smiles and love.

But passing by an innumerable multitude, let us consider the instance alluded to in the text. Saul of Tarsus was the chief of sinners. Deeply read in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, with an intellect powerful and discriminating, he ought to have been among the first to discover the proofs which surrounded the mission of Christ. He had long dwelt in streets which the Son of God had filled with his miracles and illuminated with his doctrines,—which he had consecrated by his prayers and watered with his tears. He could not have been ignorant of the darkness and the earthquake which attended the crucifixion, nor of the wonders wrought on the day of Pentecost. And yet he resisted all the light, and became an infuriated leader in the unhallowed insurrection against the Messiah. He was among the first and most zealous that raised the torch of persecution. When the beloved Steven was stoned, Saul was "consenting to his death." He "imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed." "Many of the saints" he "shut up in prison,—and when they were put to death" he "gave" his "voice against them. And" he "punished them oft in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being

exceedingly mad against them,—persecuted them even unto strange cities." He demanded letters from the chief priests to Damascus, and volunteered in that direction as a missionary of persecution. I see him urging his journey with anxious speed, with his eye fixed on the distant prey, foaming with rage, feasting his heart with anticipations of Christian tears and blood, firmly determined not to rest till he had left to the hated "Nazarine" neither name nor memorial on earth. But behold, "at mid day" he "saw in the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun." It was the Lord Jesus descending in the habiliments of his glory. But why has he descended? Is his patience quite exhausted? Has his right hand taken hold on vengeance? Is he about to smite the rebel trembling at his feet? Will his first words be, Depart thou cursed? Ah, it is the patient Jesus still. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" The trembling rebel cries, "Who art thou, Lord?" The Lord does not strike him dead by uncovering the awful glories of the Godhead He tenderly replies, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose,"—what purpose? "to make" him "a minister" of the Gospel of peace, a chosen vessel to bear his name among the Gentiles, a distinguished champion of the cross; to labor and suffer and die for his name's sake. This was an instance purposely set up to convince the Church in all ages of the amazing patience of Christ. "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

Was this the character of Christ eighteen hundred years ago? He is still the same. For though he does not now by miraculous interpositions hang around him the outward marks of his character, to strike the senses, but has retired from our view, he has retired for this purpose, that being no longer an object of sight, he might give stronger action to faith. But he is still the same, and leaves not himself without a daily witness. With the same unconquerable love and patience he bears with all the sins of his elect through the periods of their childhood, youth, and riper years, while yet they are his enemies and hold him bound by no covenant obligations. While

yet they are united with the wicked in reviling his religion and blaspheming his name, his love is still fixed upon them. He watches over them day and night to protect them from ten thousand dangers. "A thousand" may "fall at their side, and ten thousand at" their "right hand," but they are still preserved. He follows them with the checks and whispers of his Spirit. He frequently forces them into the secret corner to pray. He calls them when like little Samuel they know not who it is that calls them. At length when the appointed time arrives, he sets home the law upon their hearts. The commandment comes, sin revives, and they die. O then they think they are forever cast out from his presence. But these are only the measures he takes to bring them home. Their hearts resist all these impressions, but his patience never fails. And when the selected moment comes, he changes the heart of stone to flesh and puts a new song in their mouths. From that instant he is bound to them by a covenant which nothing can dissolve, and takes upon himself the finishing of their salvation. From that moment he loves them as himself, and it becomes as fixed as heaven that none of their sins can separate them from him. They may raise temporary walls of partition between him and themselves, but nothing can exhaust his patience. As a mother feels for her sick and froward infant, whose side she never leaves, so he feels for them. And so will he continue to feel until he has brought them home to glory.

III. Let us consider his patience as manifested in his consent to atone, and in a sense to answer, for all the sins of men against himself.

This is a greater wonder still. While believers, (to speak only of them,) are sinning, he patiently consents that all their sins, as they hourly arise, should be charged against himself, and should be pardoned for the sake of his sufferings. Should a child abuse his parents, and the mother, not content with patiently enduring the injury, should offer her intercession to procure forgiveness from the father, and consent to have the offence charged against herself, this would be but a faint image of the astonishing love of Christ. He freely

suffered an equivalent for our punishment, so needful to support the authority of the law. He put himself in the place of his people, and, (so to speak,) assumed and discharged all their debts, wiping off all future scores. This done, he ascended to intercede for them in the presence of God,—to take hourly upon himself, (if I may so say,) all their new debts as they come in, swallowing them all up in the general satisfaction he has made. All our ingratitude against himself he in this manner assumes,—all our forgetfulness of him,—all our cruelty which opens his wounds afresh. Where am I? Am I carried back to the judgment hall and the Pretorium? The patience of Christ is certainly as great now as then.

Such is Christ; and exactly such is God. There is no moral difference between them. In love to a world of sinners God is not second. The whole plan of mercy is spoken of as originating with him. The Father "sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," and is as willing to accept the satisfaction as Christ was to make it. In consenting that his Son should take upon himself the burden of mediation, his love to the world was as great as that of Christ. He that has seen the moral character of the Son, has seen that of the Father. We behold the whole Godhead shining forth "in the face of Jesus Christ." He is "the brightness of" the Father's "glory and the express image of his person;" and "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Here then the character of God is clearly brought out to light. And is this the God whom a wicked world abhor? Is this he whose government they oppose, whose throne they would demolish, whom lust and rancour represent as a tyrant worse than Nero? Where sleep the thunders while such blasphemies are abroad?

Such is God; and such man ought to be,—in love,—in love to enemies,—in love to all. This is holiness. This is what the law of God requires. This is what the government of God was established to promote. Yet against this law and government the whole world are in arms and outrageous in their murmurs. Where is the red right hand of justice? Ah, it is held motionless by the arm of mercy,—by patience which astonishes all heaven.

Such is Christ; and how important a place does he fill in the religion of Christians. From the system of pagan morals he may well be spared; but can real Christians put him out of view, or reduce him to a mere schoolmaster sent out to instruct? If it is the Christian religion which we profess, our devotions, our faith, our hopes should be full of Christ. He is the all in all to Christians. That religion which does not begin and end with him, is not of God.

Such is Christ, and on him ought Christians to place their unwavering confidence. In point of patience and love, the human nature of Christ is what it was when he stood before Pilate, though probably vastly enlarged; and in point of all moral feelings, his human nature is an exact image of the divine. Why sayest thou then, O Christian, that he has not patience enough to keep covenant with thee? that he has not love enough to save so stupid, neglectful, and vile a sinner?—That he is not weary of thee, proves indeed his unparalleled patience. Any mere man would soon grow weary of so perverse a charge. This you know; and entertaining too low ideas of his love, you are tempted to think him altogether such a one as yourself. But would you behold him in the light that Paul now does, you would awake from your gloomy dream and stand astonished at the amazing love and patience of Christ. Could you with enlightened faith behold him patiently enduring all the sins of his unregenerate elect in all nations and ages, without any abatement of his love to their persons; could you view him bearing with all the faults of his regenerate family, scattered among the nations and drawn into a million different follies by the temptations of the world; could you see all this, and understand that in no instance since the conversion of Adam has his patience towards his people ever failed; you would gather courage to commit your all into his hands, and among the rest, a poor, imperfect soul, to be purified by his blood and Spirit and presented to the Father by his intercession. And why can you not see all this? All this is the truth of God; why can you not believe it? There sits Christ above these visible heavens, with the same love and patience that appeared in the judgment hall. There he sits, and loves his people with infinite tenderness, and patiently pleads for the



pardon of all their sins as they arise. All this is as real as though you saw it with your eyes. Could you, like Thomas, see, you would believe. But Christ has retired from sight on purpose to give operation to faith; and now he says, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Go to him with the prayer of the disciples, "Lord, increase our faith?" Plead, with the father of the lunatic, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief." You must depend on him and go to him as much for faith as for life. Go and receive more faith, and exercise it in confidently trusting in his love and faithfulness. He has proved himself faithful in all past ages. None ever trusted in him and were desolate. He has "been our dwelling place in all generations." He will never leave nor forsake his people. Commit your all to him without wavering, and he will keep that which you have committed to him till the day of his appearing.

Such is Christ; and if there is any virtue or any gratitude, let us devote our hearts and lives to him. Let us "thus judge,—that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." We "are not" our "own," we "are bought with a price." Let us "therefore glorify God in" our "body and in" our "spirit, which are God's."

Shall this heavenly benefactor continue to be "wounded in the house of" his "friends"? Shall this grace of God be turned into licentiousness? Will any take encouragement to sin from that love which stooped from heaven to redeem them from all pollution? Will they transgress because their sins were ponderous enough to crush their Redeemer from a throne to the manger and the cross? No exhibition ever made in hell pronounces sin to be so dreadful as does the cross of Christ. Dream not that he came to be "the minister of sin." No, he came to "save his people from their sins." And it is inscribed on the foundations of his kingdom, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

O sinners, can you reject such a Saviour! Will you plunge into eternal burnings rather than receive him? Will you stand and sport with his

agonies? Will you trample his blood under foot? Will you break your way to hell over his mangled body? Stop, stop your mad career. O turn, and let the blood which your sins have shed wash out every stain. Turn before justice allows his patience to work no longer. Turn before the Lamb is changed to a lion; before he rouses his wrath and swears, You shall not see my rest.

# **SERMON XXX**

## **CHRIST'S KINGDOM NOT OF THIS WORLD**

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. - JOHN 18:36

The policy of kings and the pride and avarice of priests have sought to raise the Church to civil power and to make it an appendage of the state. Every such attempt has served only to sink the spirit of religion into the spirit of the world. While the altar has been set to prop the throne, it has fumed the nose of majesty, but has ceased to send its incense to heaven. God is a Spirit, and it is the business of his kingdom to govern the spirits of men. That kingdom, though it extends its authority to the courtier as well as the peasant, has nothing to do with the affairs of state. And it asks nothing of the state but protection. It asks no sword to cut the throats of heretics. It seeks no alliance offensive and defensive with the civil arm. It thanks no potentate for his officious interference to force men to heaven. It is the empire of the Eternal Spirit over the spirits of men, and is founded only in their free consent. Had this principle been well understood, it would have saved all the Christian blood which has stained the sword of guilty persecution; it would have broken up all religious establishments, and swept away a long catalogue of lords spiritual and ghostly magistrates.

The Jews expected that their Messiah would appear in the character of a temporal prince; that he would raise them to the empire of the world, and like another Cesar tread the nations beneath his feet. Hence the jealous attempt of Herod to take off the infant Saviour by a general massacre of the infants of Bethlehem. Accustomed as the nation were to this expectation, they supposed that Jesus of Nazareth intended to set up for an earthly king, and their plan was to accuse him of treason against Cesar. For this purpose they watched his words; they sent forth spies to ensnare him; and when they could

gain nothing, they suborned false witnesses to swear, "We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cesar, saying that he himself is Christ a king." All this time their great objection to his claims was, that he did not appear in the spirit and splendor of a temporal monarch and break their Roman yoke. The very disciples followed him with the same expectations, and were disappointed and chagrined at the long delay. But why, ye followers of the Lamb, does it grieve you that your Master, who is to rule over all worlds, does not come down to an earthly throne? Why, ye malicious Jews, should it be a matter of complaint that he does not lay aside his universal dominion to manage the affairs of your little state? Is it not a more godlike office to rule the spirits of men, to reduce their raging passions, and to make them good and happy, than to shine in the pageantry of earthly splendor? to overcome the powers of hell, than to destroy the Samaritans? to deliver you from the bondage of sin and Satan, than from the power of the Romans? to raise you to an eternal throne, than to lift you to dominion over the heathen. Has not he who has been taught to govern himself, been served by a better king than he who has been led to victory through the blood of slaughtered armies? Is not the peasant who under this banner has vanquished the world, the flesh, and the devil, a better and happier man than Cesar in all his glory? It became then the benevolence as well as the dignity of Christ to put himself at the head of a kingdom not of this world.

But he had other ends to answer by this arrangement. He wished to draw away the affections of his subjects from creature enjoyments, and he wished to separate them from the principles and manners of worldly men. And it behooves them to demean themselves as the subjects of a kingdom not of this world. Let us attend to these three ideas.

I. He declined an earthly throne and established a kingdom not of this world, in order to draw away the affections of his subjects from creature enjoyments. He saw that the very soul of the apostacy consisted in loving the creature more than the Creator,—in forsaking

the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns,—in removing the heart from God to the gratification of worldly tastes. He saw that mankind had become slaves to the world, and that their selfishness, pride, and idolatry were hourly inflamed by a close connexion with worldly objects. The grand thing therefore to be done was to weaken their attachment to the world and to send them back for happiness to the Source of their being. For this purpose he took measures to convince them that the world was not the good which he came to bestow. That he might fasten a deep and lasting impression of this truth upon their minds, instead of assuming the badges of royalty he appeared in our world in a destitute condition, not having where to lay his head. He was the reputed son of a carpenter and born in a manger. He selected his officers of state from a band of illiterate fishermen, and was crucified between two thieves. He passed by the mighty and noble, and chose for the materials of his Church the base things of the world, and things which were despised, and things that were not, to bring to nought things that were. Had he appeared in royal splendor and selected his ministers and disciples from men of rank and fortune, it would have seemed as though a part of the blessedness of his kingdom consisted in worldly greatness. But now it is manifest that it consists, not in those things which foster pride and carnal desire, but in those which gratify humble benevolence.

II. Another end which he had in view in establishing a kingdom not of this world, was to separate his subjects from the principles, maxims, and manners of worldly men. The world had all gone out of the way; there was none that did good, no not one. They were all dead in trespasses and sins. Of course their governing principles and their manners were corrupt. In order therefore to bring them back to God, he came to introduce them to a kingdom whose principles, maxims, and manners were wholly unlike those of the world. The principle which holds the first rank in the world is selfishness; the principle which holds the first rank in the kingdom of Christ is disinterested love. The principle which stands second in the world is pride; the principle which stands second in the kingdom of Christ is humility. The principle which comprehends the entire spirit of the

world is lust,—lust of honor, wealth, and pleasure; the principle which comprehends the whole spirit of the kingdom of Christ is self-denial.

The world having thus yielded to principles diametrically opposite to the kingdom of Christ, it was to be expected that the maxims and manners growing out of these principles would be equally different. It is not strange if the great mass of the maxims and manners of the two kingdoms are found in direct opposition. These points of difference probably have not all been developed. I doubt not that there are many opinions and customs tolerated even by serious men, which will be exploded when the kingdom of Christ is established in its purity. Some of these may perhaps even now be pointed out.

It is a maxim of the world that they may indulge in as many amusements, not expressly forbidden as they please, though having no connexion with health or any useful object; it is a maxim of the kingdom of Christ that whether we eat or drink or whatever we do we should do all to the glory of God. It is a maxim of the world that they may spend many of their social hours in conversation which has no useful tendency; it is a maxim of the kingdom of Christ that for every idle word men shall give account in the day of judgment. It is a maxim of the world that they may gratify their pride in as many expenses as their income will allow; the laws of Christ forbid the indulgence of pride in any form or degree, and require every thing to be saved that reasonably can be for the poor and for the extension of his kingdom. It is a maxim of the world that they may make presents to the rich as far as their selfishness desires; one of the statutes of the kingdom of Christ says with a frown, "He that giveth to the rich shall surely come to want." We are not indeed forbidden to exchange hospitalities with our affluent neighbors, much less with our kindred; but the following emphasis laid on charity feasts ill accords with the maxims of the world: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the

poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." It is a maxim of the world that they may lay up treasures on earth, and even hold their gains with the grasp of death; the kingdom of Christ says, "Sell that ye have and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not." There is no end to the enumeration. One cannot cast a serious eye on the world and then on the Bible, without discovering some strong point of difference.

The scale of degrees by which merit is estimated is altogether different in the two kingdoms. In the world the man is commonly esteemed the greatest who is most forward to press himself upon the public view; in the kingdom of Christ he is esteemed the greatest who in honor prefers others and takes for himself the lowest room. The man who is most esteemed in the kingdom of Christ, is the one whom the world are most likely to overlook; on the contrary, "that which is highly esteemed amongst men is abomination in the sight of God." Here is a Lazarus covered with rags and sores, whom the world, as she sweeps by him, deems unworthy of a look; yet that same poor man holds a higher place in the heart of God than the pampered wretch who is clothed in purple and fine linen and fares sumptuously every day. To advance in the world is to grow in riches, honors, and human science; to make progress in the kingdom of Christ is to grow in humility and brokenness of heart. To advance in the world is generally connected with a high opinion of ourselves; to ascend in the kingdom of Christ is to sink into low and abasing thoughts of ourselves. To grow in the world is generally to be alive to the world and dead to God; to grow in the kingdom of Christ is to be alive to God and dead to the world. Hence,

III. It behooves Christians to demean themselves as subjects of a kingdom not of this world.

(1.) It behooves them to renounce their idolatrous attachment to the things of the world. They are not indeed required to withdraw from

business. It is a decree of heaven that if a man will not work neither shall he eat. And he that provides not for his own, hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel. But the thing forbidden is to place the heart on the things of the world,—to set up wealth as an object of desire for its own sake, and to pursue it with so much interest and hurry as to crowd out the duties of religion. Great wealth is rather to be dreaded than desired. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." The same danger attends a full tide of prosperity in any form. To set the heart on any of these things is altogether incompatible with the Christian character. What saith the Scripture? "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."—You have died to the world and gone into another kingdom. How strange would it seem for a man who had died and gone to heaven, to long to return to the enjoyments of the world.

(2.) It behoves Christians to separate themselves from the principles, maxims, and manners of the world. Could they live under a deep impression that they belong to a kingdom altogether separate from the world, they would feel like pilgrims and strangers on the earth. But you are the subjects of another kingdom, citizens of another country, and are bound to act according to the relations you sustain. It would ill become an Englishman to adopt the manners of the Turks. But in time of war to join a hostile banner against one's own people, is treason. Let those Christians who would tremble at the thought of turning traitors to their country never desert the standard of their King to act upon the principles of the world.

It is impossible for any man faithfully to serve two contending kingdoms,—to be at once a man of the world and a faithful disciple of Christ. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Be ye not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The taste of the world is opposite to the taste of God. One is founded in selfishness, pride, and lust; the other in the most perfect



benevolence. It is therefore impossible that the same line of conduct should please both God and the world. "If I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ." "The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." On the other hand, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." It is indeed too late to rekindle the faggots or to apply the rack or the screw. There are also portions of the world who have their judgment and manners so far refined by Christianity, that they are not offended at the exemplifications of Christian morality, provided men will not introduce religion into conversation; nor even at a display of the outlines of divine truth on public occasions; nor at knowing that men in secret hold all the distinguishing doctrines and practise all the devotions of revealed religion, if they will but keep their religion to themselves and not bring it into contact with them. They will even tolerate a public exposition of many of the distinguishing doctrines, provided they are not brought home to their own conscience, and especially if the preacher will conform to their rules of social intercourse in private. Many real Christians escape their censure by a general conformity in little things, or by living retired from public view, or by exhibiting in their conduct more of the mildness and beneficence of the divine nature than of the holiness and justice, or by failing to express those parts of truth, (in relation to the guilt, dependance, and obligations of man and the sovereignty of God,) which are the most grating to the wicked, or by neglecting to reprove them, either in words or by the distinct expression of their conduct. But let any man continually carry about him, in his conduct and conversation, a full and distinct image of God, expressing all the truths of his word, all the strictness of his law, all the guilt and danger of sinners,—reproving everything proud, everything vain, everything selfish, everything that does not make God the supreme object, everything tinged with the slightest bitterness towards men, "every idle word," every small neglect, and let his daily conversation be as full of God and of eternal things as it ought; in a word, let him carry, as it were in his hand, wherever he goes, a full, and not a partial, image of God, including whatever is most offensive to the carnal heart, and let him be constituted by his

age or office a reprovcr; and there is not a community of worldly men in Christendom who will not be offended; and if they persecute in no other way, they will at least smite with the tongue,—unless indeed they are silenced by the convicting Spirit, or are restrained by personal attachment or some apparent interest. The carnal heart is as much opposed to God as ever.

Would a man therefore be thoroughly a Christian, he must lay his account to give up many things which the world esteem most valuable, and be marked by distinctions which the world abhor. He must sit down and count the cost, and come to a fixed resolution to part with many things which the strong principle of pride loudly demands. The whole system of undefiled religion is a cross to pride. Self-denial lies at the bottom of all.

It is indeed hard to submit to this; not because the world is so valuable, but because our foolish hearts are so wedded to it. But hard as it is, other saints who have gone before us have made the sacrifice, and proved by the readiness with which they came out from a wicked generation, by their striking contrariety to the world, and the humble firmness with which they bore reproaches, that they viewed themselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and sought a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. How unlike to the history of the world is the history of those ancient worthies. The former is the history of men pursuing, at the hazard of every righteous principle, wealth, honor, and pleasure,—the world's trinity; the latter is the history of men patiently enduring reproaches, regardless what they suffered if they could but glorify and enjoy God. The former is the history of men in splendid circumstances, looking down with contempt on the pious poor; the latter is the history of men walking in the dust, returning entreaties for abuses, pursuing no dominion but a dominion over themselves, consuming their lives in toiling for the interests of truth and religion, and looking for their reward in another world. Noah sacrificed his reputation and the labor of a hundred and twenty years upon an ark, while the world around him were mocking at his credulity. And do you think he has

ever repented it? Ask him and he will tell you no. Abraham forsook the pleasant plains of Mesopotamia, the honors of a noble family, and all the endearments of kindred, to consume his days in a foreign wilderness, dwelling in tents and feeding flocks. Moses, though trained in all the luxury of Pharaoh's court, and perhaps the heir apparent to the first throne on earth, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Paul was willing to leave the highest honors of his nation, to wander an outcast through the world, to endure toils, buffetings, imprisonments, and death; saying as he went, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." In every age this has been the temper of the true Church. And at the present day, many have burst every band which bound them to earth, and gone to spend their days on barbarous shores, among sooty pagans, to promote the cause of benevolence and of Christ.

Surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses, shall we sink under the light burdens which we are called to bear, and grieve to find that our kingdom is not of this world?

In the light of our subject we see how different the most moral of worldly men are from real Christians. Of the former the governing principles are selfishness, pride, and idolatry; of the latter, love and humility. We learn also that temporizers, who are afraid to avow their sentiments and to breathe their proper spirit; who put off their religion when they go into company, and submit to unwarrantable compliances to please worldly men; who are determined at all hazards to preserve the friendship of the world; have no part in the kingdom of Christ. They may be Calvinists or Socinians, but they are not Christians. We learn also that if the world frown on our religion, it is only what we had a right to expect. The world has frowned on true religion in every age. But its frowns have never kept a single Christian out of heaven. Let none be appalled as though some new

and strange thing had happened to them. Go fearlessly by their frowns and enter a world where all is peace and love.

By this test let us try the sincerity of our religion. If we cannot relinquish the favor of the world for Christ; if we cannot show that we love him better than all the delights of earth, if in the trying hour we flinch, and are offended as soon as tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word; why did we ever profess his name? The root of the matter is not in us, and we are still in our sins.

Finally, let us be encouraged to proceed with a firm step through all the sufferings and self-denial which this poor world can create. Let us never repine that religion tears us from objects which serve only to nourish pride, and of course stand opposed to our happiness. These husks are not the children's bread. Your heavenly Father would not have lavished them on his enemies and denied them to you had he not provided for you a far better good. What is the world to you? Your estate lies in another country. The world will soon be melted down in the general conflagration; and those worldlings who now frown will then be crying to rocks and mountains to cover them. And when the world is on fire, and every thing but true religion is going to wreck, who then will grudge sinners their portion? Like the complaining Asaph, let us search in the sanctuary for their end; and having found it, let us join in his holy choir, and prolong his seraphic strain; "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee." Amen.

## **SERMON XXXI**

### **CALLING ON THE NAME OF JESUS**

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. - ACTS 7:59

It is to be numbered among the evidences of our Saviour's divinity, that he is an object of prayer. It may comport with the principles of the Romish church to address their petitions to created spirits; but a protestant who would preserve consistency, must either subscribe to the divinity of Christ or refuse to call upon his name. We have an instance before us of a martyr, who on the verge of immortal light, while his soul was filled with the Holy Ghost, and the heavens were opened to his mortal vision, called on the name of Jesus. There is no term in the original answering to the word God. This was supplied by the translators: but the meaning would have been better preserved without it. In the original it is thus: "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The immediate object of his prayer was the Redeemer, whom he was then beholding at the right hand of God. It was the practice of the primitive Christians to call on the name of Christ. This was the discriminating mark between them and the Jews, who called on the name of the Father but refused divine honors to the Son. When the Lord Jesus appeared in vision to Ananias at Damascus and commanded him to visit the penitent Saul, "Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name." And when he had come to Saul, he concluded his message in these words: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptised and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."—the same Lord Jesus. "And straightway" Saul "preached Christ in the synagogues:—but all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem?" The first Epistle to the Corinthians is addressed to "the church of God which is at Corinth,—with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." To the Romans Paul writes: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.—For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all, [meaning Jesus Christ,] is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call

upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? [It was Jesus Christ in whom they were to believe.] And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" "These things," says John, "have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.—And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask and he, [the Son of God,] shall give him life for them that sin not unto death."

Persons acquainted only with our English translation, may imagine that they discover in another passage a prohibition against praying to Christ. "In that day ye shall ask me nothing: verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." The darkness of this passage is wholly in our translation; in the original the sense is plain. The confusion in our version is produced by translating two words of quite different significations by one and the same English term. I mean the word ask. One of the Greek words thus translated signifies to ask questions; the other, to ask in a way of petition. In the preceding conversation Jesus had foretold his death in a manner which the disciples did not understand, and they were anxious to comprehend his meaning. "Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me?" Then having expressed himself somewhat more intelligibly concerning his death and resurrection, and their subsequent joy on earth, (referring to Pentecost,) he adds, "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing." Ye shall have no occasion to interrogate me, or that I should be present to solve your doubts. When you shall be anointed with the Holy Ghost, you will not need "that any man teach you, but—the same anointing" shall teach you "all things." "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." And furthermore, to supply the want of my personal presence and instruction, "Verily, verily I

say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name,"— whatsoever wisdom or knowledge ye shall request,—he will give it you."

Thus the primitive Church did not confine their petitions to the Redeemer; they prayed also to the Father. Sometimes we are taught to supplicate the Father in the name of Christ, and are told that the Father will answer; because all the blessings originally come from him. Sometimes we are taught to ask the Father in the name of Christ, and are told that Christ will answer; because to him as King of Zion is committed the distribution of all good. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.—If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." And sometimes, as we have seen, we are taught to pray immediately to Christ, with assurances that he will bestow. I will,

I. Inquire how Christ and the Father can both bestow, and are both the proper objects of prayer.

II. Consider some of the peculiar advantages of praying to Christ.

I. How is it that Christ and the Father can both bestow, and are both the proper objects of prayer? We cannot indeed comprehend the mode of union between the Persons of the Trinity, or between the divine and human nature of Christ; and it may be doubtful whether we fully comprehend the Mediator's connexion with the Father and dependance on him. As it is a connexion and dependance of office, I am not sure that any part of it is incomprehensible. The following things the Scriptures enable us at least to assert.

1. When Christ is spoken of as the object of prayer, and as the agent that bestows, it is not to be understood of him as pure God or as mere man, but as Mediator,—as one holding an office under God, but himself consisting of two natures;—as the Agent delegated by the Father to redeem the Church, to govern the universe, to receive prayers, and to bestow blessings.

2. The Mediator has derived his appointment and all his authority from the Father. Though as God he had existence in himself, yet as Mediator he was created by the Father; that is, the Father created that office, and appointed him to it, and invested him with all the rights and authority appertaining to it. As the Father's Vicegerent he exercises the authority and administers the government belonging to God. As he acts in the Father's name and by his delegated power, and with a will in perfect accordance with his will, whatever he bestows may be considered as bestowed by the Father, and may be sought equally of the Father and the Son.

3. Although the government is committed to the Son, there is a propriety in praying to the Father. The blessings were originally his. For creatures to seek them of him alone was the natural order. And it cannot be supposed that the one living and true God is less worthy of worship because he has glorified himself by providing a Mediator. The will of the Father is active in every gift bestowed by the Son; for it is bestowed in unchanging obedience to his command, and by authority bestowed for this immutable purpose. Notwithstanding the awful purity of God,—so pure that "the heavens are not clean in his sight,"—yet a way is opened by which sinners may approach him with safety. Instead of being eternally hid behind a Mediator, he has chosen this method of grace to manifest himself most luminously to the universe, and now steadily shows "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Every reason therefore exists why prayer should be made to the Father.

4. There are reasons why the Mediator should be made the object of prayer. Not to insist on his divine dignity, he has in reward of his obedience unto death, been exalted to the dominion of the universe. Angels, men, and devils are put under him. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without him. All the interests of the Church are in his hands. The Father, (so to speak,) has put off the weight of government upon the Son, and pushed him forward to a public station, where every eye in heaven may behold their King. The wheels of government are no longer moved by an invisible hand, but by the incarnate God,—the



medium of all intercourse between God and man,—the Father's delegate, stationed on the confines of his kingdom, to receive in his name the tribute due from creatures. This honor, as the anticipated reward of his obedience unto death, was secured to him by covenant from eternity. By the same anticipation he entered on the government as soon as man fell, and as God's Vicegerent took into his hands the management of a world which he had engaged to redeem. It was he that appeared to the patriarchs; ("no man hath seen God at any time,") it was he that entered into covenant with Abraham, that brought his people out of Egypt, that gave the law at Sinai, that sat between the cherubims in the tabernacle and temple, that received the worship of the Church in every age as the God of Israel. Even while his manhood was toiling through the afflictions of life and was expiring on the cross, he held the corners of heaven on his shoulders and the earth in the hollow of his hand. He had "power to lay—down" his life, and he had "power to take it again." In reward of his obedience unto death he was constituted "Heir of all things." By anticipation he took possession of the inheritance from the fall. But when he arose from the dead and ascended into heaven, he was, in a more visible and complete manner, put in possession of the whole estate. Seated on the highest visible throne in heaven, and shedding indescribable lustre from his resplendent Person, he moves the remotest planet and numbers every hair of your head. He darts an eye through the caverns of hell and spies and frustrates the most latent wile that is there conceived. From the top of heaven he looks abroad through the upper spheres and regulates all their motions. But the centre of his care is the earth on which he has left a beloved Church. Receiving the prostrate homage of seraphim and cherubim, he sends them forth as ministering spirits to his Church on earth. This Church is committed to his special care, that he may preserve and defend it and complete every part of its salvation. "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." And when he has brought all his people home, and raised their bodies from the grave, and judged the world, and separated his friends and foes to their appointed places, he will resign the general kingdom to the Father,

"that God may be all in all," while yet he retains the throne over his redeemed forever and ever.

This view of the exaltation and government of the Mediator offers a proper reason for addressing our prayers to him. To whom is it more proper to pray than to the Governor of the world? To whom is it more proper to apply for spiritual blessings, than to him who is exalted "to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins?" To whom is it more proper to go for every earthly comfort, than to him who as "Heir of all things" owns the whole estate? Not a prayer has been answered since the fall, but the blessing came from the Mediator. Since the first establishment of a Church, the Father has never interfered in the government of the world, but has left it all to the Son.

5. People prayed to Christ even in the days of his humiliation; how much more should they do it now since he has sat down upon his throne? When you open the Evangelists and behold a leper, a blind man, or the parent of a lunatic at the feet of Jesus, and hear him say, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt,"—at the same time professing to relieve them by power derived from the Father; and when you hear the same persons giving thanks to the Father for their relief,—you at once see that there is no discrepancy between calling on the Father and entreating the Son. Although Christ is now exalted to dominion, it is still a dominion received from the Father. Though he has exchanged the robe of mock royalty for a robe of light, and the crown of thorns for the diadem of the universe, it is Jesus of Nazareth still, —as accessible, as full of compassion, as much a distinct object of supplication,—as when he was toiling here on earth.

II. I am to consider some of the peculiar advantages of praying to Christ. I will mention three. He may be approached with less dread; he may be more easily apprehended; and the habit of praying to him tends to impress us with the importance of the station which he holds in Zion.

1. Sinners may approach him with less dread than they ordinarily feel in approaching the invisible and incomprehensible God. When overwhelmed with the thought of the infinite Majesty of heaven and earth, and assaying to hide themselves from the dreadful glory, what relief to find the Governor of the world in their own shape, their brother, their flesh and blood, once nourished by the breasts of woman,—who ate and talked and wept with miserable men. Who will fear to approach Jesus of Nazareth, who received the blind men of Jerico and the Syrophenician woman, who wept over Lazarus and over Jerusalem, who supported the beloved John on his laboring bosom? Who will be afraid to approach the Husband of the Church, who regards her and all her members as "his own flesh," and loves her "even as himself"?

2. Prayer to Christ has the advantage of a more easy apprehension of its object. The mind is soon lost in an attempt to contemplate the invisible God. But a God incarnate,—a God in human shape,—a God brought down within the reach of our senses,—is an object of more easy apprehension. When you behold him on earth, and see the cures he performed and the prayers which he answered, you form easy conceptions of one who has divine ability to relieve. When you follow him to his throne in heaven, and see that it is the same Jesus who governs the world, who daily gives audience to his people on earth, the mind, no longer flitting from image to image, rests on one who has a settled form and place. One great end of the incarnation was to bring down the infinite and incomprehensible God within the reach of human senses and finite apprehensions. In his own nature God was exalted so far above created vision, that the very angels needed some step by which they might ascend to view him,—some visible point on which their eyes might fix,—where the presence of the omnipresent God might centre,—some window through which they might look up into God,—some image of the invisible Deity on which his perfections might be instamped and made discernable by creatures.—All this is done. But those who pass by the visible God, lose the advantage of this arrangement.

3. To make Christ frequently the object of our prayers, tends to impress us with the importance of the station which he holds in the economy of redemption. Had he remained on earth, and we could have gone to him daily as the only one appointed to relieve our distresses, it would have been easy to view him of the first importance. But those who are in the habit of applying to him on his heavenly throne, are as deeply conscious of the part he acts as though they were applying to him on earth. They are even more conscious of it. Accustomed to approach his throne and view him reigning the universal King, actually conducting sinners to heaven and introducing them to the Father, they see his station in Zion and his influence on our salvation to be greater and more necessary than did any of those who approached him in the days of his flesh. Did I hear you say, O that I had a Saviour present to deliver me from my sins and afflictions: O that he was on earth as he once was, that I might know where to find him, and go, as other distressed sinners went, and fall down at his feet?—This is because you do not accustom yourselves to go directly to him in prayer. Why do you not lift up your eyes to where he now sits,—still alive, still present, still attentive to every want and wish? You would not then be mourning that your enemies assault you and you have no deliverer. Why is it that some of you find it so difficult to apprehend Christ in distinction from the Father, but because you habituate yourselves to pass by the visible King and make all your addresses to the invisible God? Had you seen Christ on earth you would have found no difficulty in conceiving of him as distinct from the Father. And if you were accustomed to address your prayers directly to him in heaven, you would have no more difficulty now. You could then say, My faith has seen Jesus of Nazareth on his throne: I have been with him: I have obtained blessings from him: I have as clearly seen him to be distinct from the Father as though I had been with him at the last passover, or, (as Thomas was challenged to do,) had thrust my hand into his side.—Would you surmount the difficulty of conceiving of Christ as distinct from the Father, often read his life; follow him with an attentive eye through the different scenes of his mortal course; follow him to the cross; lose not sight of him there; pursue him as he rises from the

sepulchre to his throne; gaze upon him there. Behold the same body, the same features. It is Jesus of Nazareth still;—as much a man, and just as much a God, as when he was on earth. Go to him as he sits enthroned, as the distressed applied to him on earth, and cry in his ears, "Thou son of David, have mercy on me." Would you have a more exalted view? Follow him again through his life: mark his love, his condescension, his reverence for the Father, (it will render even the Father more revered in your eyes,) his submission, his obedience, his venerable sanctity: then follow him to his present dignities and glories; and you will find this exercise tending greatly to strengthen both your apprehension and your adoration of the Son of God. It will be the most interesting, soothing, melting, and I will add, purifying train of reflections that you can pursue,—no less so than to have seen him and applied to him when on earth. It is by the hand of Jesus that you must be healed and saved. It is by a believing application to him that this healing must be obtained. This putting Christ out of view and going only to the invisible God, savors too much of natural religion and legal righteousness. A Jew would have done this, and a heathen could almost do it. It deserves serious inquiry whether this is not a principal reason why our prayers are so unavailing.—We pray often for strength to resist temptation, but it does not come. Why does it not come? There must be some defect in our prayers. Those who applied to Jesus when he was on earth, found no difficulty in obtaining relief. Were they blind? their eyes were opened; were they covered with leprosy? they were cleansed. He turned none away. Would we apply to Jesus now, he is still the same, and our petitions would be no less availing. Those who neglected the Son and worshipped only the Father, were not relieved in that day.—We must go to Jesus. Renounce every other hope; put your life in your hands, and go up and "touch the hem of his garment."

Ah, when we look to heaven and behold him on the throne,—the Being who moves every wheel of providence, who fills the Church on earth, who fills all heaven with his influence, his admiration, and his fame;—when we view him the Governor, the glory, the life of the universe;—and then look around and behold some of our brethren

who believe not that he ever existed, and others who own his being but reject his grace; our hearts are ready to bleed their life away. But it will not avail. They must hug their misery and their ruin; but we will cleave to Jesus our Saviour. I would rather be that bruised, dying Stephen, than to fill the throne of Nero. Had I but one wish to offer, it should be this,—to possess at last the views of this holy martyr. My God, when I lie gasping in death, may my faith behold, (though in a far humbler sense,) "the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God;" and may I breathe my last breath in saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

## SERMON XXXII

### SELF-DENIAL

And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. - GEN. 22:2

Abraham was now dwelling at Beersheba, a town near the southern extremity of Canaan. The land of Moriah was the country in which Jerusalem afterwards stood, about fifty or sixty miles to the north. The place where the altar was to be erected for the sacrifice of Isaac, was on Mount Moriah,—the mount on which the temple afterwards stood, where all the sacrifices were offered from the days of Solomon to the advent of Christ; and to which Mount Calvary was appended, where, in the fullness of time, the Seed of promise, the antitype of Isaac, was to be offered for the sins of the world. An interpolation in the 14th verse, which seems to have been inserted after the temple was built, and probably by Ezra, informs us particularly where the place was. "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." And we are told that Solomon built the temple on Mount Moriah; the mount

retaining the name after the surrounding country had lost it; the name being indelibly stamped upon it probably by this transaction of Abraham.

Abraham had been called out of Mesopotamia, and had left all his native scenes, led by the promise that in his seed all nations should be blessed. Notwithstanding this, he had lived until he was a hundred years old before his wife bore him a son. In this time his faith and patience were put to a severe test. At length his heart is gratified by the birth of the long expected seed. The little son in whom all the blessings are wrapped up, grows up by the side and grows fast to the heart of the doting parents. With what pleasure,—with what pious delight,—do they watch his opening virtues. How often do their fond eyes, as they follow him about, glisten with the tender tear. At length the dreadful summons comes, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." What shall the father do? With what words shall he support the sinking mother? How can he lose his only son? But this is not half. How can he shed the blood of his Isaac with his own hand? What then will become of the promise that in Isaac his seed shall be called? But none of these things stagger the faith or retard the obedience of the pious patriarch. Confident that God is "able to raise him up even from the dead," he makes no delay. He vents none of his cares either to the mother or the son. He arises early in the morning, takes his son and some servants, and puts the wood for the burnt offering on an ass, and sets off on foot for the place. "On the third day" he lifted "up his eyes and saw the place afar off;" and leaving there the ass with the servants, he laid the wood on the unsuspecting Isaac, and proceeded toward the place. "And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father; and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" This affecting question did not shake the father's purpose. "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God

had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar upon the wood; [the pious youth making no resistance, although of sufficient age to carry the wood for the burnt offering.] And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son." The deed was intentionally done. The knife was on the point of entering the palpitating heart; when he who in future days was to die on the same mount to save ten thousand Isaacs from death, called suddenly out of heaven and stopped the father's hand. The trial was complete, and the proof was obtained that Abraham loved his God better than his son. This done, the God whom he served forbade the human sacrifice. And although the fame of this affair, and the great credit of Abraham for piety, introduced the practice of human sacrifices among the neighboring nations, yet God declares that such a practice never "came—into" his "heart." His only design was to try his servant, to see whether he would deny himself for him. And he was found willing to a degree that appears to us selfish creatures truly astonishing. A greater instance of self-denial was never witnessed, save when a greater Father laid his hand on a dearer son in the tragic scene of Calvary.

Abraham is called the father of the faithful, and the religion of all his sons must resemble his.—But in this specimen we discover what his religion was. It was a principle of supreme love and unreserved obedience to God, which was ready to make any sacrifice which God required. He loved his God better than his Isaac; and would rather his son should die, nay die by his own hand, than break a command of God. This is the same religion that was taught by the Founder of the Christian Church: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Self-denial lies at the foundation of all practical religion, as supreme love to God lies at the foundation of all the religion of the heart. If we are to judge from the practice and avowed sentiments of men, the easy, liberal world do not make self-denial a constituent part of their religion. To indulge



the tastes which nature has implanted, to live as they list and enjoy life in the way that best suits them, seems the fashionable religion of the many. There is with them no struggle, no warfare, no running, wrestling, or fighting, no agonizing "to enter in at the strait gate." All is easy. The gate is wide enough for the whole world to go in abreast, budgeted with all the trumpery of Sodom. They are to sail down the easy current of unresisted nature to the paradise above. Thus they dream. But what saith the Scripture? "Mortify—your members which are on the earth." "For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

My object will be,

I. To explain the great duty of self-denial.

II. To adduce some arguments to enforce it.

I. I am to explain the duty of self-denial.

This duty seems to be very imperfectly understood? While some have rejected it altogether as an injurious restraint upon the nature which God has given us, others have rode on the ridge of the other extreme into all the superstitious austerities of popery. What self-denial is, may be easily explained; but to know when we practise it, or when we only deny one desire to gratify another equally selfish, is a more difficult task. As a general definition, to deny ourselves is to perform what is crossing to our natural feelings, and what we should not do did not duty and benevolence require it. But the definition needs to be more exact.

In the strictest sense of the word, self-denial is the subjection to the will of God as expressed in his word and providence, of our personal tastes and feelings, in distinction from those which are social; because the interest which we take in the happiness of others is not, in the first instance, self-interest. Our love to friends desires nothing immediately but their happiness. And yet as the happiness of every one consists in the gratification of his tastes and affections, much of

our own happiness is ultimately drawn from the happiness of our friends. Therefore to subject their interest to the will of God, is, so far as our own happiness is involved, self-denial. So far as our happiness consists in the enjoyment of their society, a consent to part with them when God ordains it, is self-denial. As far as Abraham's happiness would have been affected in both ways by the death of Isaac,—a death inflicted too by his own hand,—his obedience on this occasion was an act of self-denial. But perhaps you deny that the crossing of our affection for others is self-denial. You say, the happiness of Gabriel consists in the prosperity of God's kingdom; and in promoting that prosperity he finds his own happiness: would it be self-denial in him to cease to promote that prosperity or even to consent to its destruction? This is an entirely different case. The happiness which Gabriel derives from the prosperity of God's kingdom, is not a thing which is to be subjected to God's will. It is subjection itself. Nor is it a thing which can be set up in opposition to that will or to that prosperity. Surely that happiness which is drawn from the public good, cannot be erected against the public good. Nor can he be called upon by his Maker to sacrifice that happiness, because there is nothing higher than the prosperity of God's kingdom at which he can aim. There is no way in which he can sacrifice this happiness but by ceasing to love this kingdom and yielding himself up to the government of a private interest; which, instead of being self-denial, would be the very essence of selfishness. But Abraham's love to Isaac could be arrayed against the interest of God, and needed to be subjected to his will. And that subjection, so far as the parental happiness of Abraham was sacrificed, was self-denial.

But there is such a thing as sacrificing our happiness without self-denial. The drunkard sacrifices his happiness; but so far from denying himself, he produces the effect by refusing to deny a depraved appetite. The superstitious wretch who yields to self-torture, sacrifices, for the time, his happiness; but he does not deny himself; for he is merely feeding pride and self-righteousness and the hope of reward. You might as well elevate to self-denial the labors of the husbandman, or the fatigues and exposures of the soldier, or the

hazards of the duellist. To feast one appetite or evil passion at the expense of another, is not self-denial. Nothing is self-denial but the subjection of our natural feelings generally to the will of God and all our interests to his interest.

There are two sets of tastes or feelings belonging to human nature in its present state. One consists of those which existed before the fall, and which still remain perfectly innocent unless indulged unseasonably or to excess. The other consists of those which were introduced by the fall, and which, in every degree and modification of them, are sinful. Such are pride, malice, envy, hatred, and the like. These must, at all times and under all circumstances, be crossed. There can be no religion any further than it is a self-denial in regard to these. The other set of tastes and affections which belong to human nature, comprises those which, not being introduced by the fall, are sinful only in excess, or when, by existing circumstances, we are called to deny them and do not. Such is the love of happiness. Such are all the animal appetites and the domestic affections. Such is the taste for the beauties of nature, for music, and for all those objects which would have gratified Adam in innocency. These tastes and feelings may be lawfully gratified with no other restrictions than these. When God has made express rules to regulate them, as in the case of the animal appetites, they are to be restricted by these rules. Or when God in his providence calls us to cross these propensities, we must deny ourselves. Thus Abraham was called to cross his natural affection for Isaac. Thus Paul was called to give up his ease, the happiness of a family state, and most of the common comforts of life. All these tastes and feelings become sinful when indulged to excess; every solicitation to which must be resisted. When the objects of them are removed by the providence of God, we must not repine, but show our self-denial in cheerful submission.

In all these respects we are to deny ourselves; but beyond these limits we may not go. For a person, when not called to it by the law or providence of God, to cross his natural tastes, or in any way to afflict himself, betrays more pride and self-righteousness than any

thing else. Self-love, or the love of happiness, is innocent when subjected by supreme love to God, and when opposed to no higher good; and to cross it without a sufficient cause, is an instance of superstitious austerity which is by no means guiltless. Though Abraham was praiseworthy in pursuing as far as he did the purpose of offering up his son; yet the neighboring heathen, who, from his example misunderstood, did, unbidden, sacrifice their children to Moloch, incurred enormous guilt.

II. I am to adduce some arguments to enforce the duty of self-denial.

1. It is suitable that we should deny ourselves in all respects in which the law and providence of God call for it. It is suitable in the nature of things that God should govern his own world, appoint all our circumstances, and arrange all our crosses; and that we should submit to them or voluntarily take them up as he appoints. The world is his property; we are his creatures; he is our sovereign, and has a right to appoint; and it is our duty to submit however crossing to the flesh. He is infinitely benevolent and wise, and full of mercy, and always faithful; and there is reason for unbounded joy that he is on the throne and that we are in his hands. It is our greatest privilege to be ruled by him. And for us to refuse to be governed by his laws and to take up our cross at his bidding, is folly and ingratitude and rebellion in the highest degree.

2. His commands to self-denial are explicit and urgent. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Shall we be conscientious not to break any of the commands of the two tables, and have no scruples in regard to this? Hear and remember: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

3. Without a principle that will lead us to deny ourselves habitually and in all respects for Christ, we have no religion. This comes from high authority. "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his

own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." What manner of love is that compared with which the tenderest charities of social life are hatred? Yet such love to Christ we must possess, (it comes from his own lips,) or we have no part in him. We must have for him that clearly supreme affection which will not stand wavering whether to make trifling sacrifices for his cause. The father of the faithful did not hesitate a moment whether to sacrifice his beloved Isaac; and shall we demur about giving up trifling objects, and yet rank ourselves among the children of Abraham? It is all mistake and ruinous deception. Those who will not sacrifice every worldly interest when called to it, are unworthy to be reckoned among the children of Abraham or of God; both of whom spared not their own, their only son. In times of ease, when nothing is required to be given up, the selfish heart may easily lie concealed, and feel good-natured towards God and man. It is when sacrifices are called for that we are to discover what our hearts are. If at such times we find no self-denying principle within us; or though there be some faint movements that way, if we find no controlling propensity to give up everything for Christ as fast as he calls for it; of what avail are all our fancied submission and our supposed supreme love to God which in easier times flattered our hopes? A man never knows himself till called to make important sacrifices for Christ. Abraham never had a full opportunity to discover what his heart was, till put upon this trial. And if this experiment had evinced that he could not deny himself for God, it would have proved, notwithstanding all his former fair appearances, that he had other objects of supreme regard. The same in respect to us. What we are, is to be determined, not in times of ease and pleasure, but in times of trial. When the hour of trial comes, then may we expect that the eyes of interested angels will be fixed upon us, to see whether we can bear the test, or whether all our fair appearances will vanish away. How many eager eyes from heaven, may we suppose, followed the patriarch all the way from Beersheba to Moriah, and watched him in the critical moment, to see whether his purpose would falter, or whether his faith and love would triumph over all the tendernesses of nature. How desirable that

when the furnace is prepared and the hour to try men's souls has come, "the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire," should "be found unto praise and honor and glory."

4. God is able to recompense us abundantly, even in the present life, for all the sacrifices we make for him. He commands all the springs of comfort in the universe. He can make up for all the losses we sustain on his account, in ten thousand ways which human reason could not devise. We may rest assured that it will never be to our disadvantage to deny ourselves for him. He never calls us to self-denials from a wish to abridge our comforts. It is not in his heart to grudge his creatures their enjoyments. It is from far different motives that he calls us to self-denial. It is to wean us from the world and to inure us to look on him as the supreme good. What did Abraham lose by his self-denial on Moriah? Instead of being deprived of his son, he obtained a more ample charter of all the blessings before promised. And when Peter said to his Master, "Lo we have left all and have followed thee,—Jesus answered, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred fold now in this time,—and in the world to come eternal life." It is not the way to lose our comforts to give them up to God; but to reserve them when God calls for the sacrifice, this is the way to have them blasted and removed. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's the same shall save it." Self-denial therefore, instead of being a loss, is our highest gain. And the selfish man who would break a Gospel precept to promote his own interest, takes the readiest way to destroy himself.

5. A greater motive than this, which cannot fail to affect the benevolent heart, is, that the eternal happiness of millions may be promoted by our self-denials. How much greater is the interest which is thus advanced, than the trifling good which is thus given up. The pleasures and profits which we renounce for the Gospel's sake,

are transient at the longest and trifling at their greatest value. And how can these compare with the immortal interests of God's immense kingdom, which in some way or other are promoted by every instance of genuine self-denial. I had almost said, how can self-denial be any longer self-denial under this animating thought? To the real Christian it would be the greatest sacrifice of feeling not to deny his propensities which stand in competition with this infinite good.

6. If these thoughts are not sufficient to move us, one more remains which surely must melt a rock. How amazingly did the Son of God deny himself for us. "Though he was rich, yet for" our "sakes he became poor, that" we, "through his poverty, might be rich." Though possessed of infinite happiness, he became "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Though adored by angels, he came down to receive the spittings of Roman soldiers. He cast away the diadem of the universe to wear a crown of thorns. And all this that you and I might be snatched from eternal torments and share in the immortal happiness of God himself. What soul that is fit to be called human, will not take fire at this thought? Shall we think it much to give up our toys for him who sacrificed his glory, his blood, and his life for us? The ingenuous heart must surely feel it a privilege to testify its gratitude by any form of self-denial. Every opportunity for sacrifices will be the subject of thanksgiving rather than of complaint.

"Well thou mayst claim that heart of me

Which owes so much to thine."

7. Thus have the faithful felt in every age. The history of the Church from the beginning is a history of self-denials. Abraham could leave his native scenes, and the pleasant plains of Mesopotamia, and all his kindred, and the delights of refined society, to consume his life in a foreign wilderness, among unsociable strangers. Moses could give up all the honors of the house of Pharaoh, and all the treasures of Egypt, "to suffer affliction with the people of God" in the deserts of Arabia.

Paul could renounce the highest prospects in his nation, for reproaches, stripes, imprisonment, and death. And the time would fail me to tell of the many others who were famed for signal sacrifices in all the days of old. And in our times, the whole family of Christians are constantly struggling with self-denials. It is the great business of their lives. In more irresolute moments we may think our sacrifices and crosses greater than those of others, and may repine at the hardness of our lot. But the trials of Christians are perhaps more equally apportioned than is often imagined. If not, of this we may be sure,—they are exactly apportioned to the necessities of each. Could we have a full and particular view of the Church militant, with all its secrets disclosed, we should have a view of a great family dispersed through the world, all in their respective spheres struggling with self-denials. Not one would be found unemployed. We should perceive their struggle to be daily and almost ceaseless, and at times each supposing his own trials the most severe. This is the universal conflict of Zion from age to age; a conflict for which we were placed in this vale of tears. We were stationed here, not to rest, but to toil; not to possess our inheritance, but to make sacrifices: and our rest and reward are to come after we "have borne the burden and heat of the day." This is the condition of the whole, immense family of our brethren; and why should we be more exempt or more at ease than they?—For shame let us not seek to repose in ignominious sloth, when all our brethren are daily toiling and struggling in their work. Let us not sink under the apprehension that we stand alone in these trials. There is abundance of company with us. All who have entered on the heavenly journey stand with us. The trials of Zion are in a measure common.

In view of all these reasons, let us all, as we are called to it, take up our cross and follow Christ. There is no other way to follow him but to the cross, for he went no other way. By that cross let the world be crucified to us and us to the world. We must bear the cross if we would wear the crown. Let us commit all our interests to the divine management, in readiness cheerfully to endure whatever he shall impose who for us agonized in Gethsemane and Golgotha, and to



resign whatever he shall require who gave up heaven and life for us. Let us never consent to exchange the trials which he has prepared, for thrones and kingdoms. "By patient continuance in well doing" through all self-denying scenes, let us "seek for glory and honor and immortality." And it shall "be no grief unto" us "nor offence of heart" when we come to stand on the everlasting hills, by the side of the fountain of life, inhaling immortal joys, and looking back on the trials of the wilderness. When we shall receive the high rewards of faith and patience, and find heaven the sweeter for all the deprivations of this life, it will be no grief to us that we renounced the pleasures and portion of the wicked, and continued faithful amidst all sufferings and crosses. O that the glorious prospects of eternity might smooth down all the ruffles of our impatient minds,—might nerve us with fortitude to meet all the evils with which human life is beset, to bear all with patience, and into the hands of God to give up all our interests with filial submission. Let "none of these things move" us, "neither" let us "count" our own "life dear" to us, "so that" we may "finish" our "course with joy." And then "our light affliction which is but for a moment," will work "for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," Finally, let us be supported and encouraged by the affectionate address of the risen Saviour to the church of Smyrna: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.—Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Amen.

## **SERMON XXXIII**

### **ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD**

And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

- GEN. 5:24

Enoch was the father of the long lived Methuselah and the great grand father of Noah. It is said of him that he walked with God after the birth of Methuselah, three hundred years. It was a long time for a man to support a holy life and communion with God without any relapse worthy of notice. It is difficult for Christians now to do this for a single day: how remarkable then that he should have done it for the long space of three hundred years. Such approbation did his extraordinary piety gain him, that when the time came for him to leave the world, God translated him, as he afterwards did Elijah, and suffered him not to taste the bitterness of death; perhaps to show mankind what he would have done for them had they never sinned.

We have many strong featured characters drawn in history. Some shine in all the brilliancy of martial achievements, and are renowned for the conquest of kingdoms. Others have gathered laurels in the paths of science and illumined the world with the scintillations of their genius. Others by their counsels have swayed the fate of empires. And the deeds of these have been loudly sounded by the trump of fame. But more is said in praise of this man of God in the few short words of our text, than is said of them all. A greater character is given him in four words, than is ascribed to the most renowned warriors and statesmen by the whole voice of history and poetry.

There is something very expressive in the phrase, "walked with God." The Christian life is frequently called a walk, and believers are exhorted to "walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise." It is called walking before God. "Remember now how I have walked before thee in truth." The figure of walking before God was drawn perhaps from the position of those who worshipped in the tabernacle and temple. The Shekinah or visible glory of God sat enthroned on the mercy seat. The worshippers stood in the outer court directly before the Shekinah. Hence the common expression of appearing before God in public worship. To walk before God meant then to lead a life of devotion. But "Enoch walked with God." I do not find this character ascribed to any but Enoch and Noah. I will,

I. Explain what is meant by this figure.

II. Show the consequences of walking with God.

III. State the prominent means by which such a walk can be kept up.

I. I am to explain the figure.

It seems to be expressive of something more intimate than the phrase to walk before God. We all know what it is for two friends to walk together, engaged in close and interesting conversation.—And this is the figure by which is represented the intercourse of Enoch with his God for three hundred years. The figure is well adapted. The hidden life of the Christian, his retired habit of devotion, his separation from the world, (living, as it were, in the other world while dwelling in this,) his daily, intimate, unseen communion with God, are very fitly represented by two intimate friends walking together, engrossed with each other, unmindful of all the world besides, unseeing and unseen.

This general thought comprehends several particulars.

1. When two friends thus walk together their communion is secret. So is the communion between the Christian and his God. The world wonder what the Christian finds to employ himself about when alone. They wonder what supports him under trials, and renders his countenance cheerful when they looked for sadness. Let them know then that he draws his comforts from another world; that he lives far away from this, where the changes and trials of the present state do not reach him. As well might they wonder whence Abraham and David derive their present joys, while clouds are darkening the world below.

2. When two friends thus walk together, their conversation is kind and sweet. So the man who walks with God pours into his Father's ear all his desires and complaints, and receives his kind and comforting answers in return.

3. When two friends thus walk together their wills and governing feelings are the same; for how "can two walk together except they be agreed?" They also keep the same course, and thus are advancing towards the same object. So the man who walks with God is conformed to him in moral character. Benevolence reigns in his heart, and his open arms embrace the universe. Like God, his feelings are in accordance with the holy law. He loves righteousness and hates iniquity. His object too is the same with his. The glory of his Father, the prosperity of Zion, and the happiness of the universe, constitute the one indivisible object of his pursuit. He is delighted with the government of God, and has no controversy with him who shall reign. His will is swallowed up in the divine will. He wishes not to select for himself, but in every thing chooses that his heavenly Father should select for him. He is "careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving," makes his "requests—known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding," keeps his heart and mind "through Christ Jesus."

There are two other things implied in walking with God which are not exactly suggested by the figure.

1. The man who walks with God walks humbly. God will not walk with him else; for "the proud he knoweth afar off." The whole of man's duty is summed up in doing justly, in loving mercy, and in walking "humbly" with his God. The Christian, with all his intimacy with his Maker, does not approach him with familiar boldness, but is the more abased the more he sees of him. "I have heard of thee," said Job, "by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

2. The man who walks with God exercises a living faith. This, according to the apostle, was the main spring of all those graces which gained to Enoch the reputation of walking with God. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found because God had translated him: for before his translation he

had this testimony that he pleased God: but without faith it is impossible to please him."

## II. I am to show the consequences of walking with God.

1. By thus walking with God the soul contracts a holy intimacy with him. The consequence is,

2. That it makes advances in the best of all knowledge, the knowledge of God. An intimate walk with God affords an opportunity to study his character, to see it developed in the free communications he makes, and to listen to his instructions. He is the great instructor of mankind; but his teachings are not extended to those who live estranged from him.

3. This closer inspection and clearer discernment of God, are the most powerful means to sanctify the soul. Views of God are transforming. While "with open face" we behold "as in a glass the glory of the Lord," we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory." Therefore,

4. A sure consequence of such an intimacy between God and the soul, is an increased mutual affection. The more the soul knows of God the more it will love him, and of course the more it will be beloved. What a most tender friendship did Enoch and Enoch's God contract for each other during their intimate communion for three hundred years. If we would enjoy the same blessedness, we must, like Enoch, walk with God.

5. Such an intimacy between God and the soul cannot fail to establish mutual confidence. The more God is seen the more securely can the soul commit the management of all its interests to him, and venture its everlasting all upon the truth of his word. On the other hand the more this confidence is found, the more God can confide in such a soul. He will not trust those to whom he can say, "I know you not;" but of those who are intimate with him and confide in him, he will say, "Surely they are my people, children that will not lie." It is the

greatest happiness to feel this confidence in God and to know that he has this confidence in us. If we covet this, let us walk with him.

6. Such an intimacy with God will preserve us from bad company. A man who is walking with an honorable friend, is not likely to be annoyed by disagreeable intruders or to break away after low society. When the soul is in the immediate presence of God, neither sin nor Satan dares to invade; neither the world nor any of its perplexing cares will venture to intrude. Every Christian knows what distressing and dangerous companions these are. If we would avoid them and more fully enjoy the profitable and delightful society of Enoch's God, we must do as Enoch did.

7. Another consequence of such a close walk with God is, that we shall find support under the unavoidable trials of life. When we are in distress, very soothing is the company of a prudent and sympathizing friend, who, from the stores of his knowledge, can suggest subjects of consolation. But how much more blissful the society of God, whose heart is all tenderness, and who can open to the soul the most comforting of all truths. There is no consolation like this. Indeed it is well worth while to be a while in the furnace, for the sake of walking there with one in "the form of—the Son of God."

8. Another consequence of walking with God is the enjoyment of his protection. Myriads of enemies and dangers swarm in all the way to heaven; but while God is near he will not suffer them to annoy us. When one of Enoch's spirit hears the thunders at a distance, his refuge is nearer than the danger, and he steps in and is safe. He hides himself where no evil or enemy, though searching for him throughout the world, can find him.

9. Another consequence of walking with God is, that we shall always have a faithful monitor at hand, to throw in timely cautions to keep us back from indiscretions and sin or to reclaim us when we have wandered. The conscience of one who walks with God is preserved tender, and God is faithful not to suffer a son who cleaves to him to

err by his side without rebuke. To possess such a monitor is one of the greatest blessings of life. Let those who would enjoy this exalted privilege, take care never to depart from the side of their Saviour and their God.

10. Another consequence of walking with God is an enlightened view of his providence and government, a clear discernment of the glories of the heavenly world, and a peaceful assurance of his eternal love. Tell me what is happiness if this is not. What, of all the enjoyments of the world, can be exalted happiness compared with this?

11. Another effect of walking with God is a higher enjoyment of ordinary blessings. By the placid love which by this means is kept alive, the mind is put in a frame to enjoy every other comfort. And the gratitude which is thus mingled with the enjoyment of God's gifts, renders them all the sweeter.

12. Another effect of walking with God is a greater preparation for usefulness. In proportion as the mind becomes wiser by converse with God, and holier by near and transforming views of him, it is fitted for stronger and more persevering and better directed efforts for the happiness of others. In proportion as its faith and benevolent desires are enlarged, its prayers will be mighty for the salvation of men. Its very breath will penetrate their conscience and their heart as no other means can do. And it will throw out upon the world the all commanding majesty and winning sweetness of a holy example. One such man will have more influence upon the order of society and the salvation of men, than millions who never walked with God.

13. Another consequence of walking with God is a peaceful death. In Enoch's case it was not death, but a triumphant translation. And in every other case, in proportion as a man has walked with God, his end, though he leaves his body behind, is still triumphant, or at least serene. How unspeakable a comfort, when one is struggling with the king of terrors and about to enter on eternal and unchangeable scenes, to have "the full assurance of God's love, peace of conscience,

and joy in the Holy Ghost." How much better than to sink under awful fears of eternal wrath, or even under doubts which leave the soul to measure over the dark valley alone. Would you enjoy this triumph, or even this serenity in death, you must prepare for it by walking with God.

Finally, another consequence of walking thus closely with God, is an enlarged share of immortal glory. In heaven the blessed inhabitants all walk with God, every day and hour. And they find it no burden but a happiness which they would not exchange for the whole creation. Why was it not then a happiness on earth? And yet for an exemplary march in that happy course, millions have found their blessedness eternally increased. The enhanced joy of a single soul for a few hours, will outweigh all the pleasures of all the wicked on earth. The time will come when that additional blessedness of a single soul, will have out-measured all the happiness enjoyed on earth from Adam to the conflagration. A little further, and it will have exceeded all the happiness enjoyed by saints and angels in heaven before the day of judgment. And further still,—but imagination faints and turns back from the pursuit, and can only exclaim, How infinite the good resulting from one degree of additional faithfulness.

From the weight of all these reasons for a close walk with God, I hope you are now prepared to give your whole attention while,

III. I state the prominent means by which such a walk can be kept up.

Humility and faith, as we have already seen, are not means merely, but are involved in the very idea of a walk with God. Without these we cannot approach God, much less walk with him. The same may be said of obedience generally. These in the inquiry are not considered so much in the light of means, as a part of the walk which means are to keep up. And yet particular acts of disobedience may be mentioned as things to be avoided and particular acts of faith may be named as means to be employed. The means involve two things,—the



guarding against what is injurious and the attending to what is useful.

## I. The guarding against what is injurious.

(1.) It is absolutely impossible to preserve the soul in the habit of conversing with God, without avoiding improper conversation with men; not only every thing false or impure or profane or malicious or revengeful or passionate, but every thing deceitful or slanderous or uncharitable or uncandid or vain. It is even said "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

(2.) Vain thoughts are another hindrance to an intimate walk with God. This led the pious Psalmist to say, "I hate vain thoughts." There cannot exist a great degree of spirituality, unless the mind is habitually employed in spiritual contemplations. People who consume most of their leisure hours in thoughts of vanity, do not walk with God. It betrays a heart full of idolatry: and as well might the worshippers of Baal claim to walk with Israel's God. These cold thoughts diffuse chills of death through all the soul, and can no more comport with its spiritual activity, than paralysis can comport with the activity of the body.

(3.) No known sin must be indulged. One such Achan fostered in our camp, will prove that we have not only no intimacy with God, but no acquaintance with him. One indulged sin is as decisive against us as a hundred. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

(4.) Undue worldly affections and cares must be excluded. Those affections for the world are undue which are not constantly subjected to the love of God; that is, are not ready, at all times, cheerfully to submit to the rules which he has made to regulate our use and management of the world, and to any sacrifices which his providence

may extort from us or require at our hands. And those cares are undue which, from their number or pressure, seduce the heart from God. Every worldly care necessarily draws the attention from God for a season, as we cannot fixedly attend to two things at once. But if the heart is not enticed away, the thoughts and affections will spontaneously return to him at every interval of care and with ever fresh delight. Those affections and cares which, according to these definitions, are undue, obstruct our communion with God and abate our intimacy with him. Of course they must be guarded against if we would walk with him.

These are the things to be studiously avoided. And now,

2. Let us see to what we must attend.

(1.) We must punctually and earnestly attend on all the means and ordinances of God's appointment. Any neglect or irregularity or carelessness in this attendance, will cut the sinews of our spirituality, and diminish our strength to achieve victories and resist temptations in future. Separate yourselves from means, and you may as well separate your fields from culture, and even from the rain and dews of heaven. All our light and grace come through the medium of means. This in general; but to be more particular,

(2.) We must pray the prayer of faith and "pray without ceasing." Prayer is the Christian's life. Though every other ordinance be attended to, yet if this one be neglected, all is in vain. It is as impossible for the soul to be spiritually alive and active without a punctual course of fervent and believing prayer, as for the body to be alive and active without breath. Prayer has more influence on the sanctification of the soul than all other ordinances. It is going directly to God to receive the life-giving Spirit according to an absolute and often repeated promise. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any

of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him." This is decisive if any language can be. The promise is absolute, and there must be an unwavering belief in the promise in order to give the application success. "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." But the faith inculcated is not a belief that I shall receive, but that I shall receive if I ask aright. It is not a belief in my goodness, but in God's truth. It is a firm, unwavering, confident belief that God will "give the holy Spirit to them that ask him." aright. This strong confidence in God's truth may be exercised whatever doubts we have of our own goodness or election. If we are troubled on these points it ought not to keep us back. We may leave them to be decided afterwards, and go right to God with unlimited confidence in his truth and consequent willingness to hear the cries of all who sincerely seek him. Whoever is elected, this is true of all. Say not, God will hear me if I am elected, and not without.—Election or no election, he certainly will hear the cries of all, (be it Judas or be it Peter,) who seek him with the whole heart. This ought to be the strong confidence of every man, whatever opinion he may have of his own character or destiny. This, as the apostle testifies was the faith of Enoch.—"Before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe [what? that he himself is good? that he himself is elected? no such thing: must believe] that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," There is a full chance then for doubting Christians to exercise this sweet and successful confidence in God. Tell it to the nations. Let the joyful tidings circulate, through all the region of despondency and gloom. There is no confidence required of you respecting your goodness or election. The only faith demanded is

to "believe" in God, "that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," whoever they are,—whether it is I or another man,—elect or non-elect.

(3.) We must watch. In that most trying moment when the powers of hell were let loose upon the suffering Saviour, he gave his disciples no other direction than this, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." So much emphasis did he lay on these two duties. In regard to watchfulness, I would suggest the following rules.

First, be vigilant to observe the first motions of the enemy. If he has made considerable advances before you move, your exertions will probably be too late. It is dangerous to parley with temptation. Check it early or it will probably prevail. Keep all your eyes open to watch the different avenues by which the enemy makes his approach. He will often vary his mode of attack. Through all his variations keep your eye steadfastly upon him. Acquaint yourselves with his numerous devices.

Secondly, watch another enemy greater than this;—watch your own heart. Keep an attentive eye upon the movements of corruption within you: otherwise some evils will gather too much strength for you to resist; others will work unseen, and go in to form your character unknown to yourselves. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Thirdly, watch opportunities for doing and getting good. Much is lost in reference to both by overlooking the favorable moment.

Fourthly, watch the motions and expressions of divine providence. It will throw much interesting light on the character and government of God and illustrate and confirm many things taught in the Scriptures.

Fifthly, watch the motions of the Spirit upon your minds. Sometimes the Spirit whispers an invitation to prayer or divine contemplation. If the suggestion is followed we may find the duties easy and pleasant, and the effect lasting. But perhaps we refuse to attend to the impulse.

The consequence is, our hearts grow cold and lifeless; and then though we attempt to pray or meditate, we find no relish for it. This remark goes no part of the way towards denying God's efficiency, but only assumes that he leaves us sometimes by way of punishment. It may be illustrated by a passage from the Song of Solomon, understood to relate to the intercourse between Christ and the Church. The Spouse, half aroused from lethargy, says, "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew and my locks with the drops of the night. [Now mark how her indolence pleads.] I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? [Now the heavenly Bridegroom makes a more effectual effort.] My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my Beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my Beloved, but, [see the effect of not opening to Christ at first,] my Beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone: my soul failed when he spoke: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him but he gave me no answer." This is enough to confirm my idea of watching and obeying the first suggestion of the Spirit of Christ.

I have thus shown what it is to walk with God, the blessed consequences, and the means. May I not now, my Christian brethren, urge upon you this delightful duty? It is what you owe to the blessed God, your Father and Saviour, who has astonished heaven by his kindness to you, and whose mercies, if you are not deceived, will hold you entranced to eternity. It is what you owe to him, and it will secure you a happy life, more than all the wealth and honors of the world. It is heaven begun below. Do you not wish to be happy? Bend all your cares then to walk with God. Be not satisfied with a general desire to do this, but fix systematically on the means prescribed. Pursue those means hourly, daily, yearly. Reduce your life to a system under the regulation of these rules. Good old Enoch could walk with God three hundred years. And he has never seen cause to

repent it. Could you have access to him in his glory, would he express regret for the pleasant mode of spending the last three hundred years of his life? We are apt to think that we are not expected to aim at the superior piety of the ancient saints. But why paralyze every power by such a stupefactive mistake? Are we not under as great obligations? Is not God as worthy of obedience now as in the days of old? Have the increased displays of his mercy in the Gospel impaired his claims? Has the affecting scene of Calvary rendered him less lovely in the eyes of sinners? Are the means used with mankind less than in the patriarchal age? Or are the happy consequences of a walk with God worn out by time? Why should we then content ourselves with being scarcely alive, when so many saints have been through life rapt in communion with God? Do we thirst for honors? What honor so great as to be the companion and son and favorite of the everlasting God? Do we wish for riches? Who so rich as the heir of him who owns all the treasures of the universe? Do we prize the best society? What better society can be found than Enoch had? Does any valuable consideration move us, or any ingenuous motive, O let us never cease to walk with God. Amen.

## **SERMON XXXIV**

### **WHEN I AM WEAK THEN AM I STRONG**

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak then am I strong. - 2 COR. 12:10

In Paul's absence from Corinth, false apostles had crept in, who charged him, among other things, with being a hireling, because he received a partial support from the churches. This put him upon

vindicating himself and his ministry: and the supreme modesty with which he performed this task, is an example for all apologists for themselves. He does not boast of his heavenly call, his high authority, his many miracles, his superior eloquence, his unrivalled piety, and his equally unrivalled usefulness. If he must glory he chooses to glory in his infirmities, as attesting both his own sincerity and the power of Christ in the success of his ministry.

By infirmities and weaknesses he means the same, and comprehends under them, not only his general insufficiency for the salvation of men,—not only his feebleness of body,—but the hunger, thirst, nakedness, watchings, weariness, reproaches, and persecutions, which he endured for Christ. The manner in which he boasts of these infirmities, will appear from the following specimens. "We are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men.—Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place, and labor, working with our hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat. We are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day." "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our body." "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God; in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." "Are they ministers of

Christ? (I speak as a fool,) I am more: in labors more abundant, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep: in journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not? If I must needs glory I will glory of the things which concern my infirmities." Having then mentioned one, (meaning himself,) who had been "caught up to the third heaven," he adds, "Of such a one will I glory, yet of myself I will not glory but in my infirmities." And having alluded to the thorn in his flesh, (supposed to have been an impediment in his speech brought on him by his persecution at Lystra,) and to his thrice repeated prayer for its removal, he proceeds to state the answer and the effect on his own mind. "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.—Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak then am I strong."

Thus his being an earthen vessel, by which the power of God was manifested in his success; his thorn in the flesh, which removed him still further from the possibility of accomplishing any thing himself; his poverty, reproach, and extreme suffering; his subjection to the will of his enemies, against whom he had no power to protect himself:—(all which, while it attested his sincerity, showed him, not as a mighty conqueror marching through the the world and prostrating nations by the power of his own arm, but as a weakling subduing the armored champions with a sling and a stone, in the name of the God of the armies of Israel;—all which, while it brought



to his own mind a sense of other insufficiency and dependance, manifested to others the power of Christ in the triumphs of the Gospel:) his hunger, thirst, weariness, and exposure to every danger; which showed him, not a giant fortified with inherent strength, but a poor feeble worm unable to sustain himself: that violent persecution, which, borne with unresisting meekness and triumphant faith, proved the means, by convincing thousands, of extending the kingdom of Christ: that rupture with mankind,—that dissolution of alliance with the world,—by which was wrought in him a deadness to the things of time and sense and a vigorous life of faith:—these were the infirmities in which he delighted, as means to awaken in himself a sense of his own nothingness and dependance and to carry him out to Christ,—as means to render the power of his beloved Saviour more manifest in his support and success.

To what a high and heroic frame had this holyman arrived, that he could take pleasure in infirmities, reproaches, persecutions, and distresses for Christ's sake. It is as much as ordinary Christians can do to submit to these things. But to take pleasure in them,—to consider them no longer a misfortune but a constituent part of prosperity,—a source, not of misery, but of joy; this is passing strange. How far is religion, in her loftier flights, above the operations of nature. Ask the men of the world in what they take delight, and they will tell you, In the absence of all sorrow,—in the approbation of all around us,—in the highest portion of worldly good. But here is one who takes pleasure in reproaches, in want, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. Happy man! he is proof against all the evils which are such a terror to others. All the ills of life have lost their power on him. The curse which smote this vale of tears is to him repealed. He has nothing more to fear for time or eternity. What is bane to others proves meat and drink to him. The greatest troubles only increase his joy. He has found indeed the philosopher's stone which turns every thing to gold. I have heard of heroes who could support misfortune without complaint; but never, till Christianity showed them to me, did I hear of men who could take

pleasure in affliction,—who could take pleasure in such a catalogue of woes as has been recited.

The reason which the apostle gives for this marvellous joy, is contained in a still more marvellous paradox; "When I am weak then am I strong." This, on every principle of nature, is not only a paradox but a falsehood. But grace and nature are just so opposite. In the kingdom of grace men ascend by lying down, conquer by submitting, save their life by losing it, and are the strongest when most weak.

In this paradox there is a double meaning. The first meaning is, I take pleasure in being an earthen vessel, in having a thorn in the flesh, and in undergoing all these degradations and sufferings for Christ, because they give opportunity for his power to be glorified in me. When they press upon me most, his strength is most conspicuous in my support. I never feel my graces so active nor my spiritual joys so high, as when I am suffering for his sake. This truth is illustrated in the history of that apostle. When did he ever sing so rapturously as when he and Silas lay bound and mangled in the inner prison? And his ascent to the third heaven is thought to have been at the time when his body lay overpowered under the persecutions at Lystra. This accords with the ordinary experience of Christians. "A child of God," says one, "seldom walks so much in the view of God as his God, as when, in his outward circumstances, he walks in darkness and sees no light." This is eminently the case when his sufferings are for the cause of God. When were the three children in Babylon visited by a heavenly guest, but when they were walking in the furnace for their adherence to the truth? When did Daniel experience so much of the care of his God, as when, for his fidelity to him, he was in the lions'den? And when are ordinary Christians so strong in their faith and patience, in their hopes and joys, as when they are suffering for Christ?

But the paradox contains another meaning, to which the transition is easy. When I most feel my own weakness and go out to Christ for strength, then am I the most strong. This meaning must have lain by

the side of the other in the mind of such a man as Paul. He could not have been weak under the pressure of outward trials, without a corresponding sense of his insufficiency and dependance. In his case the two ideas were inseparable, and they must be considered inseparable in the declaration of the text. It is as though he had said, I take pleasure in all my sinless infirmities and trials; for when these press upon me, then I most feel my own weakness, and this carries me out to Christ and casts me upon his strength; so that I am never so strong in the power and grace of my Redeemer, nor the occasion of glorifying these attributes so much, as when, from the pressure of outward afflictions, I most feel my own weakness.

A proud dependance on ourselves,—that stiffness which will not dissolve into the feelings of a child dropping into a parent's arms,—is the great obstruction to our salvation. On the other hand, that conscious feebleness, guiltiness, meanness, nothingness, which looks up to the grace and power of God as the only ground of salvation; which rests on him as the heart that dictates and the arm which executes every part,—as the Deliverer who first planned to pluck us from the pit, and performs what he planned,—as the Father who pardons us, not for any thing in us, but for reasons existing in the glorious Trinity,—as the Sanctifier who hourly renews our strength,—as the arm which clears our way and guides and carries us along,—as the Shepherd that gathers us in his arms and carries us in his bosom;—this it is to be weak,—this it is to be strong.

The name of God is ushered into our world, in the first chapter of Genesis, as the Covenanters; for that is the meaning of the Hebrew word translated God.\* "In the beginning the Covenanters created the heaven and the earth:"—created them for the theatre of that redemption which had been settled by covenant from eternity. Before man was formed or angels made, the Covenanters, from the boundless benevolence of the Godhead, undertook the salvation of this world,—undertook to draw out from their own fulness all that was necessary to complete the amazing work,—undertook to make atonement,—to call, awaken, convert, and pardon sinners, to

sanctify, protect, and save believers, to begin, carry on and complete the salvation of every one of the elect. The righteousness, strength, and universal guardianship, are not only freely tendered, but secured by a determinate choice,—by a purpose of earnest love which will not be disappointed: like a mother who originates all the arrangements respecting her weak and froward infant, forces upon it her effectual care, and leaves nothing to depend on its own wisdom or strength. You have heard from the records of his grace, how the heavenly Leader goes before his people, clears their way, spreads about them his protecting shield, supports them when faint, strengthens them when weary, stimulates them when sluggish, reclaims them when wayward, keeps off their enemies, keeps down their corruptions, is himself the first mover in every step they take,—the ground and dispenser of their pardon,—the defender who stands answerable for their protection against every foe and danger,—the manager of all their minor interests, who daily executes with his own hand the three great promises, that no evil shall befall them, that no good shall be withheld from them, that all things shall work together for their benefit. When he sees they need strength, he gives it,—gives it of his own accord, and gives them strength to ask it. When he sees they need wisdom, he gives it,—pardon, he gives it,—solace, worldly good, affliction, he gives it all. All their springs are in him. Nothing originates in their prayers; their prayers originate in him. Nothing originates in their prudence; their prudence originates in him. He worketh all their works in them. When they cannot guide themselves, he takes the business out of their hands. He blocks up their way and deranges their plans and turns them back sorely against their will, and, heedless of their frettings and cryings, saves them in spite of themselves. All this is provided in the everlasting covenant.—That is our anchor of hope.

"Amidst temptations sharp and long,

My soul to this dear refuge flies."

We are weak, but he is mighty. We are foolish, guilty, rebellious, but he is our "wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." We have no other way but to cast ourselves into his arms as helpless infants. In all our conflicts, in all our guilt, we can only resort to God's strength, to God's grace, to God in Christ as our all in all.

And this is the spirit which it is our life to cherish. This is the weakness by which we are made strong. We never shall cease to lean upon ourselves till we despair of our own strength. We never shall rest upon Christ till we cease to lean upon ourselves. We never shall draw strength from heaven till we rest upon Christ. Never therefore till we despair of our own strength shall we be strong in the Lord. And in the same proportion as we feel our utter weakness and go out of ourselves to rest on his strength, we shall be strong. He is the vine, we are the branches. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can" we "except" we "abide in" him. But the very bond of union is this dependance on him for life. In proportion as we feel this dependance, the streams of life flow from him to us; in proportion as this sense abates, we wither like a separated branch. "He" filleth "the hungry with good things, and the rich he" sendeth "empty away."

This childlike sense of weakness and dependance is unlike that temper which sinks into sluggish repose and leaves God to do both his work and ours. Was Paul inactive while he was weak? Was ever mere man since the fall strung up to higher exertions? His "labors more abundant," his "journeying often," his "weariness and painfulness," are put into the very definition of that weakness which constituted his strength. The Christian life is not sluggish rest. We must wrestle, fight, run, and endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ: but the point is, to feel, in all this exertion, that we are using the strength of another. God's agency does not set aside our agency, but puts it in motion, like a wheel within a wheel. He works all our works in us; but if our works are not done, it proves that he

has not wrought. We must "work out" our "own salvation,—for it is God which worketh in" us "both to will and to do."

This dependance is full of trust. It is not a morbid sense of weakness which resorts to God reluctantly. It is a consciousness of what we are in view of the whole work of redemption,—in view therefore of what God is in that work. It does not despair except of help from ourselves, but casts the soul on the mediation and fullness of Christ, and rises to a sweet and triumphant confidence in him.

From what has been said we learn,

1. That we have no reason to fear any affliction which may come upon us for a wise and faithful adherence to the Gospel. The weaker we are in this respect the stronger we shall be in Christ. No labors, no sacrifices, no reproaches ought to be dreaded. We should hug the cross, "and count it all joy when" we "fall into divers temptations." Do we not wish above all things to enjoy more of God and to be more like him? and shall we shrink from trials which are sent to bring us to both parts of this salvation? Instead of fearing and fearing, let us comfort our hearts and go forward with undaunted zeal to meet a world in arms.

2. We see the vital importance of an humbled child-like spirit, free from all self-sufficiency, full of a sweet sense of dependance, of filial confidence, and willing to be supported and led by a parent's care. This brings us directly to the source of all life and joy, and is the only temper that can bring us there. In this spirit of dependance and trust let us daily go forth to our work, and learn habitually to say with David, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler and the horn of my salvation and my high tower." "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident." "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow

of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." And then from sweet experience, we may add, in the seraphic language of Isaiah, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

In all our prayers and exertions for the kingdom of Christ, let us be sure to go forth under this deep sense of weakness and absolute dependance. Without this we never shall work any deliverance in the earth. Our "strength is to sit still,"—to refrain from Egypt and Assyria and to confide in the living God. In this point chiefly he is jealous for his honor. If we ever succeed, like Elijah on Carmel, to unstop the windows of heaven, we must be far more conscious of this utter weakness and dependance than Christians ordinarily are. How much dependance, think you, Elijah placed on an arm of flesh, when he "came near and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel and that I am thy servant?" And when he retired to the top of Carmel "and put his face between his knees," and sent his servant seven times to look for the western cloud, how much confidence, think you, he had in that little lump of clay which was called Elijah? Could his dependance or his trust in God have been greater? And had it been otherwise, would the fire have fallen from heaven "and consumed the—sacrifice and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water—in the trench"? or would the heavens have gathered blackness and poured out abundance of rain? O my brethren, what almighty energy is wrapped up in this dependance and trust when we put our hands to the kingdom of Christ. I would say of it as David said of Goliath's sword, "There is none like that; give it me." For want of these heavenly attributes all our strength is withered, all our labor lost. We go forth like the Midianitish army and fill all the valley "as grasshoppers for multitude;" but one shout of faith, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," will do more execution than the whole. O that this lesson might now be written with sun-beams on our heart forever, and it would do more for our usefulness in the kingdom of Christ than all other things. This is the great secret that was to be

discovered; this is the grand talisman that will accomplish all things. Supported by its power, "he that is feeble—shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God." They "shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea," and "it shall be done," "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me:" and this is the heavenly amulet about the neck and heart, which conveys the power, "When I am weak then am I strong."

## **SERMON XXXV**

### **THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD**

But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me. - ISAI. 49:14–16

There is a striking analogy between God's general treatment of his Church in different ages of the world, and his treatment of individual Christians in different periods of their life. The various changes which have taken place in the state of the Church, with those which are yet to come, strongly represent the changes which occur in the experiences of individual Christians.

The bondage of the Church in Egypt, its deliverance by the mighty power of God, its overflowing joy when it had safely passed the Red Sea and thought all its enemies slain, the dedication of itself to God at Sinai, the tedious wilderness it had to pass before it could cross the Jordan and rest in the promised land; the care which God exercised over his people, to feed, guide, and defend them; the numerous enemies they had to encounter; their own fickleness,



ingratitude, and rebellion; all represented, with memorable exactness, a Christian's journey from spiritual Egypt to the heavenly Canaan.

If we take a wider range and contemplate God's treatment of his Church from the first promise of a Saviour to the day of judgment, the analogy will be still more manifest. So exact it is that when the pen of inspiration is describing the joys or trials, the hopes or fears of the Church at large, individual Christians may see in the description a delineation of their own hearts. Indeed many of the prophecies and most of the promises relate equally to individuals and to the Church at large. An instance of such a double reference is seen in our text. The words may be applied both to the general Church and to all its real members.

So numerous are the evils with which this life is chequered, and so often is the light of God's countenance hid behind the cloud of unbelief, that it is not unfrequently the language of our hearts, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." And in reference to the Church at large we are too prone to say, The Lord hath forsaken and Zion's Lord hath forgotten. He who was acquainted with all our weaknesses and trials, well knew how to adapt his promises to our wants. He knew how to shape and point them so that they could make the readiest way into our hearts. How could any assemblage of words have a greater tendency to fix a desponding mind on the faithfulness of God, than those which are used in the text?

My purpose is to adduce some arguments to confirm our faith that God will never forget nor forsake his people.

1. The spring of his love to them was in himself, and not in any moral qualities found in them: and therefore no imperfections in them will ever dry up this eternal fountain. He loved at first because it was his nature to love, and his love will continue for the same reason. In fulfilment of his covenant with Christ, his love transformed them

from enemies to friends: and if their very enmity could not restrain him from beginning this good work, their remaining sin cannot prevent him from carrying it on to perfection. The apostle therefore was "confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in "Christians, "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." If the love of God was changeable, our unnumbered provocations might turn it from us; but on his immutability he himself encouraged us to build our confidence. "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." When the Christian is depressed with a sense of his own unworthiness, it is very comforting to reflect, The Lord has not loved me thus far on account of any merit in me; why then should I fear that he will cease to love me on account of my ill desert? It is his glory to love the undeserving who were given to Christ; and I have heard him say, "For my own sake, even for my own sake will I do it; for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another."

2. The efficacy of the atonement and righteousness of Christ, by which Christians were at first pardoned and adopted, remains the same: therefore they can never be forsaken. If their unworthiness could reverse the pardoning and justifying sentence, the redemption of Christ would not be complete. If matters were left thus uncertain, and the burden of keeping themselves was laid on their own shoulders, not a child of Adam would ever reach the kingdom of heaven. But blessed be God, that vicarious righteousness which was at first the ground of our pardon and acceptance, is not changed by our sins; and if on this account he can subdue and receive the sinner, surely on this account he will continue to love the saint.

3. Our faith in this delightful truth is confirmed by explicit promises. "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people.—And I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me forever.—And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I

will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me." "The Lord is faithful who shall stablish you and keep you from evil. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you." "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

It is well for Christians that God has taken into his own hands the management of their spiritual concerns, and has himself undertaken to train them up for glory. Had he not thus taken the work to himself, we must have despaired of its being done. Every one who has learned the fickleness and treachery of his own heart, will say with David, "Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had—dwelt in silence." All the encouragement of Christians is founded on his promise to keep them by his "power—through faith unto salvation." When beset with temptations they sometimes despond, but the faithfulness of God at last compels them to acknowledge, "When I said, My foot slippeth, thy mercy O Lord, held me up." Or if to show them what is in their hearts, and to bring them to a fuller reliance on the righteousness of Christ and the strength of God, he leaves them to fall, it shall not be forever. "A just man falleth seven times and riseth up again." Though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. Even the angels are made ministering spirits to the Church. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them." In times of the greatest spiritual dearth they shall still be fed. The barrel of meal and the cruise of oil shall still support them while all around are perishing with famine. He who caused waters to break forth from the

rock to refresh the thirsty Church, and from the jaw bone to revive the fainting prophet, has said, "When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them: I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water." Amidst all the afflictions of life God is never unmindful of his people. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." He has this excellent property of a good friend, that he never forsakes his friends in adversity. All other friends may depart, but God will not depart. "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." "We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He is sensible of all the sufferings which his members feel, and of every injury and insult which are cast upon them. "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye." In the process of the last judgment he will treat every injury and every benefit rendered to his members as rendered to himself. He has pronounced a vehement curse upon those who offend one of his little ones, and promises a magnificent reward to those who give only a cup of cold water to them as his disciples. He marks them by the most endearing titles. He calls them friends, he calls them brethren, he calls them his children, he calls them his spouse, he calls them his members, he calls them his body. After borrowing figures from relations like these to express his tenderness to his disciples we shall not be surprised to hear that he acts the part of the kindest shepherd. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." "They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them."

Under the special care of such a God and Saviour what can the children want? Do they need pardon? they have it. Consolation? they have it. Restraining or sanctifying grace? it is theirs. Do they stand in

real need of any worldly good? God is not backward to bestow even that. "He that spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" "The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee." This sums up the whole matter. Are we in darkness? "the Lord God is a sun." Are we encompassed with enemies? "the Lord God is a—shield." "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe." Do we want present sanctification or future bliss? "the Lord will give" both "grace and glory." Do we want any other comforts in our way? he will bestow even these: for "no good things will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." The inference from all this is just; "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

God will not only confer on his people the present possession of every thing really good, but he will protect them from every thing that would ultimately prove an evil. "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." And every thing which does occur shall turn to their benefit. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—"All things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come, all are yours." We may well exclaim then with the enraptured Psalmist, "O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men."

4. The experience of all ages has borne testimony to the unfailing faithfulness of God to the Church and to all individuals who put their trust in him. The human race have now been acquainted with their Maker for almost six thousand years, and not one of them has ever found unfaithfulness in him, either towards the Church or towards any of its members. Though many Christians, through unbelief, have been ready to call his faithfulness in question, and to say, The Lord hath forsaken, and my Lord hath forgotten, yet in no instance has the

gloomy apprehension been supported, but in every case God has appeared for their relief and convinced them that their jealousy was groundless and unkind.

When the Church became reduced to a single family, and the overgrown vices of a wicked generation threatened to swallow it up, report was made in heaven that the Church was in danger, and God came down and drowned the world with a flood. Every thing must give way to the safety of the Church. God revealed to Noah his purpose of drowning the world, and promised him, if he would submit to the scoffs of an unbelieving generation and rear a stupendous ark, that he and his family should be saved from the deluge. Noah believed God and ventured all upon the promise. And did God disappoint his hopes? Ask him, and he will tell you, No. When the Church was again reduced and again in danger, God separated the father of the faithful from the rest of the world, called him from his father's house, and carried him through an interesting variety of scenes, to prepare the way for the continuance of a Church among his posterity. While the patriarchs were wandering about and carrying the little Church with them, the eyes of all heaven were upon them: angels came down to inquire into their matters, and the Mediator, the Angel of the covenant, the God of the Old Testament, came down to visit them. God told Abraham that if he would forsake his kindred and follow him, he would conduct him safely to a land flowing with milk and honey, and give it to his seed for their inheritance; that he would be his "shield and" his "exceeding great reward." Abraham ventured all upon the truth of the promise and left his father's house. And did he ever find the promise fail? Ask him, and he will tell you, No.—God told Jacob that if he would go down to Egypt, he would go with him and assuredly bring back his seed. Jacob believed, went into Egypt, and ultimately found all the promises fulfilled. He there became convinced of the unreasonableness of that despondency which a little before had said, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." The good old patriarch became convinced that these things had not been against him, that his

distrust had been ill founded, and that in all things God had taken the readiest way to promote his happiness. When the Church was oppressed in Egypt, God came down in wrath. I hear, says he, the cries of my sons as though they were in distress; what are ye doing to my children? His eyes beheld their oppression and he set himself to deliver them. Because Egypt refused to let them go, he smote it with ten successive plagues; and when Pharaoh pursued the retreating Church, he overthrew him and his host in the Red Sea. He would have destroyed all Egypt before he would have seen his Church detained in bondage. God promised Moses that if he would prefer "the reproach of Christ" to "the treasures in Egypt," and would conduct the Church from the land of slavery, he should have his presence and friendship for a "recompense of reward." Moses obeyed: and did God ever forsake him until the Church was brought to the borders of Canaan and he safely landed in heaven? On a certain occasion, when God was angry with his people and seemed to refuse to go with them any further, Moses interceded, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." As though he had said, Consider, Lord, the tediousness of the way and the swarms of enemies which threaten to swallow us up. What can we do without thy presence? How can we live without thy love? And now mark the gracious answer, rich as the treasures of God; which, when extended to a general application, may yield unfailing solace to all who are still entangled in the mazes of this wilderness. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." This promise was fulfilled. God went close by his side through all the windings of the wilderness, supported him under every trial, overcame all his enemies, and then received him to the rest that "remaineth—to the people of God." The Church in the wilderness frequently distrusted God, and in their complaints charged him with falsehood: but they never could make good the charge, and by his seasonable interpositions were always made to blush at their complaints. He satisfied them with water out of the rock and fed them with "angel's food." "Their clothes waxed not old and their feet swelled not," and their "shoe" became not "old upon" their "foot," for the space of forty years. He guided them by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. He defended them

miraculously from all their enemies, and could not be provoked to forsake them by all their murmurs and rebellions. A review of all this appeared so astonishing to Moses as he stood on the plains of Moab, not far from Jordan, that he exclaimed, "The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. [As though he had no other estate.] He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness: he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." God promised David that he would make him king over Israel; and David for the most part believed the promise, though now and then his fears would arise and tempt him to say, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." But God made good his word in every tittle, and forced David to acknowledge, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles." And he has not had a remaining doubt of the divine faithfulness for twenty-eight hundred years. And what shall I now say? for the time would fail me to tell of Elijah, of Daniel, and his three companions, of Ezra and Nehemiah and of the whole army of prophets, apostles, and martyrs, who by a faithful God were enabled to quench the violence of fire, to stop the mouths of lions, to quell the rage of enemies, to endure sufferings with patience, to meet death with triumph, and to enter into the joys of their Lord. Ask these happy spirits while harping around the throne, whether they ever found unfaithfulness in the holy One of Israel; and, No, No, No, would resound from all the heavens. And, my brethren, were I to appeal to your experience, which of you all can allege anything against the divine faithfulness? Your hearts may at times have distrusted God; but has he not in every instance convinced you that it was without foundation, and in a thousand cases astonished you with the most delightful evidence that he had not forgotten to be kind?

I shall conclude with a few reflections.



I. The thoughts which have been presented ought lastingly to convince us of the utter unreasonableness of those jealousies of God which every one acquainted with himself finds too frequently in his own heart. Nothing can be more unfounded than an apprehension in Christians, (while regarding themselves as such,) that he who loved them with an everlasting love, and who has done so much to redeem and sanctify them and to train them up for heaven, will after all forsake them and leave them to be overcome by their spiritual enemies; that he will neglect to make all needful provisions for them in this life: that he will fail to bestow every real good, or that he will suffer the occurrence of any real evil. The unequivocal promise and oath of God bid them fear none of these things. Such fears then involve a charge against God of deception and perjury. And has he given a cause? The uniform testimony of six thousand years answers, No. There is no reason why we should not place unlimited confidence in him. Nothing appears why we may not, with the utmost safety, commit to him the management of all our concerns for time and eternity, with the confidence of the apostle, "that he is able to keep that which" we "have committed unto him against that day." "All the promises of God—are yea and—amen." They are unchangeable truths. They never yet deceived and they never will. Let us not therefore yield to anxiety on any subject, but "seek—first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," assured that if we do this, "all" other "things shall be added." Let us follow the comprehensive advice of Peter, to cast all our "care upon" God, "for he careth for" us; and not neglect the counsel of Paul respecting the things of this life: "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." All we have to do then is to commit the management of all our concerns to God, to seek first his kingdom and righteousness, to "pray without ceasing," and to "rejoice evermore."

II. Is God so mindful of us that he never turns his eye from us a single moment? How ungrateful then for us to be so unmindful of him. Though he never forgets his people, yet they daily forget him. Though his feelings towards them are such that it would be infinitely more difficult for him to forget them than for an affectionate mother to forget her darling infant, yet they suffer the least thing to draw their minds from him; yea they sometimes suffer sin, the most deformed of objects, to rival him in their hearts. Such returns to the best of beings and the best of friends, surely deserve nothing less than eternal burnings. It is reserved for the last judgment to lay open the infinity of that sin which the children of God daily commit against their heavenly Parent. "O that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for" this cruel ingratitude to the best and kindest of fathers.

III. What new and wonderful views does our subject give us of the love of God. After all our ingratitude, (which seems enough to make the stones cry out against us,) he still loves us with infinite tenderness, and would find it unspeakably harder to neglect us than a mother to neglect her mourning infant. O the unutterable, the boundless love of God! Eternal research will not exhaust this subject. It was to bring out this love to the view of an astonished universe, that all these worlds were made. Nothing was so important as the display of this unbounded love in its own proper exercise. From this infinite ocean of love, of light, and of glory, have flowed down unceasing rivers of delight into all parts of the universe, save one, for six thousand years, without exhausting or diminishing the fountain. Why is not the wonder of this love more realized? It is infinitely the greatest wonder in the universe. Why is not this precious Being more apprehended when he shines in such amazing glories all around us? when his love appears so ineffable in his care of his creatures and in his kindness towards them? Henceforth let it be our supreme object to search into his adorable perfections and to make them known to creatures.—And after all our sottish stupidity and ingratitude, let our lives hereafter be spent in advancing his kingdom and glory,—in gratitude, adoration, and praise. Amen.

# SERMON XXXVI

## SON AND HEIR THROUGH CHRIST

Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.- GAL. 4:7

Guilt and unbelief are prone to represent God as an implacable foe, and often check, even in Christians, that humble boldness and firm reliance with which a redeemed soul ought to cast itself upon a covenant God. The spirit most becoming a child of God is not servile fear, but filial confidence. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son." As the whole moral glory of God consists in love, and as the most precious exercises of love are mercy and truth, God is most glorified when these perfections are most distinctly seen and most confidently relied on. He never is better pleased than when his children feel a strong confidence in his veracity and paternal tenderness. Such a trust is the choicest and most difficult effort of faith, and does more than all direct exertions upon ourselves, and infinitely more than all the glooms of guilt, to purify the heart, to overcome the world, and to procure from God all the strength we need. In this grace all other graces and holy habits are involved; as love, humility, repentance, and universal obedience. It is this operation of love which brings us into the closest union and communion with God, and leaves the deepest impression of his image on the heart. It is the very hand which takes of the things of God and transfers them to the soul. It is the very bond of union to Christ, and therefore the grand condition on which all blessings are bestowed. This then is the grace which it behooves us to cultivate with the most assiduous care. And that I may encourage you, my

beloved brethren, to rise up to this filial confidence, I shall direct your attention to the high standing which believers hold as sons and heirs of God.

But first it is necessary to consider the ground on which this amazing privilege rests. It rests on the mediation of Christ. "If a son, then an heir of God through Christ." The principle of receiving privileges on account of another who stands in a certain relation to us, is familiar to you all. You constantly see children treated with kindness by their father's friend, without any reference to their own merit. On this principle proceeds the whole system of divine grace. The unworthy receive blessings on account of another who has espoused their cause and assumed their responsibility. A deep impression of this truth must be fastened on your minds before you can rise up to a realizing sense of that stupendous system to which I am solicitous to draw your attention. And yet this impression cannot be made but by the simple exercise of faith, resting implicitly on the testimony of God. God has said that for the love he bears his Son, he will treat those outcasts whom his Son has adopted, with all the tenderness of a Father; and we must firmly rely on this declaration. In no other way can the impression be obtained.

Thus prepared, let us go back to the beginning, and contemplate this great subject step by step. In the ages of eternity a covenant was entered into between the persons of the sacred Trinity respecting the redemption of the world. The Son voluntarily assumed the office of Mediator and espoused the cause of a ruined race. He engaged to take our nature, to take our place under law, and to perform and suffer all that was necessary to support the authority of the law. He engaged to yield perfect obedience to its requirements, and in the nature which had sinned, to receive and obey a command from the Father to die on a cross as a substitute for man. The Father, who in this transaction held the rights of the Godhead, accepted the offer and engaged to receive that vicarious sacrifice in the room of the punishment of believing sinners. He engaged also to confer on the Son, thus voluntarily reduced to a servant, a glorious reward. In the

first place, seeing that the Son would lose his pains unless an obstinate race should be subdued and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, he engaged (the Spirit consenting,) that a certain number should be thus subdued and sanctified. This number he gave to the Son by absolute promise, and wrote their names, (speaking after the manner of men,) "in the book of life." In the next place, he constituted his Son the "heir of all things" and gave him the universe for himself and his Church. He made this grant to him, not as a private person, (if I may so say,) but as "the head of the body." He gave him nothing which was not to be shared by his Church, and all its members were constituted "joint heirs" with him. Hence the assurance to believers, "All things are yours." Hence also the promises: "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." "All things work together for good to them that love God." In the next place, he appointed his Son the manager and distributor of the whole estate, and made him "head over all things to the Church." that he might overrule all things for the happiness of his people. The Spirit consented to act under him: and thus "all power—in heaven and in earth" was "given" to the mediatorial King as head and guardian of the Church.

All this he was to purchase for himself and his people by his obedience "unto death." But as he had given bonds for the payment of the price, he was actually invested with the inheritance from the beginning, and entered upon the office of mediatorial King immediately after the fall, and has been the sole governor of the universe ever since. On the strength of that bond he also entered on the distribution of the blessings he was to purchase.—From Abel down to John the Baptist, sinners were saved on the ground of his obedience and death. But passing by those preceding ages, it will help our conceptions to come down to the time when the bond was cancelled and the reward more openly conferred; that is, to the actual sufferings of Christ and the glory which followed.

As soon as sufficient preparations had been made by instruction, to enable men to understand the wondrous plan, and by predictions and the prophetic testimony of types, to furnish abundant evidence of his divine mission; and as soon as the state of science had become sufficiently mature, and the intercourse among the nations sufficiently extended, to spread and transmit the records and proofs of the great transactions; the Son of God appeared in the flesh. "He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." He was "made of a woman, made under the law," in "the form," not of God, but a "servant" of God. He perfectly obeyed the divine law under circumstances the most trying. In the nature which had sinned he drank "the dregs of the cup of trembling and wrung them out." He stood before heaven and earth and there offered for a rebellious world life for life. Here ended all that the Son had engaged to do and suffer. Now it remained for the Father to fulfil his part of the covenant. In the first place then, he declared himself appeased by raising the Sufferer from the dead. This was a public acceptance of the person and atonement of the Son. It was an acceptance of the sacrifice in behalf of believing sinners, and so was a sign and seal of their acquittal. Hence it is said that he "was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification." The atonement left believers where Adam stood the first moment of his existence, before he had either transgressed or obeyed. Let us now extend our view to those rewards which were conferred on the Son when he arose, and conferred, not for his sufferings as such, but for his obedience. As the most essential part of his obedience consisted in yielding himself to death, so his reward was inseparably connected with his resurrection; insomuch that his resurrection was publicly viewed as a manifestation of his title to the inheritance, and thus a manifestation of his sonship. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power—by the resurrection from the dead." As he arose to take possession of the inheritance, he is called "the first-born from the dead," and "the first begotten of the dead." Indeed his resurrection is expressly mentioned as a fulfilment of what is written in the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."\* In a word when he arose from the dead and appeared in heaven with all his

engagements fulfilled, he, in the most visible manner, took out of the hands of pure Godhead all the blessings which he had purchased for the Church; including regeneration, pardon, sanctification, guidance, comfort, and eternal life, together with the subserviency of the whole universe to these ends. In a more formal and visible manner than he had ever done before, he took possession of the inheritance; including the use and enjoyment of the whole universe, not for himself alone, but as "the first born among many brethren." He took possession in behalf of all the "joint heirs." All the blessings which redeemed sinners can ever receive for time or eternity, were put out of the hands of pure Godhead and committed to the Mediator for distribution. Thus when "he ascended on high" he "received gifts for men."

At the same time he was, in a more full and visible manner, appointed the guardian of his younger brethren, with power to impart the blessings he had purchased according to his own will,—a will however in perfect accordance with that of the Father and submissive to it. "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.—For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." His dominion which extends to all worlds, is nothing distinct from the office of guardian and distributor to his brethren. All power is committed to him that he may use it for their benefit. This dominion was conferred on him as the reward of his obedience. "He—became obedient unto death;—wherefore God—hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." One of the prerogatives of his sovereignty is a right to judge the world; and as the whole of his dominion and glory was promised as the reward of his obedience "unto death," his resurrection was a public manifestation in particular of his investment with this high judicial authority. God "hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead."

Every part of his reward was bestowed more visibly and fully after his resurrection, than it had been by anticipation before. The delegated dominion which was a part of the reward, involved the direction of the divine Spirit whose mission he had procured for men. He told his disciples that if he went "not away the Comforter" would "not come unto" them, but that if he went away he would "send him;" in other words, that he would ask the Father and he would send them the Comforter; that is, the Priest by his intercession would obtain that gift, and then the King, acting with delegated authority, would send it. This was the principal gift which he received for men; and he received it when he ascended on high, "that the Lord God might dwell among them." The new and enlarged communication of this gift was made on the day of Pentecost, and has continued with the Church ever since. This was the chief means by which his kingdom was to be enlarged on earth and in heaven, and by which he was to "see of the travail of his soul and—be satisfied," By this means he at once obtained a glorious kingdom among the Gentiles, overturned the altars of devils, demolished their temples, and drove his enemy from his usurped dominion in the Roman empire. Every convert was a new trophy; every new church swelled the triumphs of his grace. The countless millions given to him in the everlasting covenant, (including, it is believed, by far the greater part of Adam's race,) will all be brought in by the energies of his Spirit. Nor will he stop till he has beaten his enemy from the field and shut him up in prison, and after reigning on earth without a rival for a thousand years, has transplanted a glorious Church to the eternal heavens.

All this dominion and glory and blessedness constituted the inheritance which he took possession of as "the first born among many brethren," for the benefit of the "joint heirs." The complete use of the whole universe was comprised in this inheritance; and the whole universe, so far as it constitutes a good to be enjoyed by the Church, or in any way subserves that good, was taken out of the hands of pure Godhead and committed to the mediatorial King as his own, for the use of himself and his people; not however in a way to



hide from creatures the supreme right of the Father and his gracious grant, (for that would have defeated the whole design, by concealing, not only the just claims of God, but the procuring influence of the Mediator;) but the Father's right and his gracious grant are both acknowledged in the intercession of the Priest. But still the mediatorial King has as complete possession and as perfect a control over the whole inheritance, as though the Father had ceased to exist. And the whole is owned and managed by him, not as God but as Mediator, the Head of the Church, "the first born among many brethren." The whole then is as really owned by every believer,—as unalienably owned by every believer,—as by Christ himself. He is not the Mediator any further than he is the Head, the Guardian, the Representative of the Church. Whatever therefore he receives as Mediator, he receives for the use of the Church,—for the use of every living member in it. Whatever is unchangeably made over to the Head, is unchangeably made over to every member. In point of treatment he and his Church are absolutely one. No oneness so absolute and infrangible subsists between our natural members, between husband and wife, between soul and body, between any two objects in the whole creation. Nothing so nearly resembles it as the everlasting oneness between the divine Father and Son: "As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:—I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." If Christ is a Son, they are sons of God; if Christ is "heir of all things," they are "joint heirs with" him; if Christ possesses everlasting life, because he lives they "shall live also;" if Christ is a King, they shall sit down with him upon his throne. Where he is there they shall be also. If he is rich they cannot be poor. If the whole universe is made over to him, they possess it all. They own the sun, moon, and stars. They are put in possession of the infinite God.—"All things are" theirs. "Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come, all are" theirs, and they "are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Still "the heir, as long as he is a child," is not put into actual possession of the inheritance, but is treated in many respects as "a

servant, though he be lord of all." He is kept "under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father." In this life we are minors; but he who purchased the inheritance is appointed our Guardian to manage the interest for us, to hold it securely against we come of age, to direct our education, and to superintend our whole course. He will allow us to want nothing. Our inheritance is ample, and he will impart it to us as fast as we need. It comprehends all needed good, temporal and spiritual; and all needed good our Guardian will bestow. He may chasten us sore when we offend, but he will not deliver us over to death. The very correction is intended for our benefit. He may leave us, to try us and to prove us and to know what is in our hearts, but it is only that he may humble us and do us good in the latter end. He may leave us destitute of some of the good things of this life, but it is not because he grudges us these husks which he lavishes on his enemies. It is because these husks are not the children's bread, and would really be hurtful to us. Did we actually need them, he would create a new world for our use rather than withhold them from us. He sees what strength and light and grace we need to help us on our way, and will impart them all. His "strength" shall be "made perfect in" our "weakness." His grace shall be "sufficient for" us. He will "guide" us by his "counsel" until he receives us "to glory." "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." He "will bind up that which" is "broken, and strengthen that which" is "sick." He will "gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom." When we say our "foot slippeth," his "mercy" will hold us up. The inheritance is not to be purchased by our fidelity nor forfeited by our infirmities. It is made sure and unalienable by the price paid by our Head; and he has stipulated with the Father, absolutely, to bear us through and bring us into the full possession.—Every interest is made sure in Christ.

And now what has the believer to do but to adore and love and serve his infinite Guardian and Friend, to cleave to him, and to "rejoice evermore?" Let him roll every care and burden on the Lord, and advance towards the heavenly mark "with joy unspeakable and full of

glory." O ye most highly favored of all the creatures of God, place more confidence in your Guardian and Guide. Banish these tremblings and fears. Rejoice that the Redeemer of Zion reigns; that he has found his throne after passing once, as you are now passing, through a vale of tears. Be ye "partakers of" his "sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." Take up the cross that you may wear the crown. Place more confidence in him as your all prevalent Intercessor. "Seeing—that we have" such a "High priest that is passed into the heavens," fail not to go boldly to the throne of grace. Lie no longer as slaves beneath the throne. In all the sublimity and tenderness of the filial spirit, go through him to the infinite God, crying, "Abba Father." Cultivate more this spirit of adoption,—this holy, humble confidence. And O remember him. Forget your father and mother, but O remember him. Say from your inmost soul, "If I forget thee," O my Saviour, "let my right hand forget her cunning." When you kneel at the throne of grace, remember him: when you are abroad in the world, fail not to remember him: when you approach the sacramental board, O remember him with bursting love and praise: when you lie on your dying pillow, still remember him: stretch out your hands to him and die with your eye fixed upon his cross. Amen.

## **SERMON XXXVII**

### **LOVE TO OUR NEIGHBOR**

Then one of them which was a lawyer asked him a question, tempting him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On

these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. -  
MAT. 22:35-40

In love to God and man consists all the religion of the Old Testament and the New. As far as any religion has this character it is genuine, whatever errors and imperfections may attend it As far as any religion wants this character it is spurious, however correct may be the creed and conduct of its professors. "Though I—understand—all knowledge and—have all faith;—though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and—give my body to be burned, and have not charity, [that love to God and man which "is the fulfilling of the law,"] it profiteth me nothing." Zeal itself is nothing better than strange fire any further than it is enkindled by love. Is it tintured with bitterness towards men of opposite opinions? Is it proud? Does it irritate rather than allay the sinful passions? It is nothing but animal nature excited. Animal nature, warmed by sympathy, heated by party spirit, and blown by the breath of spiritual pride, may be kindled into fervent zeal when there is little or no love to God or man. These impure ingredients are too often mixed with the zeal of those who are really pious,—those especially who have warm and sanguine constitutions. It may be admitted as an everlasting maxim, that the less our religion is shaped by our natural temperament, the more supernatural and pure it is.

Scarcely any human propensity discovers itself more in matters of religion, than a disposition to sunder the two tables of the law which God has joined together. A great portion of the Christian world, though split into different parties and called by various names, may be reduced to two classes; those who place their religion too exclusively in love to man, and those who place it too exclusively in love to God. The former class, neglectful of the duties of private devotion, and inattentive to their affections to their Creator and Redeemer, place all their religion in moral honesty, alms-giving, and decent manners, added perhaps to a formal acknowledgment of God in the acts of public worship. The latter class, though full of devotion and zeal towards God, are neglectful of their duties to their

neighbors. If they are not deficient in moral honesty, at least their intercourse with men is strongly marked with selfishness. If they do not neglect the social and civil duties which are cardinal, they are too inattentive to the feelings of others, and too desirous to please themselves in the adjustment of numberless little circumstances which constitute a great part of the happiness or misery of social life. They habitually withhold many attentions which love could not fail to render. When the gratification of their own wills or propensities comes in competition with the wishes of others, as daily happens in many trivial matters, their pleasure must be consulted and their neighbor's disregarded. If they happen to differ from others on the topics of ordinary conversation, they are always in the right, and they maintain their opinions with an obstinacy and an ambition to triumph in the argument which is no wise consistent with loving their neighbors as themselves. They are sociable or silent as their own whims, and not as the feelings of others, dictate. If they are not bitter and censorious, they are at least untender and uncandid towards those who differ from them in opinion. They claim to love God, but they have little or no love to man.

Now these two kinds of religion equally separate the two tables of the law. Both are defective. Where love to both God and man is not found, there is no true love to either. On the one hand, that heart which "is enmity against God," has no sanctified affections of any kind. Its social affections are nothing more than the natural feelings which are common to infidels and pagans, and in some measure to brutes. How can there be a principle of pure benevolence which refuses to love the Father of the universe, who comprehends in himself infinitely the greatest portion of all existence? Those who neglect the first table of the law and place all their religion in the duties of the second, never perform even these otherwise than in a superficial, heartless manner: and who does not know that external actions without the heart are dead,—the body without the soul? On the other hand, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" "Whosoever hateth his

brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." We cannot "bless—God" with the same tongue with which we "curse—men." That love to God which is not accompanied with love to our neighbor, is not genuine. True love to God contains a principle of good will to all intelligent beings, and of peculiar affection to those who bear his image. There is a selfish love to God as a benefactor and friend, which leaves the mind as sour towards men as ever. Love to men is one of the best tests of genuine love to God.

But even where love to God is sincere, there is danger that while engaged in contemplating our obligations to him, we shall overlook the attentions which we owe to men. We must reflect much on the second great command, in order to prevent our religion from becoming unsocial and severe. Real love is not an unsocial principle. The sweet flow of affection towards all men which appears in revivals of religion, especially among those in whom the love of God is new and ardent, evinces this.

My present design is to treat of love to our neighbor; in doing which I shall describe perfection which I never reached; but the law of God is not the less binding for our defects.

We are required to love our neighbor as ourselves. Who then is our neighbor? Every child of Adam,—those who are to us what the Samaritans were to the Jews,—those who have a different religion, who are strangers and natural enemies. These are our neighbors according to Christ's own instruction in the parable of the good Samaritan. Wherever there is man, there is our neighbor.

Love to our neighbor is a principle of universal good will and kindness; a disposition to desire, and as far as we are able to promote, the temporal and spiritual prosperity of all men; to "do good" to "all" as we have—opportunity," "especially" to "the household of faith." "Charity—is kind."

Charity is a principle far more pure and elevated than any of the natural affections, and is essentially different from the friendships of the world,—from all friendships founded on a similarity of natural tastes, community of interests, or interchange of favors. Its objects are both persons and characters; and to both it is just and impartial. It loves persons according to their greatness and the distinctness with which they are contemplated. It loves the divine image by whomsoever reflected, in proportion to the clearness with which it is seen. Where charity is combined with natural affection or natural friendship, there is a greater amount of affection, but the excess is natural affection only, and not sanctified love.

But what is it to love our neighbor as ourselves? It implies two things; that our love to ourselves is properly regulated, and that our love to our neighbor is regulated by that. We are not required to love our neighbor as we in fact love ourselves, but as we ought to love ourselves. If our love both to ourselves and others was properly regulated, we should love our neighbor as ourselves; that is, we should feel and act towards others as we should wish them to feel and act towards us. This explanation I borrow from Christ himself. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this [take notice,] is the law and the prophets;" that is, this is all that the law and the prophets require in relation to our neighbor; in other words, this is all that is required in the latter of those two commandments on which "hang all the law and the prophets." But the question still returns. How should we in that case desire others to feel and act towards us? I answer, as affectionately and kindly as perfect love can feel and act towards another. We could not desire more. Still the question returns, Could a man, in the exercise of perfect love, be as interested in the happiness of another as in his own? In many cases, we know, men are bound, and are ready, to deny themselves for the benefit of others, and to forget themselves in their solicitude for their neighbor's good. Christians may be called "to lay down" their "lives for the brethren." So far is clear. On the other hand, our own interest is specially committed to our care, and is more immediately under our eye. I may add, we are

more conscious of our own sensations than of the sensations of others, and can be more sensible of the value of happiness when it is connected with our own consciousness, than when it belongs to another. There is also an innocent self-love on our own side, to balance the benevolence which we feel for others but cannot feel for ourselves. But we are so little acquainted with the feelings of perfect beings that we ought not to be too positive on this subject.—One thing however is certain: we cannot in practice, whatever we may do in theory, carry the genuine love of our neighbor to excess. We may indeed do so much for one as to defraud another, and so much for a part as to contract our usefulness to the whole: but we cannot do too much for our fellow men in general. If by our exertions we destroy our health, this is limiting the good which we might have done to others as a whole.

Another thing is certain: we must extend to our neighbor an affection which has the same general qualities with that which we bear to ourselves; tender, constant, persevering. Whenever we think of him, though we have nothing to say or do, our hearts must go forth in real love and sincere wishes for his happiness. Be he a stranger, be he a supporter of opinions opposite to our own, be he an enemy, or in one word, be he a Samaritan, he is still our neighbor. We must regard his errors and sins, even when they are pointed against ourselves, without any of the censoriousness or bitterness either of party spirit or personal resentment, but with real compassion. Whatever of Christ he has, we must love and honor, however he may oppose and vilify us. Whatever of sin he has, we must be ready to forgive. "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Whatever provocations we meet with, we must never suffer a feeling to rise towards any person but what is consistent with the kindest wishes for his happiness. If we feel indignation, it must be because he has sinned against God. But we may not wish him evil nor rejoice at his calamities. We may indulge no personal ill will, no malice, no revenge, no anger, peevishness, or impatience. A Christian "must—not" "be" "soon angry." "Whosoever is angry with his brother



without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." "Charity suffereth long,—is not easily provoked,—beareth all things,—endureth all things." "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is—peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated," "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men,—patient," "showing all meekness unto all men." "Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.—And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." "Only by pride cometh contention." Pride must not be allowed to set up claims in opposition to the rights of others. There must be no rivalry, no contention for influence, no "vain glory," no aspiring desires to outdo or outshine another for the sake of being his superior,—no vanity, no boasting, no envy. "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." "Charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another;" taking "the lowest room." There must be no impatience of contradiction, no obstinacy in maintaining opinions. The man of God must not be self-willed."

"Charity—thinketh no evil." It indulges no evil surmisings against a neighbor. It gives the most favorable construction to all his doubtful actions. It imputes no bad design where it is possible to suppose another. It never construes the actions or designs of others in a way which bespeaks anything but perfect benevolence. "Judge not that ye be not judged." "Charity—hopeth all things." It hopes the best of every man and of all his professions. Yet charity is not blind, nor does it believe against evidence. It does not think all men Christians. It does not credit a profession of religion which is contradicted either by the life or the creed. I know it has become fashionable to use the word charity as synonymous with a good opinion of others. But this

is a dangerous abuse of the term. Charity has no such meaning in the Bible. There it is only another name for love.

So far as we are under the influence of love, we shall not be more keen sighted to discern the failings of others than to discover our own. We shall not behold "the mote" in our "brother's eye" and be insensible of "the beam" that is in our own.

Charity is tender of a neighbor's good name. It will "speak evil of no man." It banishes all tale-bearing, backbiting, and slander. It never speaks of another but in a manner consistent with the purest benevolence. "In" its "tongue is the law of kindness." It indulges no complaints against others which betray more feelings for self than justice and truth.

We must never speak to another but in a manner consistent with the purest love. We must not render "railing for railing." We must never blame another in a manner expressive of the slightest evil passion or the least desire to inflict needless pain. No impatient expression should escape us. "Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the counsel; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." We may never utter an expression, whether dictated by anger or pride, which is calculated unnecessarily to wound the feelings of another. We may never direct a point of wit against another which we should not be willing to receive ourselves.

Our actions should never betray any thing contrary to good will. Neither by conduct nor manners nor looks nor the modulation of the voice, should we unnecessarily wound the feelings of another. The love required is a spirit of disinterestedness, ready to consult the feelings of others rather than our own, in words, looks, deportment, and in a thousand nameless attentions which love never fails to prompt,—not indeed to increase our own popularity, but to communicate happiness.—As little as we know of the feelings of perfect benevolence, we may see how love expresses itself in all these ways towards our friends or our children, even when we disapprove

of their conduct; and in this way we may form some idea how perfect love would act towards all men. We ought to exercise a tender regard to the feelings of others. "Christ pleased not himself." "Charity—seeketh not her own." "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." We should consult the feelings of others rather than our own in regard to topics of conversation, and in efforts to keep up conversation. There should be nothing neglectful either in our feelings or conduct, nothing disobliging, nothing churlish, nothing unsociable, nothing like abandoning society. Without civil looks, words, and manners, we do not exert ourselves, "as much as lieth in" us, to "live peaceably with all men." In cases where conscience will allow, we should give others their choice instead of insisting on having our own. In all little things where there is a preference, it is going on the safe side to give it to others. In all these respects true religion coincides with true politeness.

"The wisdom that is from above is—without partiality." We must not be partial in our attentions to particular friends whose taste accords with our own, to the neglect of others who have equal claims upon us. This would be to grieve others for the sake of pleasing ourselves. In these things we must avoid the undue influence of private feelings and bring them into subjection to duty. The less we are influenced by natural feelings and the more we are governed by a sense of duty, the safer will our conduct be. Though we must honor those "to whom honor" "is due," such as civil and ecclesiastical officers, and must render different degrees of respect to men according to their different ages, stations, and qualifications; yet in religious matters, especially in ecclesiastical trials, we must make no distinction founded on circumstances foreign to religion. "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ—with respect of persons. For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or, Sit here under my footstool; are ye not then partial in yourselves?"

—If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin."

"The wisdom that is from above is—without hypocrisy." In accordance with the spirit of the ninth commandment, there must be nothing false, nothing insincere, in our intercourse with men. The best way to avoid insincerity in those numerous compliments and professions which custom has sanctioned, is actually to feel all the good will and love which they express.

"The wisdom that is from above is—peaceable." It will strive to heal without delay all breaches between ourselves and others. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave then thy gift before the altar and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Love will leave no means untried to make peace among neighbors. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

The love required will render us strictly just in all our dealings. Not only will it prevent us, according to the spirit of the eighth commandment, from screwing from our neighbor what justly belongs to him; but, according to the tenor of the tenth commandment, it will restrain us from coveting what is his. We must have two selves for parties in every contract, and mete such measure as we are willing to receive. "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

The love required will certainly prevent us from leading others into sin, or even desiring to bring guilt on them for the sake of gratifying ourselves.

"The wisdom that is from above is—full of mercy and good fruits." It is generous and bountiful. It is "given to hospitality." It is

compassionate to the distressed and charitable to the poor. It is liberal in support of public institutions. It is beneficent to the full extent of its ability. Among the various commands which it contemplates, it is sure not to overlook such as these: Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." "Sell that ye have and give alms: provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen nor thy rich neighbors; lest they bid thee again and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blest; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." All these beneficent actions must be done from pure love, and not to be seen of men.

The love required will, according to the spirit of the fifth commandment, "be subject to principalities and powers" and "obey magistrates." It will "render—honor to whom honor" is due, "fear to whom fear," "tribute to whom tribute." It will be respectful to superiors, condescending to inferiors, kind to equals, affable and obliging to all. It will faithfully and affectionately perform what is due to parents and children, husbands and wives, brethren and sisters. It will regulate all our natural affections.

Love to our neighbor will awaken a desire for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom and the salvation of men. We should long and labor for this object, as well from tender love to the souls of men,—of men whom we never saw,—as from a regard to the glory of God. To one who feels a fervent love to God and man, there appears no opposition between these two motives. Indeed as they stand before the eye they coalesce and become one.

Love excludes party spirit from religion. Though it distinguishes between truth and error, between the clean and the unclean, its aim is not to build up a party, but to promote the knowledge and enjoyment of God among all men. There may be as much private interest in religious parties as in political sects, and as much selfishness and rancor in each as in the miser or the assassin. Instead of calling down fire on the Samaritans, we must regard them as our neighbors, and love them as we love ourselves.

Finally, love will excite us to pray for the temporal and spiritual prosperity of all men. "I exhort—that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority." If we would find deliverance from our own troubles, we must pray for others. "The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends." We must pray for others if we would love them more fervently, and thus improve the temper of our own hearts. On this subject I shall quote the language of an eminent divine of the Church of England.\*

"There is nothing that makes us love a man so much as praying for him; and when you can once do this sincerely for any man, you have fitted your soul for the performance of everything that is kind and civil towards him. This will fill your heart with a generosity and tenderness that will give you a better and sweeter behaviour than anything that is called fine breeding and good manners.

"By considering yourself as an advocate with God for your neighbors and acquaintance, you would never find it hard to be at peace with them yourself. It would be easy for you to bear with and forgive those for whom you particularly implored the divine mercy and forgiveness.

"Such prayers as these amongst neighbors and acquaintance, would unite them to one another in the strongest bonds of love and tenderness. It would exalt and ennoble their souls, and teach them to consider one another in a higher state, as members of a spiritual

society that are created for the enjoyment of the common blessings of God, and fellow heirs of the same future glory.

"And by being thus desirous that every one should have their full share of the favors of God, they would not only be content but glad to see one another happy in the little enjoyments of this transitory life. — "Ouranius is a holy priest, full of the spirit of the Gospel; watching, laboring, and praying for a poor country village. Every soul in it is as dear to him as himself,—because he prays for them all as often as he prays for himself.

"If his whole life is one continued exercise of great zeal and labor, hardly ever satisfied with any degrees of care and watchfulness, 'tis because he has learned the great value of souls by so often appearing before God as an intercessor for them.

"He goes about his parish and visits every body in it, but visits in the same spirit of piety that he preaches to them. He visits them to encourage their virtues,—to discover their manner of life, and to know the state of their souls, that he may intercede with God for them according to their particular necessities.

"When Ouranius first entered into holy orders, he had a haughtiness in his temper, a great contempt and disregard for all foolish and unreasonable people. But he has prayed away this spirit, and has now the greatest tenderness for the most obstinate sinners; because he is always hoping that God will, sooner or later, hear those prayers that he makes for their repentance.

"The rudeness, ill nature, or perverse behavior of any of his flock, used at first to betray him into impatience; but it now raises no other passion in him than a desire of being upon his knees in prayer to God for them.

"Thus have his prayers for others altered and amended the state of his own heart.

"It would strangely delight you to see with what spirit he converses, with what tenderness he reproveth, with what affection he exhorts, and with what vigor he preaches: and 'tis all owing to this; because he reproveth, exhorts, and preaches to those for whom he first prays to God."

Thus, my hearers, I have described as well as I was able, the love to our neighbor which the divine law requires. This is that charity to men about which we hear so much, but which appears to be little understood and still less practised.

Methinks I hear some exclaim, What tame and spiritless characters would such a religion form: there would be no men of letters, no poets, no orators, no statesmen.—But tell me, was Jesus of Nazareth so tame? Was not he who spoke as never man spoke, eloquent? Was not Isaiah a poet? Were not Moses and Solomon statesmen? Have you ever considered the fervor, activity, and eloquence of the apostle Paul? Do you know any who in these respects surpass the holy angels? Indeed what other temper has God himself? Had we perfect love, we should do what is good and excellent "with all" our "might," because it is commanded: and that which is not good and excellent we ought to leave undone. If so much care for our feelings, words, and actions would check the boldness and ardor of eloquence, or in any degree moderate our decision of character, it would prove that these have been supported by wrong principles. Let them then be checked, till divine love, coming in the place of wrong affections, makes us active, eloquent, and decided, as "the rapt seraph that adores and burns."

I am awed into reverence as I approach the religion of Christ. What a pure and exalted system of morals it presents. The Bible is the only book on earth that draws a perfect character. This sublime morality of loving God with all the heart and our neighbor as ourselves,—how infinitely superior to the sordid selfishness of heathen systems. What are your Senecas and your Platos but glow worms by the side of the meridian sun? This is the religion which makes men truly good and



great. This is the religion which would make a happy world. The harmony and blessedness of heaven are nothing more. Let men universally love the Lord their God with all their hearts and their neighbor as themselves, and you may remove your prisons and your stocks; you have done with courts of justice: all animosities are extracted from the human heart, and nothing but peace and love and universal happiness remains.

We now see why so many professors walk in darkness and are oppressed with doubts. It is because their religion is so little in accordance with the word of God. They cannot but see this contrariety whenever they open their Bibles. Many things which are there required they do not find in themselves; many things which are there forbidden they do find to their sorrow. They have "a form of godliness," and perhaps a zeal; but if they possess any of the religion of love, it is but a spark buried under the ashes of their idol altars. The way to obtain "the full assurance of hope," is to have more love to God and man; to bring all our habits of feeling, conversing, and living, under the control of this principle; to go through all our habits with a scrutinizing eye, to correct whatever is wrong, and to confirm whatever is right; making it a matter of conscience daily and hourly to act, in small matters as well as great, from a sacred regard to the will of God.

In the light of our subject we discover the strictness of the service which God requires. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life." The charity which I have described is very far from that latitudinarian principle which makes the way broad enough for a whole world to go abreast. It is a principle of strict and scrupulous holiness. "Sir," said a worldly man to Mr. Rogers, (the first martyr in queen Mary's reign,) "I like your company, but you are so strict." "Ah, Sir," said Mr. Rogers, "I serve, a strict God."

We see from our subject that the law of God "is exceeding broad," even if we look only at that part which respects our neighbor. As a whole it extends to every moral action, word, thought, and feeling.

How impossible to present a righteousness of our own which this law will accept. Mere law can accept none but a perfect righteousness. "By the deeds of the law" therefore "there shall no flesh be justified." From this tribunal we must appeal to the throne of grace, and rest for justification on the perfect righteousness of the Redeemer. As we contemplate the requirements of the law, we see at once our absolute need of the righteousness of Christ. But unless we are his disciples by faith, his righteousness can avail us nothing. And we are not his disciples unless we pant after holiness, and watch and pray and diligently use the means appointed. We must reach forth after a greater and still greater conformity to the divine law.—"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Amen.

# SERMON XXXVIII

## WHERE IS THE LORD GOD OF ELIJAH?

Where is the Lord God of Elijah? - 2 KIN. 2:14

This was the exclamation of Elisha at a time when his master had just been taken up from him in a fiery chariot, and he stood in need of the assistance of that God who had so remarkably displayed his power in the days of Elijah. In that period of declension from the worship of Jehovah, a long suffering God raised up a succession of prophets to bear testimony for him and to work miracles in his name. One of the most distinguished of these prophets was Elijah. The time in which he executed the prophetic office was a remarkable period in the history of that people. Except Moses and Samuel, there had been no prophet whose ministry had been attended with such pre-eminent tokens of divine power. At his request the heavens were shut that "it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months;" when he was hungry the ravens were commanded to feed him; at his word the widow's meal and oil failed not during the famine; he restored the same widow's son to life; he gloriously triumphed over the prophets of Baal by calling fire from heaven on Carmel; "he prayed again and the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit;" he called fire from heaven to consume the two captains with their hostile bands. At last when the time drew near for him to be received up into heaven, he came to Jordan with Elisha, and "took his mantle and wrapped it together and smote the waters, and they were divided, so that they two went over on dry ground.—And it came to pass as they still went on and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces." At this

time of distress, when that glorious season of divine wonders was past, (the season of Elijah's ministry,) when Elisha looked back on those delightful days as forever gone,—when his trembling soul panted for the return of those displays of divine power and glory,—when he ventured, in the strength of the Lord, to attempt the same things that Elijah had done; it was then that he looked upward and inquired, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" This inquiry he made when he smote the waters of Jordan with Elijah's mantle and opened a passage for himself on dry ground. This inquiry we may suppose he made when he healed the waters of Jericho,—when by his frown he called two she bears from the wood to destroy the children of idolatrous parents who had been taught to mock him,—when he multiplied the widow's oil,—when he raised the Shunammite's son,—when he purified the poisoned pottage, when he fed the multitude with a few loaves,—when he healed Naaman,—when he smote Gehazi with leprosy,—when he made the iron swim,—when he opened his servant's eyes to behold the mountain full of chariots and horses of fire,—when he smote the messengers of Syria with blindness and again restored their sight. The spirit of Elijah did rest upon Elisha in an increased degree. When the former was about to ascend into heaven, he "said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee.—And Elisha said, I pray thee let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee."—Elisha saw him when he ascended: he caught his falling mantle, and with it a double portion of his spirit, and in the course of his life performed more miracles than his master had done.

The particular point in which I wish to view the prophet as inquiring for the Lord God of Elijah, is in the act of raising the Shunammite's son. It was her only child,—the son of her old age,—which God had given her for her hospitality to the prophet. When he was grown and was with his father in the field, "he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had—brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon and then died. And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of

God, and shut the door upon him and went out." And she hastened away to Carmel to the man of God, and brought him to her house. And "he went in" where the child lay, "and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. And he went up and lay upon the child." Where now is the Lord God of Elijah who raised the widow's son of Sarepta? "And [he] put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm. And he returned and walked in the house to and fro." Methinks I hear him inwardly crying as he courses the room, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" "And [he] went up and stretched himself upon him; and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called" his servant "and said, Call the Shunammite. So he called her: and when she came in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in and fell at his feet and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son and went out." Ah how much might the faith of parents avail to raise their children to life who are dead in trespasses and sins.

This sermon I propose to consecrate to mourning. I heartily wish I had no occasion to address you in any other language than that of congratulation and joy. I could wish that this address was prepared to bid you all a welcome to the privileges of believers, and that I might triumphantly speak to you and your households as together bound to the kingdom of heaven. I should then be saved from disturbing your peace with the sad tones of grief and depression. But I confess I have no spirits to entertain you with pleasant descriptions. There is a weight at my heart which suppresses every sprightly thought; and instead of giving you pleasure, I must call upon you to mourn. Is there not a cause? Our poor children are dead. Some of our dearest friends are dead. There are many around us, as dear to us as the child of the Shunammite was to his mother, who are dead in the most dreadful sense of the word, dead in trespasses and sins. Many parents among us have not a living child in the world. Some have not a living friend on earth. In some families you see death and life coupled together. Here is a living wife bound to a dead

husband; there a living husband united to a dead wife; here a living child is supporting a dead parent; and there a whole family lie dead together. Death and life are in the same sense united in this assembly. On the same seat the dead and the living are crowded together. Should the hand of God deprive of motion every body in this house which contains a dead soul, what lamentation would be heard among us. How many would retire from the house fatherless? how many childless? how many widows? how many whole families would be swept off together? If our friends should be deprived of natural life we should mourn; and have we not a tear for those whose souls are dead and putrid in sin? Shall not a parent mourn who has six or eight dead children in his house?

How many of our poor unhappy youth are wholly destitute of spiritual life. Ye who have hearts formed for pity, come and look and weep. To see so many promising children,—so many youth lovely even in death,—scattered over the valley and numbered with the slain, is it not a pitiable sight? It is evident the poor creatures are dead, or they would not be so unmindful of the solemn objects which surround them and the infinitely interesting prospects before them. If they were not dead they would not be so regardless of death and the grave. If they were not dead they would not be so lost to a sense of God their Maker and Benefactor, nor to that holiness and communion with him which are spiritual and eternal life. If they were not dead they would not be so unmoved by a Saviour's love; they would not be so insensible of distress under the wounds which sin has given them. You would hear them sigh and complain; but dead bodies cannot feel. If they were not dead they would not be so unawed by the thunders which roll above their heads, so deaf to the entreaties of heaven, so unaffected by the anxious voice of their minister, so untouched by the tears of their parents. The dear unhappy children little know the sorrows and heart aches of living friends who behold them dead.—The dead are unmindful of the lamentations which are made around their hearse, and of a parent's tear that often falls upon their grave. If Ezekiel could weep when he stood by the valley filled with the dry bones of his people, we have no

less cause to mourn. What can be done for our poor dead children? Ministers have called to them with an aching heart till their voice and their spirits failed, and they could cry no longer. Their parents have wrung their hands over their lifeless offspring and cried in the ears of the dead, If you ever loved your parent, hear me, answer me once, my child: but there is "neither voice nor hearing." All that the most anxious love could accomplish, has been as unavailing as the staff of Gehazi. When one attempt has failed we have made another, and another still. We have, as it were, put our eyes to their eyes, and our hands to their hands, and endeavored to renew the breath of life in them; but their flesh does not wax warm nor a pulse move. Sometimes with bursting tears we ask, Are then our children irrecoverably dead? Will they never revive? What more can we do? Where can we go? To whom can we apply? Where, where is the Lord God of Elijah? He is our last resort. Our last trembling hope hangs on him. He only can raise the dead. I am convinced of it. I yield the point, and our dear friends must lie in eternal death if the Lord God of Elijah do not come to their relief. We may continue to stand over them with extended, pleading hands, and may drench their shroud with our tears, but the dead will not regard it. We may present before them every possible argument; heaven, earth, and hell may be drained of motives; but all will be to no purpose. Heaven, earth, and hell have been drained of motives; the experiment has been often tried: but you see how they lie. Behold, look for yourselves: not a muscle which death hath stiffened will move. It is distressing. We have done all we can do, but they are as dead as though nothing had been done. Could any other tones charm the ear of death, those tones should be eagerly sought. If the graver tones of divine authority, of divine threatening, could be heard, they have been often tried. If more sprightly, pleasant, and even sportive strains could allure,—as hard as it might be to be gay among the dead, we would attempt even that: we would conceal our sorrows, we would quell the rising tear, we would smile among the ruins of death, and though our heart should break we would not give it vent. But I know that whether men weep or smile, both will be in vain. The dead care not for laughter more than for grief. I am discouraged and sick of depending on

human efforts. We have exhausted our power, but we cannot even produce one serious thought. Where then is the Lord God of Elijah? It does absolutely depend on him whether there shall ever be another sinner converted in this congregation. Should he put the question to us, "Son of man, can these bones live?" what could we answer but, "O Lord God, thou knowest"? Thus wholly dependant on him, what can we do but take our friends in the arms of faith and carry them up and lay them before God, as the Shunammite carried up her dead son and laid him on the bed of the man of God? If she hastened to Carmel and embraced the feet of the prophet, and said, "As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth I will not leave thee," let us go and embrace the feet of Jesus, with the determination of Jacob, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." As we stand over the dry bones of the valley, unable to make a bone move, let us earnestly cry, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live." He who raised the widow's son of Nain,—he who stood at the grave's mouth and said, "Lazarus, come forth,"—he who burst the bands of death and rose triumphant,—he can revive our children.

At the time when Elisha smote the waters of Jordan and cried, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" he looked back on a season which had been marked with divine wonders,—the season of Elijah's ministry. That ministry was closed. Elijah had taken his flight to heaven, and Elisha was left to brood over the recollection of scenes which could never return. Such a period lies before our eyes as they are turned to review the past. The middle half of last century was a distinguished period in the Christian Church. Many with whom we have taken counsel, could well remember that glorious day, when both continents experienced a remarkable visit from the Holy Spirit; when evangelical ministers, like angels flying through the midst of heaven, travelled from city to city, from state to state, and often rode the Atlantic wave, to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation; when those servants of God bore valiant testimony against the worldling and the formalist arrayed in clerical habits, and prevailed to establish a new epoch in the progress of evangelical piety and preaching. That



was a blessed day, never to be forgotten on earth, and which will be joyfully remembered to eternity by thousands who then first began to see the light and live. Christians then were alive; their spirits were tender; religious conversation chiefly occupied their social hours; their hearts were sweetly united in brotherly love; and with the utmost freedom they could communicate to each other their joys and trials. In those days Christians were not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; they were not conformed to the world; they came boldly out and were a separate people. They were not then driving furiously after wealth and distinction: it was enough to fill their desires to see the kingdom of Christ advance. In those days parents with transport received their dead children to life, and Christians wept for joy at hearing songs of thanksgiving poured from a thousand tongues just recovered from death. O give us more such days. Alas those days are fled. The world triumphs now and holds the Church in bondage. O for the return of those glorious scenes. Where is the Lord God of White-field, Tennent, Davis, Brainerd, and Edwards?—Where is the Lord God of our fathers?

In our times also it has pleased the divine Spirit to spread his extensive influences upon earth. The whole of this century, with eight or ten years of the last, has been distinguished by very remarkable events in favor of Zion. During every part of this period we have seen or heard of unusual revivals of religion in different parts of the American Church. Many thousands have been raised from the dead and begun an endless life. A spirit of compassion for the heathen has been poured out, and exertions, greater than have appeared since the days of the apostles, have been made to cheer the abodes of pagan darkness with the light of life. But alas among us returning stupidity has damped the general joy; and the people of God, who have not themselves fallen asleep, have hung their harps upon the willows and weep as they remember Zion. Now and then a fuller tear breaks from their eye as they exclaim, Where is the Lord God of our former revivals?

Time has been, (I would not dismiss the pleasing remembrance though it is fraught with pain,) when the voice of Jesus of Nazareth was heard in these streets,—when his majesty sat enthroned in our assemblies,—when the interests of the soul were more regarded than paltry pelf,—when Christians lived,—when sinners trembled,—when the new born delighted to lisp the name of Jesus. As we cast our eyes over this assembly we can descry those who will not soon forget the scene. Yes, we have seen the day when some of you were trembling in near view of the eternal judgment,—when you verily thought there was but a step between you and death. We have seen the blessed hour when heavenly light broke in upon your despair,—when your eyes opened upon eternal day,—when your transported souls dropped the calculation of endless sorrows and hugged the hope of immortal joy. I live, I live, you cried, as your grave clothes dropped at your feet. We have seen a parent's eye glisten with a trembling tear as his child looked up to thank his Deliverer. We have seen the solemn hour when, with palpitations before unknown, you stood in companies before the Lord to enter into covenant with him. We have seen the dear youth delighting to speak to each other of a Saviour's love, when tenderness melted in every eye, and their societies were full of the presence of Jesus and of love. Let me cleave to the fond remembrance. Tear me not from a scene to which my soul clings as to life itself. But ah it is gone, and what do these distressed eyes now behold? One general waste of stupidity and death. No child is revived; no parent's heart leaps for joy; none are conscious of their guilt and danger; none experience the joys of their espousals. Their divine Deliverer, whose love, in that hour, they thought they never could forget, is forgotten and neglected. The world has rivalled him. The world has carried away the Christian, the convert, and the sinner. The world the world, the world: this is the object which engrosses every care; this is the supreme deity that is adored. "Buy and sell and get gain: out with the thoughts of death: away with judgment and heaven: name not a Saviour's love: my farms and my merchandise I will have, though the earth trembles under my feet and heaven weeps blood upon my head." And is it thus? Yes, and it is an evil beyond our power to cure. We have done and said all we can

do, and it alters not the case.—Where then is the Lord God of Elijah? Where is the Lord God of our former sabbaths and sacraments? Where, O where is he? "Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies?—Are they restrained?" I do know that it depends solely on the sovereign pleasure of God whether there shall ever be another revival of religion in this place, or whether they who are dead shall remain dead to eternity. One look from him and our sleeping friends shall revive; one frown from him and every unregenerate soul in this congregation shall die in his sins. Men and angels cannot change the decree. Ministers may preach, Christians may pray, parents may weep, and a thousand pious hearts may break; but if the Lord God of Elijah do not revive us the dead will not revive. This sentiment, though it has dwelt upon our tongues, I fear has never sunk deep enough into our hearts. In days of revival we have ascribed too much of the praise to men and means; and now perhaps we look too much to men and means for the relief desired. We never shall be revived until we realizingly feel our absolute and entire dependance on God, —until we can heartily and without reserve say, "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him." O for this dependance, that we may go forth in a body and lift our eyes to heaven as the eyes of one man, and cry, as though the salvation of a world hung upon our prayer, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah? O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat." Alas can he not be found? While thousands lie dead around us, can we not find the only being who can raise them to life? Where is he? Can we not find him? May we not find him? Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

But such dependance and such a united cry will never be until caused by him. Ah then our last hope from ourselves has vanished. And now, reduced to the last extremity, we cry with greater distress, Where is the Lord God of all our revivals? O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat. Can he not be found? While thousands lie dead around us, can we not find the only being who

can raise them to life? Where is he? Can we not find him? May we not find him? Why is his power restrained? Is his "hand—shortened that it cannot save," or "his ear heavy that it cannot hear?" No, but our "iniquities have separated between" him and us, and "hid his face from" us "that he will not hear." His power and grace are as abundant as when they were so abundantly displayed before our eyes: and if we would seek him he is to be found on the same mercy seat where we found him before. His mercy is not "clean gone forever." Methinks I see him stretching out his hands to this church and saying, Why weep ye? Have ye dead children in your houses? here is my power and grace at your service. If ye are straitened, ye are not straitened in me but in yourselves. Yes, Lord, the reproof is just. Christians do not call upon the God of Elijah with that reverence, humility, and agonizing desire which are needful to obtain a glorious display of his grace. We might witness more blessed days than any before granted, if they were sufficiently sought. And will they never return? Yes, they shall return. It was said in the introduction that the days of Elisha were distinguished with more glory than those of Elijah. It was not in vain that he inquired for the Lord God of his master. Blessed thought! It shall not be in vain that here and there a solitary Christian is asking for the Lord God of Elijah.—The time will come when every sinner then living in this congregation shall open his eyes and behold the God whom perhaps his fathers rejected,—when these streets shall be full of prayer and of the conquests of Jesus,—when this house, if it be standing, shall be crowded with tender and devout hearers,—when the happy man whose voice shall be heard from this pulpit, will have less grief of heart than your minister now has. Ye sacred walls, if ye be then standing, tell not the tale to our posterity: disturb not that joyful assembly with the recital of what ye witness now. Say not to them, Your fathers who once assembled here, were besought with tears, but some of them mocked and others soon forgot.—Before that day arrives this voice shall be silent in death, and I hope this heart will cease to ache. Those seats shall be emptied of their present incumbents, and you will all be gathered to the assembly of your fathers. But let that day come when it may,—whether I am in this

world or that,—I think it will give me joy to see the kingdom of Christ prevail in the place where I once labored, and among the descendants of those I once loved. O the delightful, glorious prospect! I could dwell upon it with rapture till I died. Hasten that transporting day. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

## **SERMON XXXIX**

### **THE BETTER RESURRECTION**

And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. - HEB. 11:35

The apostle in this chapter was contemplating the power of faith in the ancient saints. To comfort the Hebrew Christians under their various trials, he reminded them how cheerfully Abraham, at the divine command, left his father's house and all his kindred, and removed into a land of strangers, "not knowing whither he went;" and how, for the kingdom of heaven's sake, he was contented to find no abiding habitation, and to wander about from place to place, "dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob." The reason assigned for this conduct was, that he considered this world not as his home, but "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The apostle then proceeded to consider the resembling conduct of the innumerable saints who descended from Abraham, and observed in general, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." He particularly noticed the conduct of Moses, who had "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." From Moses he descended down the ages, (taking notice, as he passed

along, of the power of faith in the most distinguished saints,) until he arrived at the times of persecution. Here he commenced a most affecting account of the miseries endured by the people of God. "And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned; they were sawn asunder; were tempted; were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Those who were stretched upon racks or fastened to stakes, might, by renouncing their religion, have risen up from the threatened death, (which would have been a sort of resurrection;) but they hoped to rise to an incomparably better life than they could enjoy on earth. They hoped to rise in one hour to the heavenly rest, and to carry up those tortured bodies in the final resurrection. Both of these may probably be comprehended in that "better resurrection" which they contrasted with a guilty escape from the threatened death.

Those saints had a realizing sense that this earth was not their home. They sought not its pleasures as their portion; and they little regarded its trials, provided they could obtain a part in the "better resurrection." They discovered something in the regions beyond the grave which appeared unspeakably glorious, and which worldlings know nothing about. It becomes then an interesting inquiry, what there is beyond the bounds of this world which could so attract the eyes of martyrs from present objects, and cause them to exult amidst the agonies of a lingering death. If there is not something in heaven supremely desirable, these men were distracted, and even Christ died in vain. Let us,

I. Reflect on the lesson taught us by the conduct of the ancient saints, that this earth is not our home.

II. Inquire what there is in heaven which could encourage them to endure such extreme sufferings.

III. Contemplate the glories of the resurrection which they had in view.

I. Let us reflect on the lesson taught us by the conduct of the ancient saints, that this earth is not our home.

Had Abraham felt himself at home on earth, he would have sought some fixed abode and associated with the rest of the world, and not have wandered about in strange countries, dwelling in tents and feeding cattle. Had Moses considered this earth his home, he would not have renounced the honors and pleasures of Egypt, to consume his life in the deserts of Arabia. Had the martyrs regarded this earth as their home, they would not have roamed "in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth;" much less would they have been "tortured, not accepting deliverance," when by renouncing their religion they might have lived and enjoyed the smiles of the world. And did modern Christians look on this earth as their home and supreme good, they would regard it with far different eyes; and though they must consider it a contemptible portion, they would make the best of it, and not incur the derision of its inhabitants by their scrupulous sanctity. If the wondering world inquire why Christians separate themselves from the vanities which others supremely seek, let them know that the children of the immortal King consider not this earth as their home, but account the richest good it contains as trash compared with the heavenly inheritance. It is so filled with trials that they regard it rather as a prison in which they are confined for their faults, than as a paradise to make them happy. It is a world full of sins which exceedingly distress them, and they know that while they remain here they shall continue bound to this body of death. It is a dark world, enlightened with few rays from heaven, and in which a scanty portion of that good is enjoyed for which they so earnestly pant. They view themselves in an enemy's country, surrounded with snares and

dangers. And can they rest in such a state? O no: did they suppose they were always to continue here, their hearts would sink within them. Should their Father tell them that they might possess the whole world to eternity, but should never enjoy him or ascend to him, the doleful tidings would lay them dead at his feet. But far different prospects actually lie before them. Their Saviour has told them that mansions are prepared for them in the heavens. They believe the report, and live on the hope of soon ascending to possess them. They consider themselves placed in this vale of tears for a few days, only to prepare for that blessed world where they hope to spend an eternity. They feel themselves on the wing to be gone. Their lips are almost ready to pronounce the last farewell. They are ascending. Soon they will be out of sight. The earth is seen no more, and they are in heaven. O can it be a wonder that the ancient saints were so indifferent to their condition on earth? Is it not rather a wonder, when the world treated them thus and heaven stood full in their view, that their souls did not leap out before the time and flee away to their Father's arms? Especially when we consider,

II. What glorious things there are in heaven.—Who can comprehend the blessedness which God has "laid up for them that fear" him? Who can conceive how great a good must be bestowed to satisfy infinite benevolence? But though we cannot do justice to the subject, yet enough may be said to show that Christians are not mad when they give up the world as dross and pant after the heavenly rest.

In heaven a full and constant sense of God's favor, and uninterrupted communion with him, are enjoyed. In this world guilt and unbelief frequently represent him as an enemy, and sin is perpetually interrupting our communion with him. But in heaven there is no unbelief, no sin, no guilt unpurged. The Saviour is never hid. His nail prints and the desires of his heart constantly plead in the hearing of all heaven: and the saints fully know that their guilt is entirely and eternally washed away. Not a frown clouds the face of God. They see him to be filled with love to them individually, infinitely greater than ever throbbed in a mother's heart. If a faint glimpse of a reconciled



God and imperfect communion with him on earth, afford such vast delight, what unspeakable ecstasies must transport the soul when it is permitted to live in his bosom. If joys like these are in heaven, is it any wonder that afflicted Christians pant to flee away and be at rest?

"Sure 'tis a heaven worth dying for,

"To see a smiling God.

In heaven the most perfect love and gratitude are exercised towards God. In this life Christians are tortured with remaining sin, and go mourning all their lives under this load of death. They would give worlds to be wholly delivered from it. But in heaven this perfection is enjoyed. In that blessed world they are all melted into tenderness and love. If a few faint motions of love to God on earth produce delights with which nothing else below the sun can compare, how far beyond all present conception must be the blessedness of loving him with the whole heart and soul. The saints in heaven possess the clearest views of his character, and the most affecting sense of his love and mercy to them. They see the infinite value of that glory which Christ purchased for them, and the unbounded price which he paid for it. With what meltings of gratitude do they look up to the prints in his hands and feet and side, and down to hell to see the miseries from which his dying agonies delivered them: and then how do they cast their crowns at his feet and say, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever." With what sweet delay do they dwell on the name of Jesus. With what ineffable complacency do they look up among the glories of his nature, and look abroad and see him diffused through all heaven. This is their delightful and eternal employment. Is it any wonder that the martyrs broke through the fiercest terrors of death to reach such a heaven?

The glorified saints possess the clearest apprehensions of the perfect and unchangeable happiness of God and of his kingdom. This is a

source of the most pure and exalted delight. They are transported to see that though they cannot recompense God, he is his own reward; that he is all that reward to himself that he ever expected or desired; that he will be completely glorified, and all his purposes accomplished to his full satisfaction; that his kingdom is safe and the universe blessed to the highest possible degree.

The saints in glory have attained to vastly greater knowledge than they ever possessed on earth.—While here, they longed to understand more of God and of the wonders of redemption; but now their capacities are filled with the heavenly science. They possess the clearest views of the character of God; of his infinite sufficiency for all the purposes for which it is desirable that he should live and reign; of the fitness of the system which he has adopted to accomplish every wise and benevolent end; of the transcendent wonders of redemption; of the infinite evil of sin and the astonishing reach of mercy. It is their constant employment to study into the works and ways of God, to observe the issues of his dispensations, and to read, through the universe, new lessons of his wisdom, goodness, and power, of his justice, mercy, and truth.

In heaven they enjoy a more perfect use of their memory than they did on earth. They remember the various scenes of distress through which they passed, and this renders their present rest the sweeter. They look back on all the dangers and enemies which beset them by the way, and this endears their present safety. They review those numerous seasons in which they mourned an absent God, and call to mind their many distressing doubts and fears; and this renders still more precious their present enjoyment of God and their assurance of his eternal love. They look back on the awful conflicts which they had with temptation, and this enhances the value of their eternal deliverance. They recall to mind their abounding sins, and this renders divine mercy the more precious and amazing. They remember the many instances of God's tender care of them in their trials; how often, when every other helper failed, he came to their relief; how often, when they seemed on the point of being swallowed

up by their enemies, he hastened to their rescue; and these recollections endear him still more to them and sweeten their communion with him.

The glorified saints enjoy the most perfect friendship with angels and with each other. They have no separate interests, and each loves his brother as himself. If it is so sweet to enjoy communion with Christian friends on earth, what will it be where this communion is perfect? There the least Christian calls Gabriel his brother, and is linked, as in one soul, with seraphim and cherubim. He beholds Adam and Noah, and converses with them of things before the flood. He walks and sits and talks with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with Moses and David and Daniel, with Peter and Paul, and hears them tell of the wondrous things recorded in the Bible. He lives in the same family with the martyrs, and holds the tenderest intercourse with those with whom he once prayed and wept and sighed for the present rest. What tender intercourse do parents hold with their children, and ministers with their people, whom they have been the means of introducing to that world. What ecstasies do long separated friends enjoy at meeting where they shall part no more. O, says the newly arrived spirit, have I found you at last? Have we met and shall we part no more? This is far unlike the parting hour when I closed your eyes, and weeping said, I ne'er shall see you more. And this is far unlike the tedious days that I have spent on earth without you.— See the blessed spirits whose cares and conflicts on earth were one, and who lived and loved and prayed and fought together; see them seated on the banks of the immortal stream, recounting the trials of the wilderness. With what endearment do they look back on their common dangers and sufferings, and point to the places where they prayed and wept together. With what tenderness do they remember the sympathy and assistance received from each other by the way. And is it any wonder that the martyrs were eager to escape from the hands of their persecutors into that world of harmony and love?

This is the less wonderful when it is considered that heaven is a place of perfect rest, from which pains and conflicts are forever excluded.

They had been long toiling in a wearisome world, and had known sorrows to the full. Was it not natural for them to long to fly away and be at rest? None of their sufferings have followed them up the heavenly hills. Their sorrows endured "for a night" and "joy" came "in the morning."

To complete their blessedness they have no fears that it will ever end. On earth a gloom was cast over every enjoyment by the reflection that it would soon expire. But now some of them have been in heaven near six thousand years, and they have no apprehension that their joys are nearer an end than at first. On earth they were almost afraid to take the comfort of what little they had, lest they should soon exhaust the store. But now they do not hesitate to give themselves up to the full enjoyment of the boundless good. They look forward to its everlasting continuance, and probably to its eternal increase. There is something in the contemplation of eternal, increasing glory, that is "grand beyond a seraph's thought." Upon the supposition of an eternal progression in knowledge and happiness, the time will come when the smallest saint in heaven will be as much greater and happier than Gabriel now is, as Gabriel now is greater and happier than an infant. And still to increase without end. Imagination falters and turns back from the pursuit. And now judge ye: is it any wonder that the martyrs, in view of this "exceeding and eternal weight of glory," should shout amidst the flames on which they ascended to God? It seems from our text that while their bodies were struggling with death, they cast their eyes forward to the time when their dust should rise again. This leads me,

### III. To contemplate the glories of the resurrection.

Wonderful, glorious, awful day! How amazed should we be to see its wonders suddenly break upon us. Such amazement will seize a careless world when the time arrives. And it is not far from us. A few more suns will bring it forward. Let us contemplate it with as much solemnity as though its first commotions were now beginning to agitate the distant sky.

Time will be when all the martyrs and saints, as they are scattered over the heavenly plains, will suddenly hear the trumpet sound. They start at the transporting summons. Their hearts flutter with joy and great expectations. The day has come, say they, which we saw in the agonies of death. Suddenly all the heavenly legions gather round the standard of their Prince. The King is arrayed in tenfold glories. His artillery and furniture of war are prepared. With the grandeur of a God he leaves the heavens and places his throne in the region above this earth. The saints and angels gather around, with great expectations, to see the wonders which are about to unfold. The trumpet sounds again. The blast shakes the universe. The earth is affrighted to its centre. The planets are torn from their orbits. Worlds dash against worlds. The disjointed universe is in flames. The general shock has broken off the covering of hell, and the awful glories of the day break in upon the damned with unknown terrors. They are forced to ascend. The horrid forms come swarming forth. The saints shudder and crowd nearer to their Prince. The universal convulsion has opened all the graves. The dead bodies begin to move. The scattered dust is collecting from all quarters, and is flying in different directions to seek its kindred dust. The saints descend to find their bodies, now changed into glorious forms, resembling that of Christ; the rebel host also get possession of their own, marked with haggard deformity.

Columns of rising dead now fill all the air, some with shrieks and some with halleluias on their tongues. When they approach the tribunal they divide, these going to the right and those to the left. An awful pause ensues. The books are opened. All the secrets of men are brought forth to light. Their sins of thought, word, and deed are exposed to an astonished universe. All the virtues too of the saints are found faithfully recorded, and are spread out to the view of approving angels. All the intricacies of God's providence are disentangled, and all his dispensations, explained, and that becomes the day of the "revelation of" his "righteous judgment." How gloriously do his wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness now shine in those things which once appeared confused and even hard. Amidst

those awful solemnities, with what emotions do the saints look down and behold the earth in flames, which was once the scene of all their trials. With what feelings do the martyrs look down on those places where they were bound to the rack or the cross or the stake. Ah with what eyes do they now behold their persecutors, whom they see convulsed with horrors and crying to rocks and mountains to cover them.

The grand account is taken, and the Judge prepares to speak. With a face beaming like heaven he turns to the right: "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." He turns to the left. A thousand tempests lower upon his brow. The affrighted ranks fall back on each other and would gladly hide themselves in the eternal deep. Hell hears the sound and trembles through all her coast. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. ——And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

O ye children of the immortal King, learn to look with indifference on all the scenes below the sun, and let them all be swallowed up in a view of eternity. How did this view transport the martyrs above their agonies. And where are they now? Do they now repent that they renounced the world and accounted themselves "strangers and pilgrims on the earth?"

Our subject shows the inconceivable happiness of the children of God. They are just on the verge of immortal glory. A few days more and all their sorrows will cease, and they will stand on Mount Zion with harps in their hands and crowns of glory upon their heads. Whatever convulsions shake the world,—whatever judgments perplex the nations,—they have abundant reason to "rejoice evermore." Children of God, be much in the contemplation of your future inheritance. Were your eyes constantly fixed on that blessed state, it would be impossible for every trifle to cast you down.—Look on heaven as near. One reason why the view no more affects you, is

that you place it at a great distance. Did you know that you were about to enter it to day, the very thought would raise you to it. Well, the time is near. Perhaps before the sun shall set you will stand on the heavenly hill with Abraham and Moses and David. And if heaven is worth so much, then let nothing else come in competition with it. Tread the world beneath your feet. Let your whole souls be engaged to secure the immortal crown. But above all, if you would be affected with these glorious realities, you must firmly believe the declarations of God's word; for "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

But ye who have no part in these blessings, how "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked; "doomed to eternal fire, and probably to ever increasing torments: no Father in heaven, and no Saviour but him you have trampled under foot: the implacable enemies of God, and fit to be given over to hellish rage and to the society of devils. What will be your feelings when the splendors of that day shall break in upon your astonished sight, and you shall behold Christians admitted to that glory and you yourselves banished to hell? Would you not then give ten thousand worlds for the place of the meanest slave who has reached the heavenly kingdom? Now you may have salvation "without money and without price," but then it will be too late. O think of it in season. Hasten before the last trump shall awaken you to sleep no more.—Arise without delay and put your faces in the dust. Repent and cry for mercy, and submit to God, and stretch out your hands to Christ,—or forever die.

## **SERMON XL**

WHEN I WAS A CHILD I THOUGHT AS A CHILD

When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things. - 1 COR. 13:11

In childhood the mind, pleased with every trifle and void of care, vacantly pursues its little pleasures, and, blessed with ignorance of the ills and disappointments of life, looks forward with sanguine hopes to fairy scenes of happiness; while the bright and tearless eye, resting on the outside of things, sees a paradise in every lawn and grove. A recollection of these puerile delights is often cherished with rapture in future years, while the man, forgetful of the frettings and pulings of childhood, dotingly inquires, Why were the former days better than these? But he does not ask wisely concerning this. A virtuous manhood is much more to be desired than the state of children. It is capable of far nobler pursuits, of knowledge, enjoyment, and action more congenial with the ends of our being. The child has no high and manly aim, no cares for great and dignified things, little thought for his future well being either in this life or the life to come. His understanding is feeble, his knowledge is small, his pursuits and pleasures are useless to the world, his years are trifled away in pursuing airy visions, and he is a stranger to elevated and substantial happiness. He speaks as a child, prattling unconnectedly of his little concerns; he understands as a child, superficially and contractedly; he thinks as a child, incorrectly and desultorily; but when he becomes a man he puts away childish things. His taste relishes nobler objects; his conversation is more dignified; his conduct and pursuits are manly; his views and knowledge are enlarged. Spurning the shackles and toys of babyhood, he becomes perhaps a philosopher, and explores with astonished gaze, the works of his Creator. His excursive fancy, not confined to the policies and interests of kingdoms, wanders among the stars, and delights itself with the numberless worlds which revolve above his head, while his faith and knowledge are employed on the great affairs of the kingdom of God.



Such is the contrast by which the apostle represents the present and future existence of Christians. He was speaking of their imperfect knowledge and attainments in this life and the perfection of their state in the life to come; which he illustrates by the words of our text: "When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things;" to which he adds, "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

If the most eminent saints, while here, are in a state of childhood, how much more the rest of mankind. It is then the obvious doctrine of the text that the present life is only the infant state of man. In illustrating this position I shall show its truth,

I. In regard to mankind in general;

II. In regard to worldly men in particular;

III. In regard even to Christians themselves;

I. The position is true in regard to mankind in general. Man is a more noble being than he appears in this world, and was designed for nobler ends than he attains, or than his Maker accomplishes by him, in the present state. The all wise God would not have formed so dignified a race, and placed them in a world fitted up with such exquisite art, for no other end than that they should enjoy the little transitory distinctions and pleasures of this life,—that they should sustain such a mode of existence and intercourse for a few years, in sin and misery, and then drop into nothing, without either gratifying his benevolence in making them happy, or exercising his justice in punishing their sins. If he expended so much labor in creating them and the world they live in that they might be happy, this end is miserably defeated if there be no future state. If he created them for his own glory, their present existence, unconnected with a future state, illustrates neither his wisdom, goodness, nor justice, but casts

obscurity over them all. Men do not here receive the punishment due to their sins, nor arrive at the perfection either of their powers or of the happiness which they are capable of enjoying. Dismal are the prospects of that man who looks forward to no future state; who after sinning and sighing a few times more, expects to be swallowed up in the gulph of annihilation. Far other purposes had infinite wisdom in creating an intelligent race. The Author of their being, who designed them for immortality, placed them in this infant state, not for the good they could enjoy here, but to ripen for a glorious and eternal manhood. Their greatest growth here, compared with their future dimensions, does not transcend the size of children.—This life, instead of being the termination, is only the threshold of their existence. This world is only their nursery, or if you please, the cradle in which souls yet in swaddling bands are rocked for immortality. Could you see them launched into eternity,—could you trace their dimensions a few centuries hence,—you would behold these puny beings swelled to a stature which your present powers could not measure. How miserably do they overlook the dignity of man who contemplate him only in the present life. What wretched miscalculation to consume all their cares in making provisions for this infant state,—this mere birth of being,—this embryo of existence,—and neglect to provide for the happiness of a vigorous and eternal manhood.

II. It is particularly true of worldly men that this is their childish state. Their views, their tastes, their knowledge, their pleasures, their pursuits, all bespeak them children. Compared with the high and noble ends for which they were made, what trifles they are pleased with, what puerile objects they pursue. While I stand contemplating the dimensions and dignity of a glorified saint, I pronounce the wealth of Cræsus and the honors of Cesar to be mere play-things for children, and all the strife and hurry and noise of the world to be but the unmeaning motions and sounds of an infant. Are they not children? Mark with what vacancy of mind they pursue their little pleasures, without any dignified and manly aim,—what want of foresight and care for their future well-being,—how caught with the

outside of things and puffed with airy hopes,—how dark their understandings,—how small their knowledge of what they were created to know,—how useless their lives. They have none of that sublime happiness of which rational minds are capable. Subject to disappointments and sorrows, the children often fret and cry. They speak as a child, they understand as a child, they think as a child. Ah when will they become men and put away childish things? Cast aside your toys and raise your thoughts to objects worthy of men,—to the kingdom and glory of God,—to infinite interests and immortal concerns. To pursue objects for which men were sent into the world, to employ the mind on subjects the most noble within the reach of its present powers, is certainly to lay the best claims to the honor of manhood. Many who pride themselves on being men of honor, deem it manly to neglect religion, and account it weak and womanish to yield to the tenderesses and softnesses of piety. But they turn the tables. With powers capable of manly aims but devoted to childish play, they appear to angels as one would appear to us who at the age of fifty should busy himself in making houses in the sand. If they will not ascend to high and manly objects, it would have been better for them always to have remained children. A child is satisfied with his baubles: but they, possessed of capacities which nothing but God can fill,—which were made to be employed about the kingdom of Christ,—remain restless and uneasy with all their toys about them. If I were always to live on earth, and must be confined to its trifling objects, I solemnly declare that I would rather eternally remain a child.

III. It is true even of Christians themselves, and of the most eminent of them all, that they are only children in the present life. This is precisely the sentiment contained in the text. They speak as a child, they think as a child, and they understand as a child. They speak of divine things as a child, using expressions which no more reach the extent of the subject, than the prattling of children about the moon conveys a full idea of that luminary. They have no other language for these subjects than that of Scripture, which, being adapted to the weakness of our apprehensions, is little more than an association of images borrowed from sensible objects. In this highly figurative

language, which is necessarily imperfect because our imperfect minds could understand no other, they speak of God's eyes and hands and feet,—of his repenting,—of his coming down to see what is taking place on earth,—of his fury's coming up in his face. They speak of the worship of heaven in language principally taken from the temple worship of the Jews. But when they arrive at manhood, they will use a language expressive of things as they are,—a language no longer darkened with the shadow of figures, but taken from the very light of the subjects themselves, and as luminous as truth. No childish topics will then employ their tongues. They will converse only on noble subjects with noble personages.

They will conceive as men. Here their conceptions are extremely crude. They conceive of God as having the figure and features of a man,—as existing in a particular place,—as growing older as ages revolve. They conceive of the intercourse of spirits as being similar to that of incarnate beings. All their conceptions of heavenly things are largely mingled with ideas borrowed from sensible objects. But when they arrive at manhood, their conceptions will be correct. They will never indeed cease to be conversant with material objects. After the resurrection they will still possess material bodies. There will be a local heaven for the accommodation of those bodies. The glorified body of Christ will be the centre of this heaven, and the point to which their finite thoughts and worship will be more particularly directed. But though limited by the finitude of their nature, their conceptions will be far more matured and perfect.

They will understand as men. In this life their understandings are feeble and contracted,—are darkened by ignorance,—are perverted by prejudice,—are liable to errors and misconstructions of the word of God. Christians here cannot agree on the plainest doctrines of divine revelation, and are split into contending sects. But in heaven their knowledge will be perfect, their prejudices and mistakes will cease, and party distinctions will be known no more. They will all see eye to eye, and be united in the most sublime and delightful views of divine truth. Here they are limited to a very imperfect knowledge of

God's will, and are often pressed with doubts respecting their duty; but there all duty will be made plain. Here their views are confined to a small circle; there they will take in the universe. Here, with all the helps they enjoy, they know but little of God; there they will see as they are seen and know as they are known. If the little knowledge of God which they here possess fills them with so much delight, who can conceive the ecstasy which will arise from the clear discovery, the enlarged views, the vast knowledge of him which they will then enjoy;—beholding the face of that glorious sun without an interposing cloud,—stretching their eyes far and wide into the substance of his uncreated light,—with visual organs undazzled by his splendor,—with souls set on fire by the blaze of his glory. In this life their minds can take in but little of the wonders of redemption, and small is their acquaintance with him who purchased them with his blood; but in heaven they will behold the Lamb in the midst of his Father's throne; their delighted eyes will wander over his glories; they will approach him and lay their crowns at his feet; they will be united to him in the tenderest communion; they will have a much clearer view of the unfathomable wonders of redemption, and with amazement and transport will trace the heights and depths of this stupendous plan.

No longer limited to the hopes and anticipations of childhood, they will have arrived at the full attainment of their supreme good. No longer confined to the company of children, they will enjoy the society of the glorious army of patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs. They will be united in the strictest friendship with seraphim and cherubim, and be ennobled by intercourse with these highest orders of angels. No longer limited to the low pursuits of this infant state, all their faculties will be employed in the most noble parts of the divine service. Their understanding will be occupied in searching into the character and works of God; their affections will be exercised in ardent love and gratitude; their voices will be strung to elevated praise; their wills will be exerted in choosing God and his ways; their memory will be employed in looking back to this life and collecting materials with which to erect everlasting monuments to his glory. All

their powers, which were imperfect in this state of minority, will have attained their perfection: not that perfection which will exclude progress, but that which indicates a state of manhood. How vastly their powers will be enlarged, cannot now be told. Was Newton a child? Was Solomon a child? What then is a man? Could we approach the glorified spirit of the meanest saint that ever left these abodes of weakness and sin, we should be amazed at the magnitude of his powers. Perhaps we might see him to be greater than a nation combined. And these astonishing dimensions are probably but the beginning of his growth. I stand amazed as I trace that spirit through the ascending degrees of its eternal progression. I am lost in wonder and delight as I pursue its august destinies through immortal ages, and see it stretching towards God, widening, extending, rising,—until a spirit with the present ken of Gabriel could scarcely discern it in its glorious altitude,—until a spirit with the present dimensions of Gabriel would only be as an infant to a giant doubled a thousand times;—and still it is stretching away. From the summit of that elevation suppose it to look down upon this mortal life; how contemptible, how much like the toys of childhood would all its little glories appear. While it reviews its former attachment to earth and dust, its former puerile pursuits, yea its most fervent devotions, I hear it sing, "high in salvation and the realms of bliss," "When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things."

O my brethren, destined for immortality, raise your minds from earth and fix them on the heaven of heavens. As you march towards the New Jerusalem, let your eye be filled with the approaching glories of the place. Keep your thoughts above, where you are to spend a never ending eternity. Often contemplate the amazing destinies before you. Why those sighs and tears and low contracted griefs? Is it for the children of a king to be sad? You have reason to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I wonder you are not constantly transported. Consider what you will be a century hence. Consider what you will be a million of ages hence. I am rapt as I follow you through the ascending glories of eternity. And are you

born to this? to dignity so august? to glories so unbounded? O debase not yourselves by sordid actions. Stoop not to grovelling pursuits. Remember what you are and respect yourselves. Do nothing that you will disapprove when you review your life from the high abodes of salvation. Awaken every sleeping faculty and press towards the glorious mark. You are acting for eternity and immortality is the prize. Drive on your lagging powers; quicken your tardy progress; "till you all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Amen.

## **SERMON XLI**

### **THE PILGRIM**

These all died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. - HEB. 11:13

The apostle, in this chapter, was pointing out to the Hebrews the various operations and fruits of faith in the saints of old. A prompt obedience to the commands of God, renunciation of the world, and trust in the promises, were among the most prominent of these. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.— These all died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.—

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.—And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak and of Samson and of Jephthae, of David also and Samuel and of the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.—And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise."

This was the character and condition of the ancient saints, those favorites of heaven of whom the world was not worthy. They were destitute of worldly good. They were despised, forsaken, persecuted. But they regarded it not, for they felt themselves not at home, but strangers and pilgrims on the earth. The world was not the portion they sought, but they "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." I shall,

I. Inquire what it is to feel and conduct ourselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

II. Suggest some reasons for doing this.

III. Urge the duty of believing and trusting in the promises of God.

I. What is it to feel and conduct ourselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth?



A Christian's pilgrimage is a journey to heaven. To feel and conduct ourselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, then, is to feel and conduct ourselves as not being at home in the flesh, but as travelling on a journey to the world above. It is to tread the world beneath our feet and to soar to heaven in our affections. A wise pilgrim will not encumber himself with a load of toys which will only impede his progress towards home; which, instead of adding to his enjoyments, will only perplex him on his journey; and which at last he cannot carry into his Father's house to possess, but must lay down and leave at the threshold. A stranger on earth, if he is wise, will not expend his all in procuring the riches of the country, and in storing up an encumbrance of goods which he cannot carry with him when he returns, as he shortly must, to his native land. His principal object will be, (besides those temporary supplies which will support him by the way,) to lay in copiously those riches which he can carry with him when he returns to his abiding habitation. As he is only passing through the country on a pilgrimage to a distant realm, he will not suffer all his affections to be engrossed by the transient objects which present themselves by the way; but his attention will be principally turned to the pursuit of his journey to the destined land. He will not be disposed, upon every freak and at every difficult passage, to turn back to the land of sorrow he has left behind; but will imitate the pilgrims of old who were unmindful of the country from which they came out, though "they might have had opportunity to have returned." He will not lay aside the manners of the country where he hopes to spend his days, and assume the manners of the uncultivated tribes through which he is passing. He will obey the direction not to be conformed to the world. He will not perplex his mind by interesting himself in all the petty cares of the men he sees in his way; but as Christ cleansed the temple of worldly objects, so he will cleanse his heart, which is the temple of God, of worldly attachments and cares. He knows he cannot cleave to these and pursue his journey, since he cannot serve both God and mammon. He will not be anxious to know what this or that man whom he meets on his journey says of him, or how he likes his appearance, since he only passes by him and is gone to be seen by him no more. If all the

country through which he passes is disgusted at his foreign air and strangeness of appearance, it affects him not; since he is at once beyond their reach, and is soon to enter a country where all are congenial in minds, language, and behavior. He finds himself surrounded by strangers, not at home; at a distance from his relations and his Father's house. He is not contented to remain where he is, but is eager to press forward to meet and embrace his friends and to throw himself into his Father's arms. He looks and longs and pants after home. O, he cries, when will the happy day arrive when I shall be at rest? How long shall these mountains, rocks, and long tracts of desert land lie between me and all my soul holds dear? How long ere I shall embrace my kindred and pay sweet homage at my Father's feet? How long shall the wild beasts of the desert howl around, and I be torn with the thorns of a foreign land? Come forth to meet me, O my Father, and help me, help me home. These are the feelings of a stranger on the earth, and these the breathings of a pilgrim after heaven.

II. I am to suggest some reasons why we ought to feel and conduct ourselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

1. A pilgrim's way is the only way to heaven.—We are by nature as far from home as we are from God. In order then to find an entrance into the peaceful doors of our Parent's house, we must say with the prodigal, "I will arise and go to my Father."

2. Heaven is the only good worth setting our hearts upon,—the only place where unsullied enjoyment is to be had,—the only spot where untainted excellence is found. It alone contains pleasures which will never fade away. The experience of ages, as well as the word of God, has taught us that all things below the sun are "vanity and vexation of spirit." Earth is a deceitful good. Riches are ever ready to take wings and fly away. Honor is a bubble liable to be dissolved by the arrows of envy. Pleasures, like flowers, when gathered die. Nothing is durable beneath the sun. Nothing is satisfying beneath the enjoyment of God. God is the sum of all good. It was the discovery of

this truth which made the Psalmist exclaim, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." He then who says of earth, Here shall be my rest, and to God, "Depart from" me, "for" I "desire not the knowledge of thy ways," sets a wrong value on things and is blind to his own interest.

3. There is a sweetness in feeling ourselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth. It is sweet to feel ourselves not at home in the flesh, just on the wing to be gone, and arising to a better habitation. It is sweet to feel the world beneath our feet, to stand above it and converse with God. The man that does this is not indebted to the unsteady shifting objects of time and sense for his principal satisfaction, but possesses a happiness which the world can neither give nor take away. He can remain calm and unruffled amidst the changes of life. If earthly things depart, he says, They were made to die, and let them die. If the smiles of the world convert to frowns, he looks up with joy and sees a smiling God. He stands above the world, and, like a man above the clouds, remains unmoved and unruffled while the winds and storms beat upon the world beneath. While his hope of heaven, the anchor of his soul, remains sure and steadfast, he cannot be tossed to and fro with disappointments nor sink under the burden of chagrin. He that trusts in the Lord shall not be greatly moved. What a happy opportunity has the pilgrim, while standing aloof from the world and looking with the eyes of a stranger on all things below, to notice the dispensations of providence, to see divine faithfulness unfolded in a thousand little circumstances unnoticed by the busy world, to search into the character, works, and government of God, and to learn himself by watching the secret movements of his own mind. When the world is shut out, he may retire within himself and survey the large dimensions of his soul. He may hold converse with the intellectual world and pity the world of sense. He may hold sweet communion with God, and taste the clusters of the promised land while yet in the wilderness. As he is a pilgrim by profession and makes it his daily business to travel heavenward, the happiness and glory of the heavenly world are more fully in his view, and he enjoys a double share of the blessedness which arises from a prospect of his

future inheritance. He looks on heaven as near; the mild, yet brilliant glories of the place fill his mind; he is ready to depart; the earth dwindles to a point; he sees the approving aspect of his God smiling upon him. Then he exclaims in ecstasy, I feel the sweetness of being a pilgrim. This is not my home. I am a stranger on the earth as all my fathers were. My journey will soon end.—Heaven already opens to my view. The resurrection is at hand.

"Lo I behold the scattering shades;

The dawn of heaven appears;

The sweet, immortal morning spreads

Its blushes round the spheres."

4. A stranger and pilgrim on earth has every thing that he needs; why then should he wish for any closer alliance with the world? God's favor is life, and his "loving kindness is better than life." He who enjoys him has all and needs no more.—The Christian has a promise that if he forsakes all for Christ, he shall receive in the present life a hundred fold. "No good thing will" God "withhold from them that walk uprightly." They shall possess in the present time every enjoyment which they could wish to possess did they know what was for their good. Not a single pain which would ultimately prove an evil, will be suffered to attack them; and every thing which actually does befall them will turn to their benefit. Whatever turns up in life, they are safe and they are happy. If God had not seen that strangers and pilgrims on the earth could enjoy the highest happiness consistent with their ultimate good, he would not have confined his children within so narrow limits. If a closer alliance with the world was a real good, he would not have bestowed it on his enemies and withheld it from his dear children. The patriarchs were his peculiar favorites; yet he gave them no abiding habitation, but left them to wander about literal strangers and pilgrims on the earth. In this he meant them no harm, but intended through them to show to the

world that a state of pilgrimage was consistent with the possession of every real blessing. What more does a man want than to enjoy every needed good while here, to be happy under the smiles and protection of God, to go on his way rejoicing in peaceful hope of a happier country and certain of a better home? What more does the pilgrim want to make him happy? What need has he to come down into the world in quest of enjoyment? Would a nearer connexion with the world render him more happy? No; for,

5. To relax into friendship with the world, to feel earth our home, and to say, It is good to be here, is very dangerous; as it draws the soul from God, clouds our sight of the glory of spiritual objects, exposes us to temptation, and is the chief cause of all our miseries. Every Christian knows the truth of this assertion. When we begin to think of taking up our rest on earth, of making this a long and happy home, we do not feel the pressing necessity of daily going to heaven for enjoyment; we discontinue our intercourse with the spiritual world, get away from God, throw ourselves without anchor into an ocean of cares, give ourselves up to be carried to and fro by innumerable disappointments, retire from under the shield of God, and are easily overcome by temptation. While the soul is in the presence of God, Satan dares not approach with his wiles; or if he should, he would be unsuccessful. He waits for the soul to get away from God, and then makes his attack, as he did on Eve when absent from her husband, and on Peter while absent from his Lord. To be bound to the world is to be unloosed from God. Hence the Christian finds it no addition to his happiness, but a great increase of his misery, to forget that he is a stranger and to feel himself at home on the earth.

6. We are here in an enemy's country, while our dearest friends are in heaven. Will a man feel himself at home in a foreign land, confined in prison among enemies, while his father and his brethren are living at a distance in the happy mansion where he received his existence? Did the Church feel themselves at home in the wilderness, filled with serpents and enemies? Did Daniel feel himself at home in the lion's den, or the children in the fiery furnace? So neither should

a Christian feel himself at home while surrounded by spiritual enemies and a persecuting world. Heaven is his home; heaven is the place of his rest. There his best friends, his kindred dwell; there God his Saviour reigns.

7. This earth was never designed for the Christian's home. It is a field in which he is sent to labor. Here he spends the heat of the day, and he cannot find his home until the evening comes and his work is ended. If this earth had been designed for the Christian's home, it would have been made a very different place. It would not have been filled with so many snares and miseries, but would have been rendered a peaceful, quiet, holy habitation. But now God has prepared for him a better habitation, where nothing shall ever enter to disturb his rest, and where he shall feel himself forever at home. The Christian has only turned in here, like a wayfaring man, to lodge for a night; but heaven is his home where he has an eternity to spend. Eternity! eternity! O the boundless thought! How can we settle down in the dust as though we were always to continue here? How can we feel otherwise than as strangers and pilgrims on the earth?

8. The more of strangers we are on the earth, and the more intercourse we have with heaven while here, the more welcome and happy shall we be when we arrive at glory. The more we feel a stranger's weariness with the world, and the more we feel a pilgrim's pantings after heaven, the more we shall find our souls attuned to the harmony of the place, and with the more readiness and sweetness shall we, when released from earth, join in the employments of the new Jerusalem. If then to feel and conduct ourselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth will make a whole eternity the sweeter, O let us yield the world to fools and emmets, and fix our eyes and all our desires on a better home.

III. Let us consider the duty of believing and trusting in the promises of God.

1. To believe and trust in the promises of God is an exercise of faith and an essential mark of a Christian. It is recorded as a characteristic of Abraham's faith, when Isaac was promised, that "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." The promise was, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called;" yet when commanded of God he scrupled not to offer up his son, "accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead." Though the patriarchs died without seeing the promises fulfilled respecting Canaan and a future Saviour, yet they "were persuaded of them and embraced them." The very essence of faith is "the evidence of things not seen."

2. We should not distrust the promises of God on account of their not being yet fulfilled, or because at particular times we cannot see the fulfilment of those which relate to the present life.—It was never designed that the promises which relate to the life to come should be fulfilled at present. It is not fit that we should receive our reward till our work is done. It is not fit that we should be admitted at once to the promised land, because it is necessary for us to remain awhile in the wilderness to be cleansed of our Egyptian idolatry. Our being continued here awhile before we have all the promises fulfilled upon us, affords an opportunity for the trial and confirmation of our faith and patience. It affords us an opportunity of learning our dependance on God,—of learning the evil by tasting the bitterness of sin,—of discovering the faithfulness of God in coming to our relief in a thousand scenes of difficulty and trial, and in coming down, from time to time, into the deep pits where we are fallen, to pour into our souls the sweetness of his forgiving love. Our temporary continuance at a distance from the promised land, will heighten the pleasures of our final release and render heaven forever the sweeter. Neither ought we to distrust the promises which relate to the present life because at particular times we cannot see their fulfilment. The sum of these promises is, that no real evil shall befall us, that no good thing shall be withheld from us, and that all things which do occur shall work together for our benefit. Sometimes the Christian is so harassed and perplexed that he is ready to think that God has turned

his foe or has forgotten him. But let him remember that God's ways are not as our ways. Necessary afflictions are marks of parental faithfulness. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." So short sighted are we in regard to the design of particular dispensations, that "no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them." Many events which at first wear a threatening aspect, soon prove to be but mercies in disguise. Others which we can never account for, we may still believe have the same benevolent tendency. In short, however our feelings may be crossed, nothing can evince a failure of the promise, that "no good thing will" God "withhold from them that walk uprightly."

3. The want of a realizing belief in the divine promises, is the great reason of our impatience at the thought of being strangers and pilgrims on the earth. When the promises are hid behind the cloud of unbelief, and the troubles of the Christian warfare crowd upon us, we are ready too frequently to say, with the desponding Asaph, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency; for all the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning." The service of God at such times appears unprofitable; and as unbelief is always selfish, we are apt to go back into the world in quest of a more profitable pursuit. A Christian cannot turn back into the world while the promises are full in his view. These animate him in his course and make him feel satisfied with the loss of the world. A full belief of the promises rendered the ancient saints contented to remain strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Had they lost sight of these through unbelief, they would have sought for a portion in the world and asked alms of flesh and sense.

4. There is a sweetness in believing and trusting in the promises of God. Then the soul is raised above the world and looks down with meek contempt on all its frowns. The Christian then feels as secure and immovable as unchanging truth and almighty power can make him. When he reflects on his present condition, he knows it could not be otherwise consistently with his highest ultimate happiness. When he looks forward into life, he fears no approaching danger, for he



knows that no real evil can ever befall him. When he looks into the heavens, he says with calm serenity, Yonder world of light was made for me, for other things have told me I was a child of God. Yonder stands my Father's throne. Yonder do my friends surround it with low prostration. Yonder I shall soon be and share in all their joys. Let hell rave and earth ferment, I fear them not; my Protector liveth, and soon I shall bless him face to face.

5. The promises of God are absolutely unfulfilling. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of the promises shall never fail. They are sealed by the blood of Christ and recorded in the presence of heaven. God can as soon deny himself as he can deny his children their promised inheritance or a single good stipulated for them here. Not one of his promises has ever been known to fail since the earth was. The patriarchs lived long in this benighted wilderness before they possessed their promised reward. During their whole lives they waited patiently for the promises of Canaan and a future Saviour. And long since have all these promises been fulfilled, and the blessed men have gone home to possess the eternal rewards of their faith and patience. With equal certainty will God fulfil his promises to all his children. He will infallibly bestow upon them every needed blessing here; at the best time he will unfulfillingly bring them home to the promised rest.

Men and brethren, if these things are so what shall we say of ourselves? And dare any who have the Bible in their hands deny their truth? Let us then,

I. Reprove ourselves for our worldly attachments, and for not feeling more like strangers and pilgrims on the earth. How prone are we to feel ourselves undone when the world frowns. How inconsolable when any thing breaks in upon our temporal prosperity. If wealth or honor or pleasure or friends have fled, our hearts are all unstrung saving the mourning strings. We are ready to say with Micah, "Ye have taken away my gods,—and what have I more?" What more could we do if earth was our eternal home? Do we not know that this

life is but a breath, a point, a nothing in comparison with eternity? Do we know that we are born from heaven, and hope soon to return to abide there forever? Christian, you are almost there. Why then do you come back to earth? What can you find by your return but disappointment and chagrin? Do you find the climate more congenial, or are you so soon tired of what you find above? How, then can you bear to dwell above forever? Can you not endure to live a stranger to the earth a few days? How then can you be willing to be an eternal stranger to it? How will you endure to see your idol consumed in the general conflagration? Can you survive its loss and be happy when it is no more? Why then can you not now be happy without it? Come, put away your idol, (it is only a vexation,) and learn to be a pilgrim. Come out from the world, flee from Sodom, and escape to heaven.

II. Let us reprove our impatience and despondency at a distant view or disbelief of the promises. How often, even while we hold fast the idea of our adoption, do we despond at the many difficulties which lie in our way to heaven, and grow impatient that the promises are yet seen afar off. How often do we doubt the fulfilment of those which relate to the present life. How apt are we, in view of danger or trouble, to say, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." I shall not be supported. The evil will certainly come, and it will be a real evil. O that I could direct all matters myself.—Such secret workings of unbelief, though they do not come out to public view, may often be traced by an attentive observer of himself. Alas that we should thus give the lie to all the sacred promises of God. Christian, it is "impossible for God to lie." It is as impossible for him to cease to love and protect you, as it is for him to cease to love and defend himself. Talk not of your unworthiness. If you had a righteousness of your own, what need of the righteousness of Christ? If your unworthiness was a bar to your receiving favor, you would long since have been in hell. Trust then in God and fear not. Though heavy afflictions are sent, your Father means you no harm. They shall subserve your interest. Say then with the patient Job, "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him." Wait a little longer and you shall see a

fulfilment of all the promises. Heaven shall soon open its gates for your admission. The resurrection morning is hastening on. The books shall be opened. The divine dispensations shall all be explained.—And when they are understood, you shall find there never was a failure of a single promise which your Father made you. You will then rejoice in every thing that ever befell you in your lives. You will wonder at your former unbelief and bless God for all his faithfulness. Strange, you will say, that I should so often doubt whether the God of all truth would fulfil his word. How could I doubt? How could I fear, when God was taking the readiest way to bring me to the possession of all this glory?—Christian, you have nothing to do but to disconnect your affections from the world, place your hopes and desires in heaven, devote your lives to God, leave all your cares with him, and "rejoice evermore." Praise and joy and trust are the best returns you can make to God for all his love. Fulfil your duty to him, and he will fulfil his promise to you. Give him no cause to distrust you, and you need never distrust him. Take him for your all, and he will be all to you. He will be your Father, your Friend, your Protector, your support while here, and your everlasting portion beyond the grave. Amen.

## **SERMON XLII**

### **WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN BUT THEE?**

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. - PS. 73:25-

This Psalm was composed by Asaph, one of the three chief singers whom David had appointed in the house of God. The good man had experienced a severe trial from the infirmities of his own heart; which trial, together with the manner in which he was relieved, is described in this beautiful Psalm. He had been "envious at the

foolish when" he "saw the prosperity of the wicked," and had indulged in unworthy complaints against divine providence. "They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish.—Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency; for all the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning." This temper of uneasiness and distrust arose so high, that in a retrospect upon it he acknowledges, "My feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped.—So foolish was I and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee." The manner in which he obtained relief from this agitation, was by repairing to the sanctuary of God, where the light of divine revelation shone. Here he discovered, as through a window which opened into eternity, the awful end to which the wicked with all their prosperity were hastening. Here also he learned the final rewards of the righteous, and saw the mysterious inequalities of divine providence cleared up. The glory of God's faithfulness and truth so opened on his soul, and the comparative emptiness of all earthly things, that with more than recovered spirits he exclaimed, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

My object will be, in the first place, to explain more fully how we are taught to feel by this example of Asaph,—how such a temper will operate and what effects it will produce; and in the second place, to suggest some reasons which urge to such a temper.

I. I am to explain more fully how we are taught to feel by this example of Asaph,—how such a temper will operate and what effects it will produce.

The Psalmist in these words expressed supreme delight in God as his all sufficient and only portion. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" The only heaven I wish above is but to see thy face. Let others form confused ideas of the upper world, and desire it as a place where something is to be enjoyed, they know not what: but I know what a

heaven I desire. Could I ascend to the highest heavens and find the presence of my God withdrawn, it would be no heaven for me. The only reason why I pant to ascend above the sun and all these ruinable worlds, is that I may bask in the sunshine of his smiles, and forever behold the source of light without one envious cloud between. Let me but sit at his feet and gaze upon his lovely face, and cry, with unutterable wonder and gratitude, "My Lord and my God," and I ask no more. Let me but take some humble station in his glorious kingdom, where I may sit and read his name, where I may view his infinite happiness and glory and see his beloved kingdom blest, and my soul will be filled.

"And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." How is this? Was it then a matter of indifference to Asaph whether his friends lived or died,—whether he enjoyed the comforts of life or perished with hunger? This was not literally and precisely his meaning. But what he intended may, I conclude, be summed up in the following ideas. First, that there was nothing among all the charms of earth which could prevent him from wishing to depart and be with the Lord. Secondly, while continuing on earth, he desired nothing besides God in a comparative sense. His soul was at that moment so filled with the supreme excellence and glory of Jehovah, that all earthly things were put out of view. Thirdly, he desired nothing besides God in that he coveted nothing which he considered distinct from the emanations of God. Did he desire food and raiment and friends? he desired them chiefly as divine goodness expressed, as God existing in his outward bounty.

Such a temper of supreme delight in God will operate in unreserved and universal submission to divine providence. While God is more beloved than all other objects, the withholding or removal of every thing besides him will not awaken a spirit of unsubmission and rebellion.

While the Christian has such supreme delight in God, he will not be inordinately leaning on friends or wealth or any worldly object for

enjoyment. No high expectations will be formed except those which centre in the supreme good. Lightly valuing the things of time and sense, he will scorn the restless pursuits and unsatisfied desires of the covetous; and holding the commands of God in supreme veneration, he will practise deeds of liberal charity. Sensible that prosperity gives and adversity takes away only those things which are least desirable, neither by prosperity nor adversity will he be greatly moved. Ever assured that God, the supreme good, is safe, he will dismiss all anxieties respecting future changes, and come what will, he will "rejoice evermore." Calmly resigning the management of all affairs into hands dearer than his own, he passes his days in unruffled serenity, and knows not the distrusts of jealousy nor the uneasiness of unbelief. Having a greater regard for the divine will than for any earthly comfort which that will can bestow, he has learned "both how to abound and to suffer need," and "in whatsoever state" he is, "therewith to be content."

The result of this supreme love to God will be faith, trust, self-denial, obedience, and an unreserved consecration of all that we are and have to him, to be disposed of according to his pleasure, and to be employed in his service, how and when and where he is pleased to appoint.

II. I am to suggest some reasons which urge to such a temper.

The infinitely wise and benevolent God is worthy to be the object of our supreme delight. There is more in him to be desired and to be rejoiced in than in all created beings and things. The whole creation has drawn all its glories from him. And can it be supposed that he has imparted more beauty and excellence than he possesses? When our eyes rove abroad over the charming scenes of nature, and traverse the wonders which shine in the heavenly orbs, we may well exclaim with the half-inspired Milton, "How wondrous fair! Thyself how wondrous then!" In God there is every thing which can satisfy and transport the immortal mind. What is the world to him; its pomp, its splendors, "and its nonsense all?" What are the treasures

of India and all the glories of Greece and Rome, compared with the fruition of that God whose smiles fill heaven and earth with gladness? Possessed of him, the imprisoned beggar, with all his griefs, is rich and happy; devoid of him, kings and emperors are poor and wretched. Let every earthly comfort depart, yet while we can enjoy the immortal source of blessedness, we are blessed still, we are blest indeed. While walking out with Isaac to meditate at the evening tide,—while beholding that glory which Moses saw on Horeb and on Pisgah,—while worshipping him whose faithfulness and truth were seen by Abraham on Moriah, and whose glories appeared to John in Patmos,—while overcome with the magnificent majesty which rushed on the view of Habakkuk,—while melting away in the sweet ecstasies of David in sight of the mercy and faithfulness of his heavenly Father,—while triumphing in him who was announced by the songs of Bethlehem and by the joys of Simeon's bursting heart,—while from our streaming eyes we pour forth gratitude to the Sufferer of Gethsemane and Golgotha, and ascend to heaven with him who ascended from Olivet,—O how poor and worthless do all mortal things appear.

The claims of God to our supreme affection are further supported by his exceeding great and unnumbered mercies. He is the God of all our revivals, of all our deliverances, and of all our comforts; the God of our fathers and the God of our children. Innumerable mercies, distinguishing us from most of our fellow men, mercies affecting to angels,—have filled our lives. He supported us in our infancy; he led us through all the windings of our youth; his watchful eye has continually been upon us in riper years. Through all our days he has nourished and brought us up as children. He has been with us in six yea and in seven troubles, and brought relief to our distresses when every other helper failed. From countless dangers has he delivered us. He sent his Son from his bosom to bear our sins in his own body on the tree. From what an abyss of pollution and wretchedness have some of us been raised by his pardoning love. He has bestowed upon us the invaluable gifts of his word and ordinances. By his unspeakable grace we have enjoyed the sight of his work revived,—

sinners plucked as brands from the burning, and brought to unite their young hosannas with the praises and joys of their fathers. Where shall we end the enumeration? More numerous are his mercies than the stars which look out of heaven. Has the world, have any of our friends, has all creation done for us what our God has done? Surely if kindness and mercy can engage our hearts, we lie under the most pressing obligations to say from our very souls, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

From the truth and faithfulness of our divine Benefactor, we have full assurance that if we get divorced from all our idols and wed ourselves to him alone in holy trust and service, he will make ample provision for our support and comfort,—he will abundantly recompense our fidelity and renunciation of the world. We have no occasion to apply to any other comforter, to any other protector, to any other guide, to any other portion. He will be to us such a portion as will fill and satisfy our souls. He will be all that we need and all we desire. We shall be blest beyond all previous conception. We shall be full; can need no more and can hold no more.

It is one of the lamentable marks of human weakness that men are so habituated to recede from the eternal centre of rest and to wander abroad in quest of enjoyment. Dependence is withdrawn from God and placed on other objects, which may not be obtained, or if obtained are ever liable to be lost again. The mind, thus torn from its centre and following deceitful meteors, rambles, it knows not whither,—is ever pained with uncertainty and trembling with dubious fears lest the objects in which centre all its desires should be lost. In proportion as men thus place their hopes in the creature, they find themselves the prey of restlessness and misery. To forsake the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns, is a sure prelude to disappointment and vexation. Ah when will we be wise? When will we dismiss all our vain dependances and make God our only rest and portion? When will we thus obtain that happiness which we have long sought in vain? Could we look with indifference on all the



shifting scenes beneath the sun, on prosperity and adversity, on loss and gain, and make the sincere appeal, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee," how happy might we be even in this vale of tears:

Knowing the claims which he had to our supreme affection, God has asserted those claims in his holy word, and strictly commanded us to love him with all the heart, and in comparison with him to hate father and mother, wife and children, and even life itself. And as he is infinitely the greatest and best of beings, this supreme regard to him is his due. It is perfectly right and fit, and what we owe to him, to make him the object of our supreme delight, to rejoice that he holds the throne, to resign ourselves with all our interests to his disposal, to feel that we have enough and abound while possessing him, even though every thing else be taken away, and under all our trials and disappointments, to be quiet as a child that is weaned of its mother. It is infinitely unreasonable to set up any private interest in opposition to the interest of the universe,—the interest and wishes of God and his kingdom. Of what consequence is it for infinite wisdom and love to sit upon the throne if they may not govern the world? What does it signify for us to proclaim our joy that the world is under divine direction, if we will not submit and consent to be governed?

Such supreme delight in God and his government had Enoch and Noah, and Abraham and Moses, and David and Daniel and Paul. Not one of them could receive the divine approbation and enter into rest on easier terms. And on no easier terms can we enjoy the friendship and protection of Asaph's God in the present life; on no easier terms can we enter the portals of the heavenly city. But the sure reward of thus choosing him for our portion, will be the unfailing friendship and enjoyment of him in the present life, and when all these perishable worlds shall be blended in one common grave. Then shall they who have chosen him in preference to all others, be everlastingly united to their glorious centre, and shall plunge into that ocean of glory which they have chosen for their all, and lose themselves in him. Then shall they know how wise their choice who

prefer the immortal God to the husks that were made for the flames. Then with what hearty sincerity and bursting joy will these eternal notes go round, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

Let this assembly pause for a moment, while each one solemnly inquires with himself whether he has chosen the God of Asaph for his only portion and supreme delight, or whether his affections and hopes still linger among the vanities of this lower world. Do our souls stand ready, at the word of God, to break away from every scene of this enchanted ground, and leaving the world behind, to soar to regions from which all worldly things are forever excluded? Do we, like Simeon and Paul, pant to ascend to the full possession of the supreme good? Why do we wish for heaven? Is it that we may live forever at home with our God, and after a long and tedious separation, be forever united to the centre of our souls? Is it this, or is it some other heaven which is the object of our imagination and desire? And can we sincerely appeal to the Searcher of hearts, "There is none upon earth that I desire besides thee?" Have we a solemn conviction that we have chosen him for our supreme good and everlasting portion? Or do we still remain miserably encumbered with the lumber of earthly objects,—wretchedly ignorant of the Source of our being,—encompassed with darkness which has known no morning,—wickedly and fatally straying from the only source of happiness,—vagrants in the region of confusion, night, and misery? Ah wretched souls, whither do ye wander? Why prefer the night of chaos to the glories of the uncreated sun? Why flee from the fountain of happiness and love in pursuit of wretchedness and eternal war? Where can such bliss be found as you have left behind? Wherefore do you speed your course from the Author of your being as though all misery lived with him? Whither would you hurry in the wildness of your distraction? O return, return. Seek no longer for happiness in shunning its only source. O return, return. Let planets break loose from the attractions of the sun, and wander wildly and without order into the regions of night; but let not immortal souls break away from the attractions of the eternal Sun, to wander in wild and dark

vagaries, in wretched confusion and ruinous disorder to all eternity. O return, while return is possible, to the substance and fountain of light and blessedness. Let the attractions of divine love draw you nearer and nearer, until you shall fall into the glorious Sun, and lose yourselves to all eternity in this beatific union. Renounce your alliance with worms and dust, sustain a glorious resurrection from the dead, and learn to say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

The subject will apply itself to backsliding Christians. Ah why should they who have seen his glory and known his love, and seen the world eclipsed by his charms, so often forsake the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns? Why should that which they have known to be the supreme good, be left for things which they know cannot profit? In better hours you have avouched the Lord Jehovah to be your God and portion: you have vowed eternal fealty and subjection to him. Your oath is recorded in the rolls of heaven. Why then violate your promises thus attested, and forsake the source of happiness for comfort which you know is no where else to be found? Awake from these enchanted slumbers. Pursue no longer the unnatural course which carries you from your life and from the centre of yourselves. And what can you find abroad to allure you from home? Precisely what the dove found on leaving the ark,—no place on which to rest the sole of her foot. May you, like her, soon grow weary of the damp and cheerless regions without, and return on lagging pinions, and with mourning notes plead for an extended arm to take you in. Consider also from what mercies you have fled, and through what obligations you have broken away: and then, with the melting griefs of the Psalmist, give it in charge to yourselves, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

In the last place, the subject addresses itself to those who have deliberately and heartily made choice of the supreme good, and who have never, by the mists of earth or hell, lost sight of the good they have chosen. Hail, happy souls! All hail, ye unrivalled few! From my heart I give you joy. Ye have found the pearl of great price. Ye have

found that treasure which worlds might be sold in vain to purchase. Accept our congratulations.—Accept the congratulations of angels. Let your souls arise and shout for joy; for all the treasures of the universe are yours. The infinite God, with all that he possesses, is made over to you by a covenant well "ordered in all things and sure." Let your pious hearts be comforted under the loss of all terrestrial vanities. Let them shout for joy under all trials and crosses. For under the loss of all things, you possess all things still. The immortal God is yours; and in him you have all and need no more. Be not disheartened at the trials and conflicts in which you may be involved. Soon will you emerge from them all, and like the sun breaking from a cloud, forever shine forth in the kingdom of your Father. It is in our heart to bid you God speed, and encourage you to go on and renew your wise and virtuous choice of the God of all benignity and blessedness. Be emboldened to take a larger and still larger portion of the supreme good. God has said "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." Be satisfied with this portion, and murmur not though sinners take the rest. Never indulge vain regrets for the objects you have left behind. "Delight" yourselves more and more "in the Lord, and he" will more and more give you "the desires of" your "heart." And whatever allurements solicit you astray, whatever terrors arise in your course, whatever crosses you may have to encounter, never suffer yourselves to be unsettled from the habit of hourly saying, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Amen.

## **SERMON XLIII**

### **FORSAKEN THE FIRST LOVE**

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come

unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. - REV. 2:4, 5

These solemn words were a part of the message of the risen Saviour to the church of Ephesus.—That church had been planted by the apostle Paul, who at first continued there three years. Afterwards it was left to the care of Timothy and the elders who received from Paul that affecting charge at Miletus. At a later period John resided among them, and continued there till he was banished to Patmos by the emperor Domitian, about three years before this message was sent. Under all these advantages it is not to be supposed that the Ephesian church had departed from the Gospel in the articles of their faith or in the forms of their worship. Paul had indeed forewarned them that after his departure "grievous wolves" would enter in among them, "not sparing the flock;" and that even of themselves men would arise "speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." And we know that Cerinthus and Marcion were there, who denied the divinity of Christ. There were also Nicolas and Hymenæus and Alexander and Phygellus and Hermogenes. But men of this character who had belonged to that church, had been excluded; and the church in this very message are commended for their marked reprobation of the deeds of the Nicolaitans. Nor yet does it appear that the members of that church had fallen into any open immorality, or had relaxed in their attendance on divine ordinances. On the contrary, they are highly commended for their many labors, their patient sufferings for Christ, and their resolute resistance of those who had grossly departed from the Gospel in faith or practice. "I know thy works and thy labor and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars. And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored and hast not fainted." Amidst this constellation of excellencies one spot appeared: they had forsaken their first love. That tender and fervent affection which they had felt in the days of their espousals, had grown cold. While sitting under the ministry of the heavenly minded John,—while bleeding under ferocious

persecution,—they grew cold. This is the only charge brought against them,—the only thing for which they are not even commended. This it was which drew upon that beloved and suffering church the stern reproof and awful threatening of the text: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent:" that is, I will unchurch thee; a threatening which has long since been fulfilled, though upon a generation then distant; for where is now, and where has long been, the church of Ephesus?

Although Christians in their general course grow in grace, yet there may be times after their conversion when they are in a frame less holy than at the first. A great proportion of these Ephesians were doubtless real Christians, and yet they had grieved and offended their Saviour by forsaking their first love. They do not appear to have sunk into actual lukewarmness. This character belonged to the Laodiceans, and is noticed in a far different manner. But here you see a church somewhere between Laodicean lukewarmness and the fervor of their first love; and at this alone the Saviour is so offended, that, dear as they are to him on account of their many labors and sufferings for his sake, he solemnly threatens to come unto them quickly and remove their candlestick out of its place, except they repent. I shall,

I. Consider the greatness of the sin of coldness in Christians, and how offensive it is to God.

II. Inquire how we are to escape from this dreadful evil.

I. We will consider the greatness of the sin and how offensive it is to God.

But let us first find the persons that answer to this description. The subject has nothing to do with the professor who has apostatized to

error or open vice, or has withdrawn from the assemblies of the saints. He is a Laodicean or something worse. But the person respected may be supposed to be always in his place in the house of God. He prays in his family and in his closet. He frequently attends the meetings for conference and prayer, and is regarded in general as an amiable and exemplary Christian. But he has lost the fervor of his first love. In the hour when he first found himself delivered by a Saviour from eternal death,—when first that heavenly countenance looked in upon his darkness covered with smiles and charms,—when first he dropped the calculation of eternal wo and found a title to heaven in his hands,—O, said he, I never shall lose the remembrance of this hour and this deliverance. If I forget thee, O my Saviour, let my right hand forget her cunning: let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth when it ceases to be employed in thy praise. Then his soul, full of tenderness and devotion, could wander over the glories of his Saviour's character, and sit and weep at his feet. The attributes and government of God appeared perfect, and his grace most amazing. Every sentence in the Bible had a meaning; every doctrine possessed a charm; every promise was sweet. In communion with God and his people he felt that he could spend a whole eternity. Prayer was his breath; and he looked forward to the meetings with his brethren for prayer and praise, with all the sweetness and impatience of love. He could not look abroad on a world lying in wickedness but his eyes would be filled with tears, and he must seek some secret corner where to unburden his soul in prayer. He felt his heart united to his Christian brethren and to all mankind. He was melted into forgiveness to enemies. He longed to devote his property, his influence, his life, to the honor of his Redeemer. He was jealous of every thing that might grieve the divine Spirit, and watched his lips and his heart continually. He loathed every sin, and stretched forward with insatiable desires after the perfect possession of the divine image. But now all the glories of the divine nature seem little to affect him. The dying love of Christ is contemplated with dreadful indifference. He can look upon a world lying in sin without any great distress, and without one agonizing prayer for their deliverance. He feels less love for his Christian brethren, less love for mankind at

large. His eyes can rove over those pages which contain a history of God's reign, the records of all his mercies, the charter of all the believer's rights, without seeing a glory there. His prayers are cold and heartless and difficult, and little else than mockery. He can hear words sung which might well employ an angel's harp, without one emotion. He has scarcely any realizing sense of eternal things, and finds his heart darkened with much remains of infidelity and atheism. Those blessed meetings for prayer and praise are no longer pleasant,—are often neglected. His exertions for the salvation of men are feeble and sluggish, and he seems almost to have made up his mind to leave the world with God without an anxious thought. In a word, both his love to God and love to man are dreadfully abated. This is the very person whom the Saviour is this moment regarding with unutterable displeasure; and if he were to break silence and send a message to him to-day, it would be the very message contained in the text: "I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

The great sin and offensiveness of this frame of mind will appear from the following considerations.

1. You have no right to feel this indifference towards God or man. God never gave you a right. He constantly stands over you and says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." He requires the sweetest and most compassionate regard for your neighbor, and the most adoring and grateful affection towards himself, every hour, and has enjoined these with the same authority with which he says, "Thou shalt not kill." You are wont to complain of your dulness as a misfortune, or at most an infirmity; but he considers it in no other light than as rebellion. You are wont to think that the regulation of your heart lies so far beyond your power, that if your hands are clean you may acknowledge the coldness of your heart without a blush; but he



considers your heart as much under the control of his laws as your hands, and as strenuously demands a right temper as a right practice, and no more excuses your indifference than your crimes. In a word he has given you no more right to feel for one hour this unconcern for a perishing world, this coldness towards himself, than to steal or murder.

2. This coldness is not a mere defect, it bespeaks some degree of the positive action of the most polluting passions. There is no such thing as the soul's wandering from God but in pursuit of idols. It never leaves the fountain of living waters but for broken cisterns. This coldness then betrays some remains of idolatry; and idolatry comprehends the whole action of selfishness; for the undue love of the creature as the instrument of personal gratification, is at once the essence of idolatry and the very definition of selfishness. This coldness betrays pride. A heart humbled in the dust before its Maker, never yet was stupid. And nothing but such a humiliation before God can demolish pride. Where stupidity prevails there pride must lurk. And who can doubt that coldness betrays unbelief? Did not unbelief exclude a sense of the glories of God and the love of Christ, what heart could remain unaffected? Thus this indifference is the immediate effect of the four leading sins of a depraved soul; selfishness, pride, idolatry, and unbelief. If such a state is not sinful, what in the universe can be?

3. It is a dreadful abuse of God. It is passing by his infinite glories after other objects. It is slighting his adorable perfections. It is disregarding his authority, his pressing, moving, solemn, awful commands and entreaties. It may seem hard to charge all this upon a Christian merely because he is cold; but it seems thus only because we have been long accustomed to see men cold, and by inveterate habit have lowered down the standard of duty. But let us go back to first principles. Let us have come into existence, as the angels did, in the immediate presence of God, and have always seen his glory, and seen creatures adoring at his feet or swelling their transported praise. Let our minds never have been familiarized to the instance of

a creature turning away from that blaze of glory, from the dreadfulness of that majesty, from the sweetness of that love, to follow idols. Then let such a sight be presented as a cold Christian, standing in the presence of God unaffected, and reaching after the world: let all the evils of the heart which go in to work this declension be laid open at once; and then how would the sight appear?—Should we not pronounce it a greater abuse of God than any language can fully express?

4. It involves all the guilt of base ingratitude. It is the returns of one whose name was written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world, when he was not there to speak for himself, —when none was there to speak for him but the Being who is thus abused. It is the returns of one who was cast out in the open field, and left there, under the influence of a disastrous birth, to die; by whom, when there was no other eye to pity or hand to save, Jesus passed, and spread his skirt over him and bid him live. When you had done nothing to move his love more than others, he came out to seek you; he separated you from your former companions, and delivered you from eternal death, and put a title to heaven in your hands. O then you thought you never could forget him. You gazed upon the prints in his hands and feet, and heard him say, All this I bore for you. And then how did you sit and weep at his feet and sob out your thanks. But where are you now? Are these the returns he expected from you? O the dreadful ingratitude. No creatures in the universe but redeemed sinners can show such ingratitude as this.

5. There is in this thing the violation of an oath, or a solemn breach of covenant. In better hours you stood before the Lord and called heaven to witness that till the day of your death you would love him better than father or mother or life. Could you covenant less? Had you any authority to covenant less? This was certainly your covenant; and it was so recorded in heaven. You were then standing by the foot of the cross as represented in the holy emblems. You put forth your finger to the blood which issued from his heart and sealed your solemn covenant. And how have you kept your vows? Ah the infinite

guilt! No creatures perhaps on earth are capable of guilt so great as a Christian bound to God by oaths sealed with blood.

Under all this guilt the eyes of Christ meet you. It is an awful thought. I tremble as I express it. Let not imagination dare to play about this sacred spot. In this solemn stillness of the divine presence let our words be few and guarded. But Christ is angry. O the dreadful displeasure with which he contemplates the cold Christian this moment. I hear him say to such a one; "Remember—from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

II. Let us inquire what is to be done, and how we are to escape from this fearful condition. Had there been no way of escape, I would not have opened my lips. I have brought all this before you, my dear brethren, only to obtain a hearing while I endeavor to point out the way of escape from this awful coldness and this dreadful guilt.

The first thing which you have to do is to remember from whence you have fallen. Set yourselves down fixedly to reflect on the days of your espousals. Call to mind the tenderness of your love to God and man, and compare it with your present stupor. Remember how the world then appeared, into which you are now so deeply plunged; how the realities of eternity then stood before you, which are now so concealed; how the truths of that word affected your hearts, which is now a sealed book; how much you delighted in the company and conversation of the children of God, and in conferring with them on the things of your Father's kingdom, which are now insipid, and exchanged for communion in business and conversation about the world. Self-complacency has often whispered in your ear that the change is produced by the coolness of maturer wisdom. But let me test the truth of that suggestion by a few decisive questions.—Have you now as much love to God or man, or as much faith? Do you delight as much to commune with God? Do you feel as thankful to him? Have you as deep a sense of your sins? Do you as fully realize

the joys of heaven or the miseries of hell? Do you see the truths of the Bible to be so glorious or so real? Do you feel as tender an affection for your Christian brethren? Do you feel as much compassion for a perishing world? Does your heart melt so readily into forgiveness to enemies? Are you so active in doing good? or does your heart beat with so high a desire to advance the prosperity of the Church and the salvation of men? If not, bless not yourselves in the thought of your maturer wisdom. You have certainly declined from everything which had the appearance of faith and love: and if any difficulty arises from the known truth that Christians grow in grace, it is a difficulty which presses against the soundness of your hope. You have certainly declined in every thing which appeared like faith and love; and if real Christians cannot thus decline, the question is forever settled,—you are not a Christian.

Having ascertained how much you have fallen, the next step is to repent. This must be no ordinary repentance. You must come down into the very dust. You must mourn and weep at God's feet; and forgetting all other cares, must give your whole souls to humiliation and sorrow; resolving to lie in that posture till the return of his pardoning love, whether it be for a day or a month or a year; refusing to wander abroad among other truths even of a religious kind, till you have thoroughly settled this great controversy with your Maker. For one who has wandered thus, there is no getting back to a state of reconciliation with God,—there is no getting back to heavenly affections,—but by going through the valley of humility and measuring over all its solemn length. Begin then this day the work of repentance in earnest, and set apart this week and following weeks to this special duty, till peace is restored with your offended Saviour. If you linger long in this exercise, think not the time lost or your progress retarded. A month spent upon your face, would carry you forward more than your ordinary pace would do.

The next thing required is to do your first work. You must actually return to the faith and love of former days. This obligation is laid upon you by all the authority of God, who makes no allowance for

your dependance,—who accepts no plea of inability,—but demands all this with as little ceremony as if there was no Spirit and you were independent,—with as little ceremony as he commands any outward action. But you must go to him for strength. "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." For this strength you may go to him freely. "What man is there of you whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." A firm belief in this is the very faith required. "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

"And do the first works." This was spoken with all the authority of the Godhead. "And do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." Do you hear this, indifferent Christian? Unless you repent and return to your first love, he may come unto you quickly and break up your church-standing, either by taking you away, or leaving you to fall into open sins and forfeit your Christian privileges. Where are we? In what a solemn condition do we stand? Right under the eye of God, and this awful threatening ringing in our ears. It is too late to say, "A little more sleep, a little more slumber," when the sword of the Almighty is at our breast. We thought it would be in season to awake at some future day; but what think we now? "Else I will come unto thee quickly." While I speak he may be hastening to meet us. What a solemn condition are we in. An hour's delay may prove fatal. Instantly burst those chains which bind you to the world. Break up your wretched worldly calculations. Awake from sleep. Inquire what there is for you to do to advance the interests of religion and pluck souls from eternal death. Break, as from a burning house, from that stupor and fear of man which can demur about coming out from the

world and engaging thoroughly in religion. Rouse all your powers and come up to the help of the Lord. Whatever you do you must do quickly,—for the Judge is at the door.

## SERMON XLIV

### THE DOVE

Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground: but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark; for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. - GEN. 8:8, 9

The pigeon or dove is held up in Scripture as an emblem of the Church. This species of birds are distinguished by their simplicity and innocence. They are gentle, inoffensive, easily subdued and tamed, and quick to forget injuries. Strongly attached and faithful to their mates, they seem disconsolate under separation, and are easily reconciled when a breach happens between them. They are the most fruitful of birds, bearing almost every month. Their food is the purest seed or grain, their drink the fairest waters, and they loathe the filth on which the raven riots. They are weak, defenceless, exposed to injuries, beset with fears, and addicted to mourning. When pursued by ravenous birds they will not fight, but tremble and flee to their windows. In eastern countries they often seek a refuge in caves and holes of rocks, where they nestle and abide. Of all birds they are most attached to home; and if carried to almost any distance and then set free, they will steer straight and rapidly to their favourite cabin.

In allusion to these dispositions, Christ calls his Church his dove, and hails her, sheltered as she is in her eternal refuge, "O my dove, thou

art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs." To denote at once her meekness and tenderness, he represents her as regarding him with "doves' eyes." Attached and faithful to him, she sits solitary when he is absent, and when at any time she has grieved him by her follies, she is eager to be restored to favor. Her fruitfulness is in good works. Unable to live on the ordure of sin and worldly objects, she quenches her thirst at the waters of life, and can relish only "the finest of the wheat and—honey out of the rock." In this vale of tears she is addicted to mourning on account of her sins and the miseries of her race. "Like a crane or a swallow" so does she often "chatter;" she mourns sore like "a dove." With inextinguishable desire she cleaves to her home, the bosom of her God; and when driven from it by the hurry of her passions, nothing, though worlds rise between, can prevent her from rushing back and seeking again a retreat in her father's arms. Weak and defenceless in herself and exposed to injury,—disinclined to strife and incompetent to the rough encounter, she fears and trembles and flees to hide herself in her eternal rock. Like the gentle spirited Psalmist shrinking from his robust enemies, she often pants with the desire, "O that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away and be at rest."

With these several marks of resemblance, a dove may not improperly be considered as the emblem of a Christian. So the ark, in which the Church was sheltered from the storms which swept a wicked world, may, even with the consent of the apostle Peter, be considered as a symbol of Christ.—The circumstances recorded in the text, of the dove's leaving the ark, finding restlessness abroad and returning with instinctive eagerness to that friendly refuge, have been employed, without incurring the censure of fanciful allusion, to illustrate the wanderings of Christians, their consequent uneasiness and glad return. I will not say that the passage was originally intended to be applied in this manner; but if it furnishes an apt illustration of truths obviously taught in other parts of the Bible, it may lawfully be employed for such illustration.

I. First then the dove wandered from the ark; and Christians alas are too prone to wander from Christ. In this state of imperfection and sorrow they are not so happy or so wise as to abide constantly at home. This happiness is reserved for a better state. O that it were now here. But God knows it is far otherwise with us. Here Christians must have their turns of wandering, that they may learn the depths of their corruption and their unutterable ill deserts; that they may learn the evil by tasting the bitterness of sin; that being weary of a world of pollution and trouble, they may pant after a world of holy and ceaseless rest. Here they must have their turns of wandering that they may more fully discover their need of a Saviour, while they stand amazed at the grace which could stoop so low as to reach and raise them to heaven; that they may obtain a more affecting sense of the patience and faithfulness of God which bore with them and brought them through; in a word, that they may be fitted for a world of everlasting humility,—be qualified to unite in the praises of redeeming love, and fully learn that lesson which all things were created to teach, that they are nothing and that God is all in all. Were they made perfect at once, and were never to endure the struggle of two co-existing and contending principles, they could not obtain so exquisite a sense of one of these truths.—The wisdom of God will therefore appear in leaving in his militant people passions capable of being enkindled, and appetites of being enticed, by the various objects which inhabit these regions of seduction and crime. But ah their guilt, which nothing can excuse or diminish. Redeemed as they have been by a Saviour's blood; separated and distinguished as they are from the world,—from all the creatures of God,—with a title to heaven in their hands,—with all the promises clustering upon them,—with crowns of glory ready to drop upon their heads; knowing also as they do their Saviour's love, and that all their happiness lies in communion with him, and all their misery in wandering from him, yet they will wander. They will turn their backs on their Lord, their life, and stray in pursuit of airy forms, the sprights of their own distempered fancy. They do not break away at once; they slide gradually and imperceptibly from him. First they relax their vigilance: then some constitutional sin, which is always the first to



live and the last to die, begins to move: next their closets and their Bibles are sought with less zeal and tenderness: then their conversation becomes less spirited: the world revives its faded charms: their sense of everlasting realities becomes stupified; visible things fill their eye: those twin sisters that were born in heaven, faith, hope, and charity, languish about their hearts; and before they are aware vast regions have risen up between them and God.

II. It was not without an object that the dove left the ark; she went to seek another rest. It is not without an object that Christians wander from Christ; they go to search for rest in other things. Alive at every point with feelings and tastes which were never made for heaven, and which only earth can gratify,—which are naturally loud and importunate for their objects, and though for a moment silenced by the voice of a present God, were not destroyed; no sooner is the voice which stilled them retired, than this swarm of inbred desires renew their clamorous demands for gratification. By help of the imagination, (that mental necromancer,—that traitor which stands ready to lend his mystic aid to any rebel in the soul,) each brings his object before the eye, arrayed in charms not its own, and then, more enamored still, presses for permission to embrace it. The soul, half seduced, yields a reluctant consent, and the worldly affections scatter and seize their respective objects. Some more delicate tastes rest on the beauties of a landscape, and toy with the works of God without ascending to him; others, of a more social cast, place friends and society on the throne: others start in the race of ambition: others dart upon the gains of mammon: others pursue the fickle and ever varying phantom of pleasure. All unite in seeking a paradise on earth in which the mind can rest without ascending to God. This earthly paradise, which glitters and dances in the eye, is the false meteor which has allured many pilgrims from their way. The bright deceit keeping still ahead, can never be overtaken, and the luckless wanderer too late finds himself involved in difficulties from which it is not easy to escape.

III. "But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot." Though some of the mountains stood above the waters, she could find no food adapted to her nature,—no convenient cabin for repose. She wandered unsatisfied and uneasy, till she returned on lagging pinions, and mourned at the window for an arm to take her in. It was quite different with the raven which went out about the same time. He felt no uneasiness for what he had left behind,—no restless desires to return to the ark. He could flap his wings and exult that he had regained his liberty. Not a look of desire did he turn towards his former prison. He wheeled and circled through the air as blithe as joy itself, snuffing the grateful fumes of human flesh and searching for carcasses upon the mountains.

Here is an emblem of one of the most characteristic distinctions between a Christian and a hypocrite. Both may wander; but the state of their minds is very different. The hypocrite can neglect his closet and his Bible, can loosely treat the holy Sabbath, and abandon his former strict and regular habits, with little disturbance to himself. He can live very composedly without the presence of Christ, without a heart that dwells in heaven, without thoughts that hold intercourse with the skies. His affections are earthly; his cares are earthly; his calculations mostly relate to earthly objects; his conversation is earthly and often frivolous. He selects society that is vain and worldly, in preference to the pious and spiritual. None can tell wherein he differs from a man of the world. Still he is composed, cheerful, and gay. He is contented to barter communion with heaven for the diversified pleasures of the world, and with various expedients stills the remonstrances of his conscience. "Why, who can expect always to be rapt in religious flights? We are not angels but men, and must shape our minds to the circumstances of this inferior state." There are hours when conscience will be heard, but he has an answer ready to meet her reproaches: "There are many that do worse." If he falls into acknowledged sins, these are "only the ordinary slips of imperfect nature,—the spots of God's children." If he commits crimes in secret, such as, were tears in heaven, would make angels weep, why "David and Peter did as bad;" or he raises

some error to justify his crimes. Raven like he can riot on the filthy morsel of worldly objects, and feels more happy in his present liberty than in his former confinement. If he is restless, it is not to return to the ark, but to find more prey. You never hear him mourning like doves in the valleys. He is not apt to be sad. His countenance tells you that his heart is gay. Perhaps he scoffs at pious sorrow as the morbid glooms of superstition. Now if this be a dove, tell me, ye that can, what it is to be a raven.

Far different is the temper of wandering Christians. With desires which reach to heaven and which only God can fill, they feel an immense and "aching void." They wander from object to object, but are not satisfied with any. They engage in new enterprises, but their way is hedged up with thorns so that they cannot find their paths. They enter into company, but in the midst of society they are alone. They try festivity, but "even in laughter" their "heart is sorrowful." Every amusement is insipid; every enjoyment is cankered at the root. As well might the earth disclose her cheerful landscapes without the sun, as a pious soul be cheerful without the presence of God. Whatever the world is to sinners, it is forever spoiled for Christians as a place of rest. In that blessed hour when the light of heaven first broke in upon their darkness, it obscured the glory of the world and ruined it finally as their dependance and portion. In the constitution which God has made, he appears determined that his children shall be happy in him or be miserable. He seems to have passed an unalterable decree which confines their enjoyments within these limits. True, their improved tastes may enjoy his bounties and his works, and that in a purer and more sublime degree than men of the world; but it is not with a worldly spirit,—not with the same view and estimate of the world that carnal men entertain. And when the presence of God is withdrawn this enjoyment of his works is departed with it. Then their solitary and pining souls can say with David, "My heart is smitten and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread.—I am like a pelican of the wilderness:—I watch and am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top." Or if they have lost their sensibility, still God vexes them with his arrows. He will not suffer

them to find rest for the sole of their foot in any corner of creation, until they return to the ark from which they have foolishly and wickedly strayed.

IV. The dove at length returned, forced back by the prevalence of the waters; and wandering Christians will surely return to Christ, and not unfrequently are they driven back by the waves of affliction. That love which chose and separated them from the world,—that power which first broke the chains of their bondage,—that covenant in which every divine perfection is pledged to complete their salvation,—all are engaged to recover them from their wanderings. Were they hid in the remotest corner of the earth;—were they, in the act of fleeing from God, arrested like Jonah and deposited at the bottom of the mountains; the eye of Christ would search them out, and his hand would bring them to his holy temple. He who commands the resources of the universe,—to whom all nature is a magazine of arms with which he can make war upon his creatures; he can select from an infinite variety of weapons, those with which he may choose to smite his straying children and chastise them back to his arms. A child may be taken,—a wife,—a parent; all that he has in the world shall be removed, as surely as the Lord loveth him, before he shall be suffered to live and die away from Christ. The love which is engaged to reclaim him does not want means, and will not be resisted. Neither the corruptions of the heart, nor the pollutions of the flesh, nor the allurements of the world, nor the snares of Satan, shall be able finally to separate a Christian from the love of Christ.

V. When the dove returned and mourned at the window, did the patriarch shut the bowels of his compassion against her? No, "he put forth his hand—and pulled her in unto him into the ark." And think you that Noah had more compassion for a stupid bird, than the Saviour of the world has for his disciples and members? Will he allow his turtle dove to sink in the floods when she returns and mourns at his window, and complains that not a place in the wide world will furnish her a rest for the sole of her foot. He who, when she was a raven, gave his life to transform her into a dove, will not,

when she is a dove, see her perish, sighing and pleading by his side. When she comes home fleeing before the tempest, or trembling at the talons of a pursuing foe, he will put forth his hand, and with a tenderness which Noah never felt, pull "her in unto him into the ark."—He feels a love for her, wandered as she has, infinitely too great to be expressed. Was ever an infant, after a long unnatural absence, unwelcome to the arms of its mother? That wonder may be; but as the God of truth and grace liveth, returning Christians shall never be unwelcome to the bosom of Christ. That hand which wiped the tear from a weeping world,—that hand which stanch'd the wounds of a bleeding race, will receive them, will quell their alarms, will wipe the sorrows from their cheek, and lay them to rest upon his heart. The throbbings of their breast are still, or are changed to commotions of joy and love. A heavenly calmness, and peace that "passeth understanding," are descended upon their conscience. See them hang upon his arm. They look up with smiles and tears into those eyes which first looked them into repentance; eyes which still fall on them with the sweetness of heaven, with the tenderness of Jesus.—Where are now their late guilty fears and horrid forebodings? They are all passed away like a restless dream, and now they have awoke in their Saviour's arms to immortal hopes and joy. They have awoke, after a dream that they were poor, and found themselves the heirs of all riches. And now are they confounded and open not their mouths any more for shame, because the Lord is pacified towards them for all that they have done. O blessed morning, and blessed be the God that spread its golden light upon the hills. It is well for us that we have a Saviour who "restoreth" our souls, who "leadeth" us "in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." "Though" we "have lain among the pots, yet shall" we "be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." Blessed tidings for broken hearts that are mourning and sighing for an absent God. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God." Soon will he return "like a roe or young hart upon the mountains." So he has come. He is here. He stands before you this day and spreads his

wounded hands and invites you to his bosom. What prevents you from rushing into his arms and losing your sorrows amidst the joy of that embrace? Can you elsewhere find a better rest? You have searched the world and you know it is not there. But when all other places exclude you,—when in the whole creation you are not allowed one point on which to rest the sole of your foot, this faithful bosom,—this last resort,—always offers you a safe retreat.

Come gather around me, ye beloved but foolish children who have wandered from your Lord, and hear the message which I bring you from him and the remonstrance which I present you in his name. Had you not known that rest was to be found only with him,—had not experience taught you the vexations and miseries of wandering,—you would have been half excused. But in better hours you have tasted his love,—you have lain in his bosom,—you knew that a departure from him was a plunge into a thousand woes,—was abandoning a delight which an angel might gladly have cherished. Apprized of all this, you have slipped from your Saviour's arms, and slid, as your folly drew you, into dangers and perplexities. And where are you now? Dissatisfied with yourselves and with the world around you; dark, guilty, restless, and alone.—Where is the blessedness which once you spoke of? Where the light that cheered your cloudless morning? Where the calm and happy hours of communion with God which you once enjoyed, while your eye, fixed on heaven and filled with glory, marked with transport your eternal home? All, all departed, and changed for night and tempests and fears. And this is not all. You are preparing a future rod to chastise your folly: you are preparing smarts and anguish for yourselves. And better that you should be driven back by a whip of scorpions, than be allowed to wander still. Ah why will you fawn and court and pursue a world that treats you with such harshness and disdain? Gentler treatment would you have had from Christ. He would have cherished you, and soothed you, and sheltered you from a world in arms. Why then did you leave his friendly bosom? Did he give you a cause? Had he been to you "a wilderness,—a land of darkness?" Has he merited such treatment at your hands? Ah, had he thus neglected you when your

interest was at stake, where but in eternal misery would you now have been? Arise, ye wretched wanderers, and return. Shake off this drowsiness and sloth; strip away the film from your eyes; tear the world from your hearts; and arise to action and to comfort. Think of the service which you owe him who served you in death. Think of the invaluable interests of the Church which are in a measure committed to you. All this time your usefulness sleeps, while the world is dying around you for want of your prayers, your zeal, and your godly example. Look at the stupidity of your children; see the growing irreligion of your houses; mark the looseness of your streets; (streets and houses in which the voice of the Son of God has been often heard:) and here you are, (some of you I fear,) sleeping over the distressing scene, with a heart as stupid as death and as cruel as the grave. In the name of God, if that heart ever felt,—if those eyes ever wept,—awake and feel and weep. Come, return to the ark of your rest and bring your families with you; for a storm is gathering: I hear the roar of approaching floods: step into the ark or you are swept away.

# SERMON XLV

## MANNA

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna. -  
REV. 2:17

The hidden manna is Jesus Christ, the bread of life, including all the blessings of his purchase. He is called by this name because the manna which supported the Church in the wilderness was a lively type of him. The application of the name of the type to the antitype is not uncommon in Scripture. Thus Christ is called David, and the high priest, and the lamb slain, and the passover. Many are the features of resemblance between Christ and the ancient manna.

Did this manna descend from the skies? Christ is "the living bread which came down from heaven." For though his human nature commenced its existence on earth, and his divine nature could not change place, yet by the union of the two natures in one person, it became true that the same person that had eternally lived in heaven appeared on earth; the same Mediator that had chosen the heavens for the principal scene of his manifestations, at length manifested himself in this world. Before, he had appeared in heaven; now no Mediator was to be found in the universe but in the streets of Judea and Galilee.

Was the manna provided for people in a desolate wilderness, who had a long and wearisome way to pass before they could find their rest? Christ and the blessings of the Gospel are provided to solace a company of pilgrims who have to wander a while in this thorny maze, and to encounter all its dangers and hardships before they reach their heavenly home.

Was the manna provided for people who had no other supply, who were reduced to the greatest straits and must have perished without



it? So Christ was sent to rescue those who were in a perishing state, who had no other helper, and must eternally have died without that provision.

Was the manna sent to a nation who felt their necessities and realized their dependance on heaven for relief? So Christ is provided for those, and none but those, who feel themselves to be poor and wretched and miserable and blind and naked; who renounce every hope of helping themselves and fix their dying eye on him alone. He was anointed to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to comfort all that mourn.—The manna was not sent to the full-fed Egyptians, nor to the Amalekites or Amorites, the avowed enemies of God, but to the holy people, the Church. And Christ is not sent to benefit the stout hearted and the obdurate. He will not take the children's bread and cast it to dogs. A rebellious world, however they may expect deliverance by the blood which they trample under foot, will find a dreadful disappointment. None but the obedient and believing can partake of the hidden manna.

The ancient manna was as much the daily food of the meanest of the people as of the princes of the tribes. "Man did eat angels' food," or as it is otherwise rendered, "the bread of the mighties;" intimating, as the advocates of this construction believe, that the common people enjoyed as free a use of the manna as the heads of the congregation or as Moses himself. In like manner the believing beggar has as free access to Christ as the prince on his throne. Many of the children of God are doomed to coarse and scanty worldly fare; but they enjoy as rich a share of the bread of life, and fill as honorable a place at the table of the Lord, as the great and noble of the earth. Here they need not stand behind the crowd, but are as welcome and will be as kindly treated as the most honorable. Most honorable, did I say? Who in the kingdom of Christ are more honorable than the fishermen of Galilee? Here the scale of merit is reversed. In the kingdom of him who estimates every man according to his worth, a broken heart, a heart swelling with love to God and man, is reputed more honorable than an understanding distended

with human science, than coffers filled with golden treasure, than a character emblazoned with worldly glory. To cast discredit on the scale by which the world estimate merit, our Saviour for the most part passes by the great and noble, and chooses "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," and "the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty:" for "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." The poorest Christian in this assembly will be as welcome as the rich to the feast now prepared,—as welcome to come daily to the Gospel banquet. Here is food, here is an inheritance, which cannot be taken from them. Though the fig tree should not blossom nor fruit be in the vine, yet this unspeakable privilege to feast on the body of Christ and to draw refreshment from the fountain of eternal love, would still remain. No change of fortune, no blast or mildew, no rust corrupting or thieves breaking through to steal, can filch this blessedness from them; a blessedness which in the midst of poverty makes them richer than the wealthiest monarchs without it. It seems like profanation to call an heir of glory poor. The treasures of the universe are his.

The manna was bestowed freely, without money and without price. This cannot but remind us of that heavenly invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Had Gospel blessings been put up at any price, they never could have been obtained. What have a poor bankrupt race with which to purchase? a race as poor as sin can make them. Had they much it would be too little; but since they have nothing, what can they do unless they receive freely? All the prayers ever made by sinners since the fall, all their strivings and tears, are infinitely too small to purchase one smile from heaven. And yet thousands are wearying themselves to obtain salvation by their own works. With what indignation would God have seen a Hebrew coming and offering him money for manna. Sinners must consent to come as beggars and to receive freely. And freely they may receive. Not a sinner in this house needs to perish. Let none plead spiritual poverty as a bar. The poverty of the Hebrews did not prevent them

from obtaining manna. Christ died that the unworthy might live; and none but the unworthy can receive his grace. Urge no longer as a bar the only thing which makes a successful application possible.

The manna was poured down plentifully. There was enough to supply more than a million of people. In like manner the blessings of the Gospel are sufficient, not only for the deepest wants of the most destitute, but for a whole world of sinners. There is atonement enough in the death of Christ for all, merits enough in his obedience, love enough in God, room enough in heaven. What pity then that any should perish. What pity would it have been for thousands of Hebrews to starve while heaps of manna lay piled up at their door. Let none stay without, complaining, when the whole nature of God is open to give them room. O that some poor sinner would this day become convinced that his own is the fault if his starving soul is not filled with the bread of life.

Notwithstanding the great supply of manna, none could be benefitted without taking pains to gather it. So God may be merciful, and Christ may die, and heaven may be full of comfort, and yet if men will not receive the Gospel all is in vain. A Saviour may plead, the Spirit may invite, ministers may preach, and Christians may pray, and yet if sinners will not hear, they must die none the better, but all the worse, for these means of grace. None must think to lie still and trust to the mercies of God and the mediation of Christ. It is as impious as it is fatal to presume on neglected mercy. Men must lay hold of it by the hand of faith, or it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorah than for them. How long will an unbelieving world stand by the side of infinite treasures without putting out a hand to receive, and then cast the blame of their destruction on God and say, He made us what we are and we cannot help it?

The manna must be gathered every day. How much soever was gathered at once, none of it was fit for use on the morrow. It bred worms and became corrupt. The same necessity is laid on us to apply for the bread of life every day. How much soever a Christian receives

to-day, he will have none to-morrow without a new application. He cannot live on past experiences without the present enjoyment of God. Old discoveries will not supply the soul with light and life when faith and prayer decline. When the Christian through much humiliation and agony, has obtained a feast, he is too apt to be satisfied and to neglect to wrestle for more. He imperceptibly slides away from God, and before he is aware finds himself in darkness and the prey of temptation. His departure was easy, but his return must be accomplished by long and wearisome toil. This resting in present comforts is one capital reason why Christians do not steadily enjoy communion with God. They should wear out life in continued applications for the bread of heaven.

At a certain time the Hebrews became cloyed with the manna and madly looked back to the flesh pots of Egypt. God in anger gave them the desires of their heart, and sent them quails until the meat was ejected from their nauseated stomachs: and while the flesh was yet in their mouths, he swept away many of them with a plague. In like manner Christians sometimes lose their relish for heavenly things and begin to look back to the pleasures of the world. And sometimes God in anger gives them the desires of their heart. He withdraws his presence and increases their worldly comforts, and gives them a chance to try what the world can do for them without a God. And this he does until worldly objects and worldly prosperity itself become loathsome. And then when they seek him he hides his face, and seems to say, You preferred the world to me, and now you may have the world without a God. And this he does until they are ready to cry, If thou take away thyself take every thing else away: these husks only mock my misery. While under this discipline, other judgments are often sent to punish them for lusting after idols which they had sworn forever to renounce.

These observations respect only the outward circumstances of the manna; let us follow the comparison into a consideration of its nature and uses.

Manna was the bread which supported natural life, and Christ is the bread which supports the spiritual and eternal life of his people. When the Jews said, "Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness," Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." In order that life might flow from him, it was necessary that his body should be broken and his blood shed. His broken body and flowing blood are as essential to the life of the soul, as meats and drinks are to the life of the body. Hence the expression, "My flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed."

The manna was capable of satisfying the craving appetite of the Hebrews. So Christ and his salvation are admirably fitted to satisfy the desires of an immortal soul under the circumstances of our fallen race, and in a right temper and view of things.—And nothing else can satisfy it. Let a man, under a strong sense of his sin and ruin, be presented with earthly kingdoms; they are all like jests to a dying man. Let him attempt to pacify his conscience by a round of self righteous duties; it is all in vain. But let him get a view of Christ and his fulness, and he eagerly cries, Give me this and I ask no more: give me this or I die; give me this and I live forever.

The manna was very delicate and grateful to the taste, "like wafers made of honey." But more divinely sweet is the bread which came down from heaven. The Saviour of the world is the chief among ten thousands and altogether lovely. "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." The divine charms which shine in the face of Jesus Christ, the heavenly truths and objects which he reveals, delight and ravish the soul as nothing else can do.

The manna was so wholesome that no Hebrew received injury from eating it. It rendered none sick or infirm, but contributed to the health of all. In like manner the Gospel is of sovereign efficacy to secure the healthful vigor of the soul. In proportion as it is received,

the soul is healed of all its sinful infirmities and confirmed in immortal health. No injury is derived from living on Christ. The distresses which are peculiar to Christians come not from receiving him but from not receiving him enough. When the soul is intemperate in the use of worldly fare, it is sickly indeed; but as soon as it returns to Christ, it rises up into the undying health of the sons of God.

The account we have of the manna is, that "the people went about and gathered it and ground it in mills or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it." Thus after it was bruised and broken, and prepared in the fire, it was served up to feed the Church of God. One cannot read this account without being reminded of him who was "wounded for our transgressions" and "bruised for our iniquities." He was sorely broken on the cross; in the fire of affliction he was prepared to become the bread of life; and from that fire he is served up to feast his beloved Church. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." He was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." The Lord "laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted." "For the transgression of my people was he stricken." "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."

When you behold at this table the consecrated bread, which was once cut down by the reaper, and then beat out by the thresher's stroke; which was broken to powder between the grinding stones, and then prepared in the fire, and is now served up and broken again before our eyes to furnish a feast for the Church of God, will not your melting hearts have in remembrance the friend who died on Calvary to sustain your sinking lives? Will you not contemplate those dreadful sufferings through which he passed to provide this feast for you? Let his infant cries call you to the manger, where the Creator of heaven and earth is cast out with the cattle of the stall. The great architect of the universe reduced to the reputed son of a carpenter! He who dwelt in eternal repose toiling at a wearisome trade! The Son

of the living God charged as an accomplice with Beelzebub! Follow him to the garden. What causes that blood to burst through the agonizing pores? It is not guilt but love. He sees divine wrath pointed, not at him, but at a world which he tenderly loves. He sees that wrath, like wreaths of convolving smoke, darkening the face of heaven. Before his mind is painted a world writhing in the flames of hell. And if a mother would be tortured to behold her infant withering in the flames, no wonder that this view of divine wrath against a world dearer than a mother's infant, should press out the blood from his anguished heart.—Attend him to the judgment hall. The Judge of the world arraigned at a creature's bar! That face which reflects the brightness of the Father's glory, is defiled with spittings. He at whose feet prostrate angels veil their faces, is mocked by knees bent in derision. The rough thorns are thrust through his temples. The scourge of wires tears the flakes from his bleeding shoulders.—Through the live nerves the dreadful spikes are driven. For six long hours the whole weight of his body hangs suspended on these agonizing cords. And all this because we had sinned. All this to deliver us from the ever-burning lake. Dear suffering Lord, was ever love, was ever grief like thine?

And now, my dear brethren, can we approach this memorial of our suffering Lord with unaffected hearts? In this glass shall we behold him crucified before our eyes and be unmoved? This bread is the manna of Gospel days, the symbol of the living bread which came down from heaven. Receive it with strong desires to feed on the bread of life. This cup represents that blood without which there is no remission. Approach it with unutterable desires for pardon through the atonement. This is the day to celebrate the public honors of Zion's King: let every saint be glad. Here, as at the foot of the cross, let us swear eternal fealty to him.

But of the many who are not here, our anxious hearts inquire, And where are they? We look round for them and they are missing at the feast. And why did they not come? Do they not need a Saviour as much as we? Have they no souls?—Are they not to live beyond the

grave? Will they be absent when the table of Christ is spread in his kingdom, and their parents and children are sitting around it? O my friends, where are you when your flesh and blood are setting out for heaven? The manna is heaped up at your door, and why are you perishing with hunger? A voice sounds from the sacred elements. The bread calls you to come. The wine cries as though it were the blood of Christ. The table of the Lord pleads, Ho every one that thirsteth come. Heaven and earth invite you. The Church of God reaches out a mother's arms to embrace the long lost children of her prayers. Give joy to the Church of Christ. Give joy to angels. Give joy to your sainted parents who may now be hovering over this scene. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come.—And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." Amen.

## **SERMON XLVI**

### **THE HEART OF GOD AFFECTED BY PRAYER**

And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. - GEN. 32:28

Jacob, having taken certain extraordinary measures to wrest the birthright and blessing from Esau, was compelled by his brother's hate to flee to Padanaram. In this country, which lay to the east of Euphrates, lived Laban, the brother of Jacob's mother. The wanderer took up his abode with his uncle, married his two daughters, and by them had a numerous offspring. After the lapse of twenty years God commanded him to return to his father, and renewed the promise of his protection. Jacob set out on his return, crossed Euphrates and came to Mahanaim, a place on the east of Jordan, which afterwards belonged to the tribe of Gad. From this place, or about this time, he sent messengers before him to Mount Seir, (a country on the south of



Canaan, in which Esau had settled,) to make his peace with his brother. The messengers returned with the account that Esau was on his way with four hundred armed men. Jacob had now crossed the river Jabbok and had proceeded on his way as far as Jordan. At this intelligence he was greatly alarmed. For notwithstanding the general promises of God, he knew not what particular trials might await him. Though his own life was safe, he knew not how many of his children were doomed to bleed on his brother's sword. It was a trying moment. Something more was to be done than to sit still and pray. Notwithstanding all the promises and all his trust in God, he knew that means must be used for the preservation of his family: and the means which he adopted discovered a remarkable sagacity and knowledge of the human heart. He set apart five droves of cattle as a present, which he sent across Jordan to meet his brother. He separated the cattle into different droves, and sent one drove after another, with suitable distances between; wisely foreseeing that, coming in this order, they would make a deeper impression on his brother than though they had all met him at once.

In the mean time he decamps in the night and carries back his family several miles up Jabbok, to the ford of the river. There he crosses it and leaves his family on the north side, in a place of as great safety as he could find. This done, he recrosses the ford, takes his station between his family and the approaching enemy,—on a spot of ground which from the vision of that night was afterwards called Penuel,—and then casts himself on God.

This was indeed a solemn and most trying hour. It was the dead of night. Universal stillness reigned. His sleepless family lay trembling on the other side of Jabbok. His brother was hastening forward, with forced marches and implacable resentments, to slay "the mother with the children." To flee, thus encumbered with women and children, was impossible. To attempt resistance against so great a force, would be in vain. What can screen him from a brother's fury? He has exhausted all the means in his power. He can do no more.—What hopes then remain but those which rely on heaven? To heaven

he turned his eyes. Soon a bright form appeared before him. It was the same that had appeared to him at Bethel; the same Person, and perhaps the same figure, that afterwards hung on Calvary.

By miraculous light he was emboldened to embrace him and to press him importunately for a blessing. The heavenly form put on the appearance of resistance, as though he would tear himself away. How could he be spared? What could the patriarch do alone in that trembling crisis? Methinks I hear the cries of the affrighted children from the other side, and the fierce tread of hostile feet before. He could not let him go. He was emboldened, (surprising confidence!) to hold the vision fast. O did he know what he had in his embrace? It was nothing less than the treasure of the universe. How could he let him go? Who would not give his life for such another embrace?

This surprising struggle, which was designed to bring out God's condescension to be wrestled with in prayer, and the confidence and efficacy of faith, continued "until the breaking of the day." Then said the Angel of the covenant "Let me go for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And he said unto him, what is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.—And he blessed him there."

Having thus prevailed with God, and obtained power to prevail with men, that is, with Esau and his host, his heart was at rest.

The sun arose as he passed over to his family. He had not been there long before, across the plain, he discovered his brother, approaching. He had just time to dispose his family in the order in which he wished them to approach;—the two handmaids with their children first, Leah with her children next, and the beloved Rachel with her Joseph in the rear; in order that the most beloved might be the least exposed in case of attack, or in case of peace that the most beautiful,

by coming last, might complete the agreeable impression. With all his confidence in God he still adhered to means.

Before the whole Jacob himself passed over, to receive the blessing on the very spot where he had wrestled with the Angel. "And," (still using means,) "he—bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him; and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him; and they wept." Behold the blessed effects of trusting in God and committing one's self to him in prayer when all other helpers fail. On the same spot that had been sanctified by his prayers, he received this great deliverance. The same clod that had been just wet with praying tears, was now sprinkled with the tears of brotherly affection.—Who will ever again distrust the faithfulness or resources of that God who could thus extract its venom from the scorpion's sting and soften an Esau into a brother. Penuel is the place where all should seek relief, as they have occasion, from the dangers and trials of life.

"Thy name shall be called—Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men." The very name of Israel signifies one who prevails with God: and the application of this name to the whole Church is a standing memorial of their potency in prayer. Great is Israel's weight and prevalence in heaven. And they will prevail with men; will prevail over all their enemies,—over all the profane Esaus who throw away their own birthright and then follow their "brother with the sword." Yes, great is Israel's weight and prevalence in heaven. And so long as they retain this name, their influence will never cease. It is a mark put upon them to betoken that they are invincible, (I had almost said, almighty,) in prayer. For by prayer they take hold of almighty strength and appropriate it to their benefit.

My object in this sermon is to show that by prayer believers really affect the heart of God.

It seems to be too common an opinion that God acts from the dictates of wisdom without feeling, or at least that he has no feelings for individuals, but only a benevolence for the universe at large. But how can he love the whole and not the parts? It is sometimes said that prayer is designed merely to fit men for blessings, not to influence God. If by fitting men for blessings is meant that it awakens in them those feelings which please and affect the mind of God, and render him unwilling to deny their requests, then prayer truly fits them for the blessings. But what will you say when prayer brings down blessings on others who never prayed, and who live in distant quarters of the globe. The good bestowed in such a case is no personal benefit to the prayerful. It is objected that God causes the exercises which are put forth in prayer, and that he cannot be affected by what he himself produces. But he created men and angels, who are none the less the objects of his love on that account. Will the objector say that God has no delight in the holiness of creatures because he himself has caused it? And if he can love the creatures which he has made and the holiness which he has caused, why can he not be affected by the prayers which he has excited? Every man has an individuation of existence as distinct from God as from Gabriel, and has a consciousness of pleasure as distinct from that which is attached to the divine mind as it is from the happiness of Paul. Our persons, our character, our desires, our happiness, are all as interesting to God as though he had not created or sanctified us,—as though we were self-existent.

The Scriptures speak of God as though he was really affected by prayer,—as though, from infinite and direct tenderness towards his children individually, he could not deny their requests, except so far as their good and the public interest require it. Are these representations merely after the manner of men, as we speak of his eyes and hands and feet, or do they hold forth literal and exact realities?

One thing is certain: the experience of creatures can never prove that these representations are not literally true. The conduct of God will

always correspond with that of a parent who is actually prevailed upon by the entreaties of his children. They go to him, ask, and receive; receive what they would not have had if they had not asked for it. They who bear the name of Israel have the same power to prevail with God that Jacob had at Penuel. The Angel of the covenant acted as though he could not break away from the eager patriarch. The effect was the same as though he could not. So it is with the struggle of other saints. How often is the appearance strongly held out that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Zion in prayer appears absolutely invincible. By prayer she slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand of Sennacherib's army at a stroke. By prayer she destroyed the immense army of Moab in the days of Jehoshaphat. By prayer she slew a hundred and twenty thousand of the Midianites, while Gideon and the three hundred men with him only blew their trumpets and broke their pitchers and stood still in their place. By prayer she overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea. By prayer she vanquished the Amalekites at Rephiddim. By prayer she demolished the walls of Jericho. And the time would fail me to tell of the overthrow of the Canaanites, the Philistines, Edom, Ammon, and Syria, and all the conquests which prayer has made. When prayer has put her hand to the sword, "one" has chased "a thousand, and two" have "put ten thousand to flight." Thus have Israel power to prevail with men. And the history of the Church proves that they have power to prevail with God.

What power had Abraham to prevail with God, when by successive entreaties he obtained his promise to spare the wicked Sodom if there were in it fifty righteous men,—if forty-five,—if forty,—if thirty,—if twenty,—and even if ten. In repeated instances, when the patience of God seemed exhausted by the rebellions in the wilderness, Moses prevailed with him to reverse the exterminating sentence. Joshua prevailed with God to cause the sun and moon to stand still. Gideon prevailed with him to confirm his faith by the fleece and the dew, and to vary the sign at his solicitation. Hannah prevailed with him to give the long desired son to her maternal arms. Samuel prevailed with him to rock the pole with thunders and to

deluge the earth with rain, as a reproof sign to the rebellious Hebrews. Elijah by his prayers stopped the windows of heaven, that "it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." Again he prayed, "and the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit." Hezekiah prevailed on God to reverse the sentence of death which had gone out against him, and for a confirming sign to carry back the shadow of the sun ten degrees. By prayer Daniel obtained secrets from God which no other man could discover, stopped the mouths of lions, and brought down angels to unfold the counsels of heaven. The three children prevailed on God to quench the rage of the seven times heated furnace. Esther and the Jews prevailed on him to blunt all the bolts of Persian thunder, and to raise his people to triumph from the very gates of death. While the disciples were assembled to pray for the imprisoned Peter, the angel of the Lord entered his prison, smote off his chains, and brought him out. Paul and Silas by their prayers raised an earthquake which burst open all the prison doors, and shook off all their bands, and brought the jailer to the foot of the cross. When the apostles and their "company" were praying about the persecuting priests and elders, "the place was shaken,—and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell" of the millions who through prayer "subdued kingdoms,—obtained promises,—escaped the edge of the sword,—waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

It was because they bore the name of Israel and as a prince had power to prevail with God. And all who bear this name are addressed by God in this wonderful language, "Command ye me."

We must therefore conclude that God is as really affected by the supplications of his children as any earthly parent is. Indeed he says this in so many words. "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish will he—give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them

that ask him."—Do you who are parents feel that you cannot deny your children anything which they discreetly ask and which you are able to bestow? The same feelings has God. "I say discreetly ask; for they sometimes make indiscreet requests for things that would injure them; in which case, however disposed to indulgence, you do not yield to their solicitations. So it is with God. He does not grant his people what would injure them or mar the public good; but he will grant them something better. When Paul thrice prayed for the removal of the thorn in his flesh, he was not answered in exact form, but in the bestowment of greater good. "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

The grand objection to the theory that God is really affected by prayer, arises from an apprehension that this would militate against his unchangeableness. I therefore say, that he has none of the fickleness and weakness of earthly parents when they are moved by the entreaties of their children. Their emotions are new and temporary, and often partial and unwise. Under the temporary excitement they are hurried into feelings and actions which are injurious to their children and unjust to others. Not so with God. Why, I ask, should it be more inconsistent with his immutability to be affected by the prayers of his children, than to feel compassion for their sufferings, or complacency in their holiness, or benevolence for their persons and desires for their happiness? All these feelings must be new and imply change unless they have existed in one eternal now. And if without change he can feel this compassion and complacency and benevolence towards his children, why, without change, can he not be affected by their prayers?

The grand truth is, that God's existence is not in succession, but in one eternal now. To suppose otherwise would impute to him imperfection, and deny his immutability, omniscience, and infinity. If he exists in succession he is constantly receiving new ideas; and then there is a change of thought, which must lead to a change of

counsel. If he is eternally receiving new ideas, he is not in possession of all ideas at once, and therefore is not omniscient. If new ideas are constantly coming into his mind, either the old ones are crowded out and forgotten, or he must grow in knowledge. On either supposition he is not infinite.

We cannot avoid the conclusion then that God's existence is not in succession but in one eternal now. Whatever feelings therefore he has, he had from eternity. Whatever objects are now present to his mind, were always present. With him there is nothing new. His children were individually before him from eternity, and his heart was always affected with benevolence towards them, with love for their holiness and compassion for their sufferings; and with equal certainty it was always affected by their prayers. He eternally and unchangeably beheld them before him, eternally and unchangeably heard their prayers, and eternally and unchangeably felt those yearnings of tenderness which could not deny their consistent requests.—Prayer can have the same influence with him as though he had not what creatures call foreknowledge and foredetermination,—as though he never existed till to-day. We may go to him with as much confidence as we would go to an earthly parent, who could be not only impressed but changed by our entreaties.

What a glorious circumstance it is that there is such a God,—enthroned in infinite majesty, yet from the midst of whose radiant glories divine compassion looks out as from a thousand eyes, and melts with pity for a dying world,—with more than a father's tenderness for his children. O such a God! Who can stifle the bursting praise? Who can hold their tongue from running loose in anthems of thanksgiving? Infinite ocean of love! real, unbounded love! let us love and adore and delight in thee as we may, as we ought, as we must.

We see then with what spirit and expectations we ought to pray;—not with a view to change God, but to become such objects as he eternally



and unchangeably loved, and to present such petitions as he eternally and unchangeably felt unable to deny.

Still our prayers must be made with entire submission. No condescending language of God as if subjecting himself to our dictation,—no consciousness of power to influence him,—should make us forget that he has a sovereign right to do with us as seemeth good in his sight. Even his best beloved Son must say, "Not my will but thine be done."

We cannot but exclaim with admiration and transport, what a glorious privilege is prayer.—How unspeakable the privilege of approaching that heart which is full of tenderesses like these, and of gaining over that power which "openeth and no man shutteth," which "shutteth and no man openeth."

With all the energy of wrestling Jacob let us embrace and hold fast a prayer-hearing God. Had we the patriarch's strength of faith, our prayers would not be so languid and unavailing; nor should we so irresolutely give over the struggle when God for a moment seems to reject our petitions,—an appearance which he sometimes puts on on purpose to try the strength of our faith and desire? Had Jacob been thus irresolute, he would have missed the blessing on the banks of Jabbok and his name would never have been called Israel. What powerful motives rush upon us to "pray without ceasing." What motives to union in prayer. If Jacob alone was so invincible, how great might be the united strength of praying thousands. Ere God "shall appear in his glory" to "build up Zion," there must be many wrestling Jacobs. The inscription is written on the broad side of heaven, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them."

Let the subject come down with the weight of a thousand thunders upon the prayerless. Do they know the incalculable loss they sustain by neglecting prayer? Worlds could not countervail the damage. And do they weigh the infinite guilt incurred by refusing the tendered

compassions of a God? Heaven itself cries aloud, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." Have you determined to reject his love and the immortal happiness which is opening upon you, and to defy his resentments, to breast his power, and to lie down in everlasting burnings? If so, then proceed and put your dreadful resolution to the test. But O that it may waver; O that it may change. O that Gabriel and Paul and all the saints above may strike a higher note as they see you on your faces, as they hear you cry with bursting tears, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Amen.

## **SERMON XLVII**

### **JEHOVAH-JIREH**

And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh. -  
GEN. 22:14

The father of the faithful, in obedience to the divine command, had separated himself from all his kindred and removed into a land of strangers. For a long time he had but one intimate friend to sooth his solitary hours. The happiness of being a parent was denied him until he had worn out a hundred years. Imagine then his joy when the little Isaac was given him, with a promise that from this child the Messiah should proceed. For full twenty years the eyes and hearts of the fond parents were fixed on this precious gift of heaven, and with tearful tenderness watched his opening virtues. One day Abraham hears the well known voice of his heavenly Father. Expecting some fresh expression of paternal love, or perhaps some new benediction on his beloved Isaac, he readily answers, Here am I. But conceive his astonishment when the dreadful command proceeded; "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you of." Must then all his earthly

comforts be dashed at once? In spite of the yearnings of a father's heart, must he imbrue his hands in the blood of his own son? How can he endure the ravings of the distracted mother? And how then can the Messiah be born? But none of these things move him. Without hesitation or delay he sets off for the place, concealing the big cares in his own breast. For more than sixty miles he carried his unwavering purpose, until he came to the spot where the temple was afterwards built and near which Mount Calvary stood. While on his way all the father was awakened in his heart by this moving question from Isaac; "My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" But he suppressed the rising tumult and went forward to the place. Here he built an altar, and bound Isaac, and laid him upon the altar, and took the knife to open the palpitating heart. His arm was stretched out to give the fatal thrust, when the angel of the Lord called suddenly to him out of heaven and stopped the father's hand. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and beheld a ram caught in a thicket by his horns, which God had sent as a substitute for Isaac. At this he could no longer refrain, but broke forth into thanksgiving and called the name of the place Jehovah-Jireh which signifies, The Lord will provide. He wished never to forget this great deliverance. He knew he never should forget it, and he wished the whole world might remember it too. He named the place The Lord will provide, that it might be a standing monument to all generations that God, not only would provide a Saviour for his people, but would often deliver them from straits and difficulties the most pressing and seemingly unavoidable. From these words I deduce the following Doctrine: The Lord will provide all needful relief for his people, and will often bring them sudden and unexpected deliverance from straits the most perplexing.

Let us range the ages for proofs of this. At the moment when our first parents, all dissolved in contrite grief, were bending over a ruined world, with nothing in prospect but the blackness of darkness forever, the joyful news came, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. That spot in Eden might well have been called Jehovah-Jireh. In subsequent years, when the Church,

reduced to a single family, was on the point of being buried under the corruptions of an unbelieving world, God saved it by a flood: and while the wicked lay buried under the waters of the deluge, the Church rode the unruffled wave, and sung from the top of Ararat, The Lord will provide. At a later period, when the Church was in danger of being lost in a second general apostacy, God separated Abraham from the rest of the world to be the father of the holy seed. When the destruction of Sodom was determined on, and the fiery storm was gathering over the vale of Siddim, messengers from heaven were sent to bring out Lot: and when he entered the protecting Zoar, he might well have sung, so loud that all heaven would have heard, The Lord will provide. When Esau came against his brother with an armed host, Jacob, encumbered with his wives and children, could neither flee nor resist. In that extremity he applied to the God who had been a shield to his father Abraham, and found such a deliverance as affects his heart to this day. The plain of Penuel, which was wet with the tears of relenting Esau instead of Jacob's blood, might have been inscribed all over with Jehovah-Jireh. When Joseph was cast into the cave, with no hand to deliver, no heart to pity, no tongue to plead for him, what relief could he expect? Yet the Lord did provide. And when he was cast into prison, with no witness to repel the foul charge, an obscure, unbefriended youth, in a strange land, in a dismal dungeon, crushed under the arm of power, what possible way could be seen for his escape? Yet by a wonderful interposition he was taken from the dungeon to be the lord of Egypt.

When the most powerful monarch on earth, bent on retaining Israel in bondage, commanded the midwives to destroy all the male children, by this very means God introduced an infant into Pharaoh's court, to be there trained up to deliver his people and to illumine the world with the records of salvation. When Israel lay bleeding and bound under the oppressive power of Egypt, with no armies to assert their rights, and no ally this side of heaven, God found out a way to break their chains and to bring them out. And when the armies of Egypt pursued and overtook them by the Red Sea, there seemed no

possible way of escape. The sea before, the enemy behind, impassable mountains on either side, and no weapons in their hands. In that moment of distress the cloud in which Jehovah dwelt, rolled between the two armies, filling the enemy's camp with darkness, while the sea opened a passage for his people to the other shore. There they sat and sung, as with an angel's voice, The Lord will provide,

Jehovah-Jireh may be set for the subject of almost every chapter in the book of Judges. The deliverance of Israel from the eight years' oppression of the king of Mesopotamia, by the hand of Othniel; and from the eighteen years of Moabitish oppression, by the hand of Ehud; and from the twenty years' domination of the potent Jabin, by Deborah and Barak; and from the seven years' ravages of the Midianites, by the hand of Gideon; and from the twenty years' tyranny of the Ammonites, by the hand of Jephthah; and from the long oppression of the Philistines, by the hand of Sampson; all proclaimed, in language not to be misunderstood, The Lord will provide.

When the Philistines fell upon the Hebrews as they were praying at Mizpeh, God wrought a great deliverance for his people; at which Samuel was deeply affected, and erected a monument and called it Ebenezer, saying "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." O how many Jehovah-Jirehs and Ebenezers may be found in the history of the Church. How many may be traced in the history of David. Often was he reduced to the greatest straits under the persecutions of Saul, and sometimes there appeared but a step between him and death; yet God delivered him. Sometimes Saul, with his men, came to the mouth of the cave where he lay concealed; and once they went in and lodged in the cave where he was; but God hid his servant. At one time the army of Saul had surrounded the fugitive, and were on the point of seizing their prey, when a horseman arrived in full foam, crying, "Haste thee and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land:" and so the bird once more escaped from the fowler. In subsequent years, when Absalom and most of the kingdom had risen

against him; when he was driven out with a little band and pursued by the thousands of Israel; nothing but inevitable destruction appeared before him: yet by a sudden change of circumstances the rebels were scattered, and in a short time the tribes were contending for the honor of bringing the king back.

Before Saul came to the throne, the Philistines had reduced Israel almost to a state of slavery.—God began their deliverance by the surprising victory granted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer over a whole Philistine garrison. He carried forward the work on that memorable day when a stripling, with a sling and a stone, prevailed over the mighty Goliath, in the name of the God of the armies of Israel. And in the reign of that same confiding youth, he put down every enemy of his people.

In the days of Asa, a million of Ethiopians invaded the land; but in answer to prayer God gave a little band a glorious victory over them all. In the days of Jehoshaphat, three nations burst into Judea; but the people of God prayed, and all those thousands fell upon their own swords. When Sannacherib, after subduing the greater part of Judea, laid siege to Jerusalem, Hezekiah and Isaiah betook themselves to prayer, on the very mount where Isaac was delivered; and God sent his angel, who destroyed in one night a hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians.

By the wonderful deliverance wrought for the three children in the furnace of Babylon, and for Daniel in the lion's den, God showed that he was determined to protect his children let their enemies do their worst; that if this could be accomplished and nature hold its course, well; but if not, that fire should become tame and lions lambs when the safety of his children required it.

When Jerusalem and the temple lay in ashes, and the whole nation were scattered in the countries of the east, what mortal eye could see a way to restore the Church and to reorganize the state? Yet God, by transferring the empire to the Persians, and by influencing the minds

of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, found out a way; and Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah successively sung, The Lord will provide. When Haman had enlisted all the power of the Persian empire against the Jews, and by a decree which Ahasuerus himself could not reverse, had fixed the day for the utter destruction of the Church, no human wisdom could conceive a way to ward off the blow. A gallows is erected for the execution of the only man whose instrumentality can save the Church. The next morning he is to die. But mark the providence of God. That night the king could not sleep. A strange anxiety banished his slumbers. He tossed upon a restless bed. Nothing will do but he must arise and examine the records of the kingdom; and there he finds it written that Mordecai has saved his life. Early in the morning Haman comes into the court to obtain sentence against Mordecai. The king commands him—to do what? to conduct the noble Jew in triumph through the streets of the city. That day Haman hangs on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, and Mordecai succeeds to Haman's honors. And thus the Church is suddenly snatched from a ruin which appears instant and inevitable. When Antiochus had partly burnt and demolished Jerusalem, and had driven all the Jews from the city, and consecrated the temple to a heathen idol, and decreed the utter annihilation of the true religion, and had put to torture and death as many as he could seize that would not renounce their God, and had burnt all the copies of the law that he could find; then it seemed as if the Church would be exterminated at once; yet in a short time, by the instrumentality of the Maccabean brethren, she arose to independence and power.

When the Church lay buried under the rubbish of self-righteousness and hypocrisy, and the dogmas of the Pharisees had usurped the place of the Holy Scriptures, and the religion of heaven seemed on the point of leaving the world, the Son of God appeared on earth to set up a new dispensation and to transfer his kingdom from the Jews to the Gentiles. When Herod had cast Peter into prison and loaded him with irons, and stationed a guard to keep him, intending the next day to put him to death; that night the angel of the Lord struck

off his chains and brought him out. When Paul and Silas had been publicly beaten at Philippi, and cast into the inner prison, and loaded with irons, at midnight, while they were singing praise to God, an earthquake burst open the prison and loosed their chains; and in the morning the magistrates were courteously entreating them to depart. When the enraged Jews had seized Paul in the inner court of the temple and dragged him into the court of the Gentiles, crying out, "Away with such a fellow from the earth;" God interposed, and sent Lysias, who commanded the castle of Antonia that stood upon the walls, to rescue him. Two days after, when forty men had bound themselves by a curse not to eat or drink till they had slain Paul, and lay in wait in the outer court to assassinate him as he should be brought from the castle to the temple to appear before the sanhedrim; the plot was discovered, and Lysias sent him off by night to Cesarea.

Numberless interpositions of a similar nature occurred during the persecutions of pagan and papal Rome. Indeed the continued existence of the little tempest-beaten Church through so many storms, is a continued miracle, declaring to all the world that the Lord will provide. Before the Reformation by Luther, the Church was as deeply covered with ignorance and hypocrisy, and as much warped by the traditions of men, as before the advent of Christ. And who would have thought that an obscure monk, with all the thunders of the Vatican pointed at his heart, could have effected so extensive a reformation in the Christian world? The voice of ancient prophecy announced that before the millennium the Church will witness the greatest distress ever known on earth, and that in the most trying moment God will appear for her salvation. And at the close of the millennium, when Gog and Magog shall have encompassed the holy city, just about to seize the trembling prey; when they shall be scaling the walls and just ready to leap into the city, the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven. And then his people shall be taken up to meet their Lord in the air, while their persecutors shall be petrified with horror to see the banners of Immanuel displayed in the troubled skies. Then will Jehovah-Jireh be the general song. Then should



Abraham pass through the blessed assembly and ask his children one by one, whether he falsely encouraged their hopes when on Moriah he declared that God would provide, they would all with glowing lips deny, and testify to the faithfulness of God.

And now, my dear brethren, permit me to call for your testimony. Have you never been shut up in distressing straits, and seen no way of escape, and in your perplexity cried to the Lord, and found sudden and surprising deliverance? Have you never been bowed down under a view of your guilt and the strength of your corruptions, or been terrified with strong temptations, and while sinking in deep waters, cried like Peter, "Lord, save me or I perish," and found an arm extended for your relief? Cast down under spiritual darkness, have you never searched in vain for a Saviour on the right hand and on the left, and almost despaired of ever seeing his face again, and in your anguish looked away to Calvary, and heard him say, "Why weepest thou? Let me wipe the tears from thy cheek and lay thee upon my heart." Do you not remember how your released soul could sit all day and sing, "Thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversity;—thou hast set my feet in a large room?" Before you ever saw the light of life, when you were sinking in the horrible pit, and nothing appeared but perpetual darkness, you suddenly found yourselves snatched from death, as Isaac was on Moriah, and arising from your despair, could have called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh.

And have you never been crushed under the pressure of outward affliction, and in your extremity sent your cries to Him who appeared on Moriah, and found deliverance as sweet as unexpected. Perhaps you have been brought to the brink of death, or have seen some dear friend struggling in the crisis of a fever; and when all hope had vanished, have been suddenly and delightfully relieved by Abraham's God. Perhaps you have been cast into perplexing circumstances, and seriously apprehended the loss of property or character, or at best to be harassed by a long train of cares; when all at once you have found the cloud dispersed, and with all your heart have subscribed to the

old Abrahamic creed, The Lord will provide. Sometimes perhaps you have been over anxious about your future support, and distrusted the providence of God; when, to shame your unbelief, he has suddenly supplied all your wants in a manner wholly unthought of. Perhaps some of you have been in real want, and have seen nothing before you but poverty and distress; when He who supplied his suffering people with manna, and hears the young ravens when they cry, brought relief in a manner which filled you with gratitude and wonder.

God frequently brings his people into straits on purpose to show them what is in their hearts and to teach them their dependance, and to manifest his faithfulness by coming to their relief. He suffers them to look perplexing circumstances in the face, that they may feel the value of that love which delivers from them all.

But let it never be forgotten that this relief is to be expected only when they practise the two great duties of obedience and trust. Abraham found this deliverance while resolutely obeying God and trusting in him to fulfil his promise respecting Isaac. Not looking at the darkness of the prospect, but leaving the ways and means to a faithful God, he proceeded in the course of duty: and while doing this, he not only was relieved from his trial, but received a new charter of all the blessings before promised. While Christians neglect their duty, or while, with eyes intent on difficulties, they trouble themselves about the ways and means by which the promises are to be fulfilled, they will meet with nothing but perplexity. But if they will confide in God, and if need be, "hope against hope," and firmly pursue the prescribed course whatever darkness may hang around it, they shall find what a faithful God can do.

And now, my dear brethren, let us lose ourselves in delightful reflections on the faithfulness of God. How was Abraham affected with this attribute on Moriah. "O," says he, "I never shall forget this scene to eternity; and let all who in future ages are tempted to distrust God, come up to this mount and never doubt again. Let a

wondering world turn their eyes this way and forever record the faithfulness of Jehovah." What a solid ground did God then appear on which to build everlasting confidence.

Our subject encourages us to place unwavering confidence in God in the darkest times. What evils can to us appear more unavoidable, than to Abraham appeared the death of his son? Yet God did provide. Though we should be so shut up as to see no way of escape, let us not despond. The darker the prospect the more opportunity for faith to act and to acquire vigour by exercise. Let it not be weakened by the very means intended for its invigoration.

Ah how does the faith of Abraham and other ancient saints shame our unbelief. When did relief ever appear to us less probable than it did to them? And if they could hope against hope, under what possible circumstances can we justify our distrusts of God? He who relieved Abraham on Moriah, what can he not do?

Finally, what strong inducements have we to choose such a God for our friend and protector in such a world as this. Had there been no being in heaven to feel for Abraham, what could he have done in that distressing hour? It is an unspeakable privilege to enjoy the friendship of such a God while passing through this vale of tears: and they who are wise will not venture further into life without securing this boon. There is no other protection against the ills of life. "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about." Great is their safety and peace who confide in God; but disappointment, perplexity, and ruin await those who reject this offered shield. O make the Lord your trust. Put yourselves under the protection of his throne: then rise earth, rise hell. Give me a wilderness, without a shred of animal comfort: if I have him I possess all. Take his presence away, and heaven itself is a dungeon, "Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee." Amen.

## SERMON XLIII

### ALL THESE THINGS ARE AGAINST ME

And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me. - GEN. 42:36

When we read the lives of the patriarchs and contemplate only their communion with God, we are ready to think of them as exempted from the ordinary cares and trials of life; and conclude it impossible for them, with such evidence of the divine favor and such a prospect of immortal glory, to have been much affected with the events of this transitory state. Indeed it is strange that a good man, walking on the verge of eternity, with everlasting blessedness in his eye, should be deeply affected with any calamity. But when we take a nearer view of the patriarchs, we find them men of like passions with ourselves, and familiarly acquainted with the common cares and sorrows of life.

Abraham passed many lonely years upon earth after he had lost the wife of his youth; and he felt all the sorrows of bereavement which a good man would feel now. Isaac had to witness a deadly animosity between his two sons, and saw one of them compelled to flee and become an exile, for twenty years, in a foreign land. Jacob passed through a long succession of trials. In addition to a brother's hate and his own protracted exile, he experienced many cares and hardships in Padanaram. Upon his return to the land of his fathers, he and his family were on the point of perishing by his brother's sword. He had the grief to bury his beloved Rachel as well as Leah. Rachel left two children, on whom the patriarch doted with most impassioned fondness. His grief for the death of Rachel had scarcely time to abate, before the eldest of her sons was seized by his brethren and cruelly sold into Egypt. His coat, rent in pieces and stained with

blood, was brought to the patriarch to persuade him that a wild beast had devoured his Joseph; and the heart-broken father exclaimed, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." In process of time a grievous famine compelled him to send his sons into Egypt to buy corn. They returned with the dreadful tidings, that the lord of Egypt, under the suspicion that they were spies, had cast Simeon into prison, and had sworn by the life of Pharaoh that they should see his own face no more unless they brought their brother Benjamin down. How could the aged father part with the last of Rachel's sons, the brother of his lost Joseph?—to put him under the power of a man who had treated his other sons so roughly? But the famine pressed upon him; all the corn was spent; the whole household must perish, and Simeon must die in prison, unless Benjamin is soon delivered up. Under these circumstances his sons pressed their father to let Benjamin go. This drew from the afflicted patriarch the deep complaint of our text: "Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." He said moreover, "Ye know that my wife bore me two sons. And the one went out from me and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since. And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

Under this severe conflict the good old patriarch felt like another man. Notwithstanding all the promises he had received from the God of Bethel, his heart sunk under the weight of this complicated distress; and in his infirmity he pronounced against himself and against the faithfulness of God, "All these things are against me." Alas the weakness of our poor fallen nature. How could any circumstance be against a good man to whom it was secured by covenant that all things should work together for his good? Poor man, how weak is thy faith. Is it so much against thee that Joseph is taken from thee to be the lord of Egypt and the nourisher of thine old age? to prevent the extinction of the family from which the Messiah is to proceed? Is it so much against thee that Simeon is left in a brother's hands? Is it against thee that Benjamin is called away by

the yearning bowels of the other son of Rachel? How limited is the poor man's vision. Could he only look beyond the cloud, he would see Joseph yet alive and disguised in glory. He would see Simeon under a brother's care, and Benjamin going to a brother's arms. He would see that parting scene,—that rending of his heart strings,—to be only a prelude to a more joyous meeting with his children. He would see the temporary loss of Joseph, the detention of Simeon, the call for Benjamin, to be only links in the chain leading to the salvation of his house, and to that succession of wonders which were to fill the world with the glory of God. Before he formed this hasty conclusion, he should have waited to see what the God of his fathers meant by these events. This would have been more dutiful to the Being who, when he wandered an exile from his father's house, had appeared to him at Bethel, and who, when father and mother forsook him, had kindly taken him up. It was but a few days and Benjamin returned with the transporting tidings that the other son of Rachel lived and was the lord of Egypt. Then it was that the patriarch was undeceived, and fainted under the mighty joy, and cried as he awoke "It is enough. Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." What a change is here. A few days ago and all these things were against him; now "it is enough." The things which he pronounced against him, are turned to a fulness of joy. Who will ever again distrust the faithfulness of God? Jacob could remember this affecting interposition to the day of his death. It was in his mind when he pronounced his dying blessing on the sons of Joseph: "I had not thought to see thy face, and lo God hath showed me also thy seed. The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." And he might have added, in the spirit of David, Thou which hast showed me great and sore troubles, hast quickened me again and hast brought me up again from the depths of the earth. Was it possible after this for Jacob ever to distrust God again? How great a happiness did he then view it that there was a God to take from him his Joseph and his Benjamin. What could have tempted him, on the day he went to Egypt, to transfer his interests to any other hands? How ashamed did he feel of his former despondency; and with what emotions, when he

arrived at Beersheba, did he offer sacrifices on the ancient altar of his father Isaac.

My brethren, this is a specimen of the general providence of God towards his people, and of their proneness to draw hasty conclusions against the faithfulness of God under dark and mysterious dispensations.

In numberless instances the reason of man is incapable of judging what is for his good. With a ken limited to a narrow circle, he often thinks events against him which in their issue essentially contribute to his happiness. It is difficult to determine from the events themselves, which are appointed in mercy and which in wrath. Many things which are pleasant to sense, like the quails in the wilderness, are sent in judgment; and many things which are very crossing to the flesh, are sent in mercy. The lapse of a few years may show, if not, the explanations of the final judgment will show, that many things on which we fondly doted, were but gilded snares, and that many things which caused our hearts to bleed, were appointed by a Father's love.

The impatience and unbelief of man tempt him to pronounce every thing against him which crosses his wishes and defeats his expectations: yet in many instances the gratification of his desires would have marred his peace, if not sealed his ruin.—When a dangerous instrument is wrested from the hands of a child, his frettings and cryings pronounce, All this is against me. But his more considerate parent has a different judgment. The youth, eager in the pursuit of pleasure, deems every bar to his gratification against him; yet his best interest and honor are involved in his defeat. The afflictions which beset his manhood, such as the disappointment of his ambition, the loss of property, health, or friends, are all too hastily pronounced to be against him; when perhaps by means of frustrated hopes and the refining furnace, his eager expectations from the creature are moderated, his pride reduced, and his soul prepared for happiness and for heaven.

In this vale of tears the hearts of men are often rent by the temporary loss of friends, by their absence and supposed death, by their sickness or the suspension of their reason; and while they are mourning them as forever lost, and crying with disponding minds, "All these things are against me," they find them restored to them again, and discover that they lost them only to receive them back with greater joy. Because our Josephs and our Benjamins are idols, they are sometimes torn from our bleeding sides and deposited in the grave.—Perhaps the last hope of a family is removed. And when the pious parent, trembling with agony, sees his pious child committed to the earth, this heaving sigh bursts from his breaking heart, "All these things are against me." "I will go down into the grave unto my" child "mourning." In an unbelieving hour he views him forever lost; and oftentimes in the dim hour of twilight visits his grave, to weep over all that is left of one so dear. But could the veil be drawn aside, he would see his Joseph yet alive and more than lord of Egypt. Soon the chariots of God, animated with spirit and full of eyes, will come to convey him to the arms of his Joseph. And when the dawn of heaven shall break upon his swimming eyes, and the chariots of God shall appear,—and he shall hear that his Joseph is yet alive, and that he is going to his child and to his God,—his soul, bending under the mighty joy, will cry, "It is enough."—"It is enough, it is enough," he will cry as he ascends in his chariot of fire. And when he falls into the arms of his child,—what was the meeting of Jacob and Joseph to this? Joseph fell on his father's neck and wept on his neck a good while: and Jacob said unto Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." But in that heavenly meeting there will be no tears,—no calculations for death,—but all will be rapture and endless life. "O my child, have I found thee at last? After all my solitary years, have I found thee at last? And shall we part no more?" This is far unlike the hour when I closed thine eyes. This is far unlike the tedious days that I have lived on earth without thee, and the gloomy hours of night in which I have visited thy grave and watered it with my tears. O blessed meeting, with greater glory than though we had never parted. I bless thee, O my Father, for taking away my idol. Forgive my rebellious sighs.



Forgive the distrust which once said, "All these things are against me."

In the complicated government of a world, many things occur the connexion and tendency of which cannot be traced by any wisdom less than divine. Nothing but the discernment of that eye which looks through eternity, can discover what events will be ultimately beneficial to men. Under such a government it is reasonable to suppose that many things will occur for which human reason cannot account. Under many aspects of God's providence the most filial minds are filled with awe, and the wisest minds perceive that "clouds and darkness are round about him." But though clouds and darkness are round about him, yet behind that veil he works with an eye steadfastly fixed on the happiness of his people. Inscrutable events, which are viewed by Christians as most against them, will prove to be links in the chain leading to their highest happiness. "All things" shall "work together for" their "good." "All things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come, all are yours." As God is an infinitely tender Father, he has no interest distinct from that of his children. Nor has the Lord Jesus Christ any interest distinct from that of his disciples. If then God and his Son pursue their own interest, they will pursue that of the great family of the Church.

In the happy termination of the grievous afflictions of the patriarch, we see a delightful specimen of the result of all the dispensations of providence. How glorious did the providence of God appear to Jacob when he lay infolded in the arms of his Joseph. What a charming explanation was that of the mysterious dealings of his heavenly Father. We shall not all see such full explanations in this life, but we shall all see them. When the whole skein of providence is unfolded, all will appear as those mysterious events did to Jacob when he met with his long lost son. Love,—the love of God,—the love of Jesus, will appear to have animated the whole machine of government and to have moved every wheel. And ten thousand voices, which once pronounced, "All these things are against me," will shout and sing,

Hosanna to him who made my tears to flow. Everlasting thanks to a Father's care for the furnace in which I was purified for glory. Alleluia. Blessing and honor and glory to him who made my tears to flow. Have we not then, my brethren, abundant reason to rejoice in the government of such a God? What could we do without a God to shape the circumstances of our lives? He knows infinitely better how to plan for us than we for ourselves, even if we had power to execute. But we have no power. Were not the government of the world in his hands, nothing would take place in which a good man could rejoice; but now there is a sure pledge that all things will issue well. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof."

If there is such reason to rejoice in the government of God, surely we ought to submit to it with patience and cheerfulness under all possible trials. There are no afflictions but what are appointed by God. The nature of our trials, their magnitude, their duration, and all the attending circumstances, are regulated by infinite wisdom and love. To the disposal of our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, let us cheerfully submit. It is best that God should govern his own world according to his own pleasure. This can be no injury to us unless we are his incorrigible enemies: and if we are, we must be wretched whether he governs or not. If he governs, we must be crushed by the hand of his justice; and if his government were suspended, anarchy and ruin would overwhelm the whole creation. To the enemies of God the very smiles of nature are full of terrors, and every measure for the display of his glory will fill them with eternal torment. But those who submit to his government not only perform a reasonable duty, but take the surest way to secure their own immortal happiness.

Will you barely submit? That is cold. Commit all your cares and interests and the keeping of your souls to God with unwavering trust and with ineffable delight. You had better never been born if you may not have God to reign over you and by well appointed trials to purify you for glory. Let us gather up everything dear to us on earth and

commit them all to the hands of a faithful God. It is safe to leave them there. He never disappointed the well grounded confidence of one of his creatures. "He is able to keep that which" we "have committed unto him against that day." We cannot place too much confidence in him. By how many mercies and faithful interpositions has he supported his claim to our confidence. And shall we distrust him still? Shall we doubt his wisdom, his goodness, or his truth? "Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee." Amen.

## **SERMON XLIX**

### HEAVEN

For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. - HEB. 11:10

This was the habit by which the patriarch Abraham sustained himself under the ills of life, while wandering a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth. It was reasonable in him so to do. When men are about to remove into another country, they are eager to catch the reports of those who have visited it, and perchance to send beforehand to explore it. We hope by and by to go away to dwell in the heavens for the rest of our existence, and it is interesting to collect all the information we can respecting that country. It is interesting to see where our Christian friends have gone who have disappeared from

our sight. If the Bible is not a fable and all the hopes of man a dream, they are yet alive, in another and a better state. Why should unbelief put them out of existence? Cannot God uphold them in a state of pure spirits like his own? Could his benevolence be gratified by placing them here to groan and weep for a few days and then to be no more? If their present existence differs from our experience what then? Have we seen all the varieties of things even in this little world? To a mind that in thought has visited India and China and the islands of the southern sea, is it incredible that a state of things should exist widely different from our experience? And if our beloved friends are still alive and in that blessed state, how interesting to visit them there and see the home they have found.

There is no need that the inhabitants of earth should remain so little acquainted with heaven.—There is a ladder, such as Jacob saw, by which they may ascend and descend every hour. We ought daily in our thoughts to visit that delightful land and to make excursions through its glorious regions. The more we accustom ourselves to these flights the easier they will become. Why is it that we feel so little the impression of eternal glory, but because our thoughts are no more conversant with heaven? It is of the last importance that we should become more familiar with that blessed country. It would tend to wean us from this poor world, to support us under the trials of life and the delay of our hopes, to illumine us with the light of that land of vision, to transform us into the likeness of its blessed inhabitants, and to reconcile us to the self-denials and labors which we have here to endure for Christ. It would tend to settle the great question of our qualifications for heaven. Could we gain distinct ideas of that blessed world, we might easily decide this point by ascertaining whether we could relish its sacred enjoyments, and whether this is the heaven we desire.

One reason that heaven makes so little impression upon us is that we contemplate it in generals, and of course confusedly. We must take it in detail. We must go through its golden streets, and traverse its flowery fields, and examine its objects one by one. Let us spend a few

moments in attempting this, and for a season imagine ourselves there.

The reflection of least importance respecting that world is, that it is a pleasant country. In whatever part of the universe it is situated, there is a local heaven, where the body of Jesus is, where the bodies of Enoch, and Elijah, and those who arose with Christ are, and where the bodies of all the saints will be after the resurrection. Those bodies will be material, and of course will occupy space, and must have a local residence, as really as the bodies which are now on the earth. That country is already prepared, (it was "prepared from the foundation of the world,") and is unquestionably material. The idea that the saints will have no place to dwell in but the air, has no countenance in the word of God. Their city, in more senses than one, "hath foundations." It is a real country; and my first remark is, that it is a pleasant country. He that could make the scenes which we behold, can unite the most beautiful of them into one and surpass them all. And there can be no doubt the place which he has chosen for the metropolis of his empire, and which Christ selected from all worlds for his residence and the residence of his Church must be the most beautiful of all the worlds that he has made. It is set forth in Scripture under images drawn from the most enchanting objects of sense. I know that these are intended to illustrate its spiritual glory, but can you prove that this is all? Why are spiritual things set forth by sensible objects? You say, because men are in the body. And pray, will they not eternally be in the body after the resurrection? And will not an exhibition to the senses of the riches of the divine nature, be as useful an auxiliary to other revelations then as now. Nor can we doubt that unimodied spirits are capable of beholding and enjoying the material works of God. Otherwise the material universe would be a blank to the angels, and to human spirits before the resurrection.

We may then reasonably conclude that heaven is a world of more resplendent and varied beauty than mortal eye has ever seen.

The next circumstance to be mentioned respecting that world is, that it contains the most delightful society. The saints are forever delivered from the interruptions of the wicked, from the pollution of their society and the disgusting coarseness of their conversation; and are admitted to the most intimate friendship with the holy angels, and with patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and the whole assembly that have been collecting since the death of Abel, including, in many instances, the most beloved friends they knew on earth. Parents will there meet their children, and husbands their wives, after a long and painful separation. Brothers and sisters will rush into each other's arms and exclaim, "Have I found you at last? This is far unlike the parting hour when I closed your eyes, and far unlike the solitary evenings in which I have visited your grave and wept over your dust."—Those blessed spirits will enjoy the most perfect friendship, with every distrust and rival interest banished; each loving the other as his own soul, and not a thought nor a joy but what is common. Their conversation will be high and satisfying, turning on the history of God's love and the wonders of his works; and the expressions of love to each other in their looks, deportment, and words, will be most tender and convincing.

The employment of heaven is delightful. The saints are delivered from all the cares and toils of this life, and have nothing to do but to serve and praise God, to go on his errands to different worlds, to study into the mysteries of his nature and the wonders of his works, and to converse with their brethren on these high and exhaustless themes.—Every faculty has attained its full employment; the understanding in grasping the great truths of God and expatiating among the glories of his nature; the memory in going over his past dispensations and collecting materials for an everlasting monument of praise; the heart in loving and thanking him; the will in choosing him and his service; the eyes in beholding his glory; the hands and feet in doing his will; the tongue in high conversation and bursting songs.

In that world they have attained to the perfection of all their powers; not to that perfection which excludes progress, but to that which fits them for the highest action and enjoyment that their capacities admit. They are delivered from every clog to meditation, devotion, or service, arising from a weak or disordered body; from all the passions and prejudices which warped their judgment here; from all those indiscretions by which they feared they should injure the sacred cause they loved; and have attained to unerring wisdom. Their memories are strengthened to recall the leading actions of their lives and the principal dealings of God with them. They are freed from all languor and wanderings in duty, and can hold their attention perpetually fixed without weariness or satiety.

They have attained to the perfection of knowledge; not that perfection, I say again, which excludes progress, but that which prevents error. They have advanced greatly in the positive knowledge of all those things which a sanctified spirit desires to know. The feeblest infant that has gone to heaven, probably knows more of God than all the divines on earth. They see as they are seen and they know as they are known. Besides the light directly shed upon them, in the excursions which they make through the universe they have a glorious opportunity to study God in his works and dispensations.

They have escaped from all the sufferings of the present life; from sickness and pain and the mortification of being laid aside as useless; from want and the fear of want; and have attained to the perfect gratification of every taste and desire,—to the possession of all things. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." As heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, they own the sun, moon, and stars; they possess the eternal God.

They have escaped from all the degradation and scorn and slander which their poverty or their religion drew upon them here, and have

reached the highest honors of the sons of God. They have been crowned, and have sat down with Christ on his throne, and with their golden harps and robes of light forever sing and forever shine.

They have escaped from all the "vanity" that was found in the creature, which left them unsatisfied, uneasy, and vexatiously disappointed; the vanity too which consisted in the transient nature of earthly things, and disturbed the short-lived enjoyment with the reflection that it would soon expire. From all this "vanity and vexation of spirit" they have escaped, and have found a good which fully satisfies and brings no sorrow with it,—no apprehension that it will ever end.

They are perfectly delivered from sin, that body of death under which they groaned all their lives long. O how they used to look forward and pant after this deliverance. But now they have found it. Not a feeling that will ever offend their God again. And they have attained to perfect positive holiness. They love and thank and delight in God as much as they desire. They could not wish, with their present powers, to be more tender or grateful towards him. They could not wish to be more free from selfishness or anger or envy, nor, with their present powers, to be more benevolent or affectionate towards every creature of God.

They are forever delivered from the buffetings of Satan. The enemy that annoyed them so long is shut up in prison and can never approach them more. No longer can those temptations vex them which made them weary of life and pursued them into the grave.

Every wall of separation between them and God is taken down, every cloud which hid his face is dispersed, every frown smoothed into smiles.—They are admitted to the perfect vision and fruition of God and the Lamb. They see that God does not upbraid them for the past, that he has not one less tender feeling towards them for all their sins, and that he loves them with an affection infinitely surpassing that of the tenderest earthly parent.—They are conscious of an interchange



of thoughts and feelings with him the most affectionate,—of a communion no less real than that which subsists between earthly friends. They possess greatly enlarged views of his perfections, particularly of his unbounded love, and enjoy him to a degree of which we have here no conception. Their souls swell and expand with the mighty blessedness, and rise into raptures of wonder, love, and praise.

The principal medium through which they see and commune with God is the Mediator. It is from his face that the strongest emanations of Godhead shine. He is the sun which illumines the heavenly city. "The city," as John saw it, "had no need of the sun neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb" was "the light thereof." It is through him chiefly that God speaks to the inhabitants of heaven, and through him as the representative of the Father they send up their thanks. They put them into his hands as the Deity expressed, much in the same way as they did in the days of his flesh. The incarnate God is constantly displayed in heaven on a resplendent throne, with much the same personal appearance, perhaps, that he had on Tabor and in Patmos. Though arrayed in glory that would overpower mortal vision, it is Jesus of Nazareth still;—the same body, the same features, the same scars in his hands and feet and side. O how do they feel as they behold him. When they look back to Calvary, and then down to hell, and then abroad over the heavenly plains, and down the slope of ages, and see from what he delivered them, and to what he raised them, and at what expense, with what unutterable gratitude do they cast their crowns at his feet, and say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." And then they take their harps and fill all the arches of heaven with the song, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever."

All this glory and happiness will be eternal. On earth their enjoyment was damped by the thought that it would soon expire. Their dearest friends, their health, their life, were held by a very uncertain tenure.

But now they have no fear of change. When they first opened their eyes in that world and found themselves entered on a blessedness which was sure and eternal, with what transport did they contemplate that single fact after all their doubts and fears. The thought that they are forever safe, that no changes can cast them down, has in it a weight and sublimity of blessedness which no imagination can conceive. They have leisure to ponder over these glorious thoughts. They may look forward to twenty, thirty, or forty years without thinking that age is coming on to cramp their powers and terminate their enjoyments. They may breathe the airs of paradise and inhale the delights of heaven for a thousand years, without losing the freshness of their youth or approaching any nearer to an end. They may measure over a million of ages of varied delights, and have as much before them as at the first. They may pass as many more millions of ages as there were dusts in the earth, and still they are as young as ever. From that distant period of eternity, when they look back to the few moments that they sojourned on earth, how diminutive will this little space appear; how trifling its joys and sorrows; and how wonderful will it seem that they could be so interested in them.

They will eternally grow in capacity, knowledge, holiness, and happiness. This seems to be the natural progress of mind until it is checked by bodily decay. But when no such clog hangs upon the spirit, it will hold on in its course of advancement without end. As it grew in the vigor of its faculties from infancy to manhood, so it will expand in the regions of life to eternity: insomuch that the least soul will far outstrip the present dimensions of Gabriel; and holding on its way, will be to what the highest angel now is, as a giant to an infant; and still it has an endless progression before it,—rising higher and higher in intellectual sublimity, and forever approximating towards the infinite dimensions of God.

Its knowledge too will forever increase. Perpetually pondering on the wonders of God, studying him in his works, drawing lessons from all worlds among which it makes excursions, and diving deeper and

deeper into the unfathomable wonders of redemption, it cannot fail to advance in knowledge without end. The time then must come when the least soul in heaven will know more than all the creation of God now do; and still it has just entered the heavenly school. Imagination cannot keep pace with its flight through the sublime heights of intellectual ascension. What amazing views of God and the Lamb, what amazing views of the mysteries of redemption, what amazing views of the wonders of creation, of the purposes to be answered by the sufferings of the damned, of the boundless reach of mercy, of the whole history of God's administration in all worlds: and still to pursue the high and glorious study without end.

And in proportion to its advance in capacity and knowledge, must be its holiness. The more God is seen the more he will be loved and delighted in.—What new and unspeakable fervors of affection will be enkindled by those accessions of knowledge which will be hourly coming in. What a flame of love and gratitude will be acquired in the eternal progress of capacity and knowledge. The time will come when the least soul in heaven will contain more love and gratitude than the whole consistory of angels now do: and still to advance to higher and still higher fervors without end.

And in proportion to its advance in capacity, knowledge, and holiness, will be its happiness. If to know and love God in one degree makes a heaven, to know and love him in ten degrees will make a tenfold happiness. What unimagined bliss then must the holy soul find in rising up to views and fervors increasing as the ages of eternity go round. The time must come when the feeblest saint in heaven will enjoy more in one hour than all the creation of God have enjoyed to this day; and still he has just begun his eternal progress in blessedness. From those sublime heights of ecstasy he will ascend to heights still more sublime, reaching upwards continually and approximating forever towards the infinite happiness of the Eternal Mind.

And now behold that creature,—the feeblest that ever entered heaven; behold him at some imagined point in eternity, with all this increase of capacity, knowledge, holiness, and happiness; and how awfully great and glorious does he appear. As much above the heathen gods as the sun exceeds a glowworm. Could that creature appear on earth he would be worshipped by half the nations. He would pour upon their sight a sublimity and glory a million times greater than they ever ascribed to God himself. And still that creature has just begun his eternal progress. What then will he become? The imagination of Gabriel falters and turns back from the amazing pursuit.

Child of God, bow before thine own majesty.—Debase not thyself by sordid actions. Forget not the glories of thy nature, nor sell thine infinite birthright for such a contemptible mess of pottage as earth can yield. Child of God, cheer up under the trials of life. Let nothing cast you down who are standing on the verge of immortal glory. It is the only opportunity you will ever have to suffer for Christ. Eternity will be long enough for enjoyment. Your toils and self-denials will all be recompensed a thousand fold by that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Child of God, why are you cast down? I wonder you are not constantly transported. Our Saviour said to his disciples, "Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rejoice rather because your names are written in heaven." So say I to you. Rejoice not that your wealth is increased, that your honors flow in upon every gale, that the laurels of science encircle your brow, that you have the sweetest and most affectionate friends; but rejoice rather that an immortality of glory is before you. Child of God, why are you growing to earth and sleeping out life in ungrateful inaction? What is the world to you who are so soon to be transported to the heaven of heavens? How will the world appear to you when it is melting down in the general conflagration? How will the world appear to you a million of ages after the judgment, while you are lost among the glories of heaven? And why this ungrateful sloth? Have you nothing to do for him who entailed this immortality upon you? Have you nothing to do for him who redeemed you from hell by his

own blood, and has gone to prepare a place for you? Have you nothing to do for him on earth at whose feet you will presently lie in such unutterable transports of wonder and gratitude? Have you nothing to do for him on the very ground which was stained by his blood, and while breathing the air that was agitated by his sighs? Have you forgot that he left on earth a beloved Church, and that he has said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me?" Have you nothing to do for that Church on which his heart is so tenderly fixed? Have you nothing to do for his honor among men, who came out to seek you when you were wandering from the fold of God,—who separated you from your former companions and put a title to heaven in your hands? Ah Sirs, how will this listlessness appear when you are enveloped in the glories of heaven and are filling the celestial arches with your bursting praise? Up, every redeemed soul, and do what you can for your God and Saviour. Take your harps from the willows and begin the raptured song. Let all the country around be charmed and won by your sacred melody. Go on your way enchanting the ear of a Christless age with your harp and your song; and when you come to the last enemy, enchant the ear of death itself with the same celestial notes; and let your praises die away from mortal ears, only to burst in new and louder tones on the ear of heaven. Amen and Amen.

## **SERMON L**

### **NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH**

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. - 2 PET. 3:13

In the preceding verses the apostle had given a distinct and literal account of the dissolution of the earth and visible heavens by the final conflagration. He passes in our text from dissolving worlds and

a smoking universe, to the new heavens and new earth which are to come in the place of the old; which are the object of the joyous expectation of good men; and which, (to wit, both the new heavens and new earth,) will be inhabited by righteousness, namely, by the same righteous men that so eagerly expect them. The Scriptures distinctly teach us that when Christ shall come to judgment, this earth, together with the visible heavens, including all the heavenly bodies that were made during the six days of creation, will be dissolved by fire, will pass away, will perish, will have an end, will be no more. They also teach us that new heavens and a new earth, in a literal sense, will be formed to supply the place of those which shall have passed away; and, though the highest or third heaven will continue to be the principal abode of the saints, that both the new heavens and new earth will be inhabited by righteous men.

A question here arises, whether the new heavens and new earth will be created out of the ruins of the old; that is, whether the old will be renovated and restored in a more glorious form; or whether the old will be annihilated and the new made out of nothing. The idea of the annihilation of so many immense and glorious bodies, organized with inimitable skill and declarative of infinite wisdom, is gloomy and forbidding. Indeed it is scarcely credible that God should annihilate any of his works, much less, so many and so glorious works. It ought not to be believed without the most decisive proof. On the other hand, it is a most animating thought that this visible creation which sin has marred,—which the polluted breath of men and devils has defiled,—and which by sin will be reduced to utter ruin,—will be restored by our Jesus,—will arise from its ruins in tenfold splendor, and shine with more illustrious glory than before it was defaced by sin.

After a laborious and anxious search for light on this interesting subject, I must pronounce the latter to be my decided opinion. And the same, I find, has been the more common opinion of the Christian fathers, of the divines of the Reformation, and of the critics and annotators who have since flourished. I could produce on this side a

catalogue of names which would convince you that this has certainly been the common opinion of the Christian Church in every age, as it was also of the Jewish.

Some of the reasons which may be offered in favor of this opinion, are the following.

1. The words which are employed to express the destruction of the world, do not necessarily imply annihilation. The texts which speak of the removal and passing away of the world, do it in such terms as are often used to denote a mere transition from one place or state to another. The figures taken from the wearing out of a garment and from the vanishing of smoke, do neither of them import the destruction of substance. For the substance of a garment when it moulders away, and of smoke when it vanishes, is not annihilated; only the form is changed. Is it said that the world shall perish? The same word is used to express the ancient destruction of the world by the flood, when certainly it was not annihilated. Is it said that the world shall have an end and be no more? This may be understood only of the present form and organization of the visible system. When the present world shall be reduced to ashes, it may properly be said to end and to be no more. And when a new organized universe shall arise from the ashes of the old, it may be properly considered, not the same universe continued, but a new and different one. Is it said that the heavens and the earth shall be dissolved by fire? We may safely believe that the fire will do all that the most intense heat can accomplish. But the natural power of fire is not to annihilate, but only to dissolve the composition and change the form of substances. To support the doctrine of annihilation, we must resort to the hypothesis, that after the fire has done its worst, God, by a special act, will annihilate the ashes together with the fire itself; which is not to be believed without decisive proof, and this proof we have not.

2. Our text and several similar passages of Scripture compel me to believe that new material heavens and a new material earth will be raised up to supply the place of those which the conflagration shall

have destroyed. This being allowed, it seems more natural to suppose that the old materials will be employed, than that they will be annihilated and new ones created in their stead. No conceivable end could be answered by such a change of materials, unless indeed the new ones were to be of a more pure and ethereal kind. But it is not for us to say that proper combinations of the elements which now exist, may not form bodies as splendid and glorious as any which could be created; especially as we know that the glorified bodies of the saints will be formed of materials which now exist on the earth, and that even the glorious body of Christ is formed of no other.

3. The new heavens and new earth seem evidently represented as a part of the vast plan of restoration which Christ undertook to accomplish.—But it is not the part of Christ in this work to create out of nothing, but only to renew. He renovates the old soul and the old body: and if he shall renovate the whole material universe after its ruin by sin, it will be analogous to the rest of his work.

4. There is one remarkable expression, which, if it refers to the new heavens and new earth, as well as to the new state of the Church triumphant, strongly carries the idea of renovation. John saw in his vision Christ sitting on his throne, the heavens and earth fleeing away, a new heaven and a new earth arising, the New-Jerusalem, or the Church triumphant, displayed; and then heard a voice from heaven, saying, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things, [the former troubles,] are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new." If this last expression refers, not only to the new state produced by the passing away of former troubles,—not only to the New-Jerusalem, or the Church raised to perfection and glory,—but, (as is thought by many,) to the new heavens and new earth which had just been mentioned, then it clearly conveys the idea of the renovation of the heavens and earth. "Behold I make all things new." This, whether it refers to the new state of the Church or to new material worlds, manifestly alludes to the old things, and implies a new formation of them. God would not



have said at the conclusion of the first creation, when worlds were made out of nothing, "Behold I make all things new." If then the new heavens and earth were referred to, (and they had just been mentioned,) the matter is decided.

5. The time of Christ's advent to judgment is called "the times of restitution of all things."—"Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things." From the "all things" must certainly be excepted those wicked men and devils who are expressly reserved to that day for punishment. But something more, I think, must be included in the "restitution of all things," than the recovery of bodies from the grave, the restoration to perfect holiness of the few saints who shall be found alive, and the vindication of an impeached government by the explanations of the final judgment. If in that day the whole material universe, except human bodies, shall be reduced to nothing, it can hardly be called the day of the "restitution of all things."

6. But the passage on which the advocates for renovation chiefly rely, remains yet to be produced. It is found in the eighth chapter of Romans. "For the earnest expectation of the creature, [by creature here is understood the works of nature generally, or as they are called a little below, "every creature," or as it is in our translation, "the whole creation." For the earnest expectation of the creature] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, [to wit, in the resurrection.] For the creature was made subject to vanity, [to instability and decay,] not willingly, [which could not be said of man, who brought the evil upon himself by voluntary transgression. Not willingly,] but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. FOR we know that every creature, [in our translation, "the whole creation,"] groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

"The creature" which "was made subject to vanity," not by its own act, but by the appointment of God who "subjected the same in hope;" which "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God," and whose "earnest expectation—waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" in the resurrection; cannot be the children of God themselves, for they "also," in distinction from "the creature," "groan within" themselves, "waiting for—the redemption of" the "body." It cannot be bad men, for they will have no deliverance in the resurrection. What then can it be since it is no part of the human race? The reasoning clearly shows that it is the same with "every creature," which our translators understood to mean "the whole creation." For after saying that "the creature was made subject to vanity" and shall be delivered in the resurrection, the apostle adds, "FOR we know that every creature, [in our translation, "the whole creation,"] groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." The argument plainly shows that by "the creature" was intended "every creature," or "the whole creation," or the works of nature generally. This phrase, "the creature," has such a meaning in the first chapter of the same Epistle. "Who—worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." It is repeatedly used in the same sense in The Wisdom of Solomon, one of the books of the Apocrypha.

If then by "the creature" is meant "every creature" or "the whole creation," how is the whole creation to "be delivered," in the resurrection, "from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God?" Not by annihilation, but by a glorious renovation, by which it shall be delivered from instability and decay and all the consequences of the sin of man, and shall attain to beauty and splendor and immortality. We are not bound by this passage to suppose that everything that now exists on earth, such as beasts, birds, trees, and plants, will sustain a resurrection. The prediction may be verified if the works of creation in general, and in particular the very substance which now composes the bodies of beasts, birds, trees, and plants, shall arise from its ruins in a glorious form, yet so changed as to exclude all the inferior objects of the present state.

But why, you may ask, if the heavenly bodies are to be continued in existence, should they be dissolved by fire, since they are not, as far as we know, defiled, as our earth is, by sin?

One end of their dissolution may be, that by a different composition of their materials they may be rendered more pure and glorious. Every chemist knows that the same elements differently combined will form very different bodies.

Another end may be, to make a memorable display of God's abhorrence of everything which has had the most distant connexion with sin. Although the heavenly bodies may not contain sinful inhabitants, (as seems altogether likely,) yet they belong to a general system into which sin has entered. They have ministered to apostate man and lighted him in his course of rebellion. They have been prostituted to purposes of idolatry, and, by being worshipped as gods, have become in a sense the ministers of sin. Besides, we are assured that myriads of devils, who are called "spiritual wickedness in heavenly places," and whose prince is denominated "the prince of the power of the air," have ranged for six thousand years through the regions of the visible system; and we know of no barrier to prevent their approach to any of the heavenly bodies or to any of the regions which lie between them. We have therefore reason to believe that not only on our own earth and in our air, but also among suns and stars, they have roamed from age to age, and there have framed their machinations against God and his Son. What wonder then if these haunts of devils must be cleansed by a general burning?

To ascertain precisely what will be the use of the new heavens and new earth, is not at present in our power. Our text declares that both the new heavens and new earth will be inhabited by righteousness, that is, by righteous persons. It states also that good men look forward with eager expectation to them as making amends for the loss of the old heavens and earth; which strongly implies that they are to inhabit them. When John in vision beheld the new heaven and new earth after the last judgment, he saw the Church coming down

from God, and "heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them," seemingly on the earth, or in the new earth and new heavens. From these passages we might suppose that the new earth and heavens will be the sole residence of good men, were it not that the kingdom into which they will all be invited at the conclusion of the final judgment, is said to have been prepared for them "from the foundation of the world." But how they can all enter and possess a kingdom prepared "from the foundation of the world," and yet all or any part of them dwell in the new heavens and new earth, we cannot at present determine. Should it be so ordered that all the saints shall have an inheritance in the highest heaven, but occasionally visit and reside in these lower worlds, (made glorious enough for their abode,) then both declarations would be fulfilled. This at present seems to be the most probable opinion; and it is one which has been suggested by learned expositors. Some have indeed thought that part of the saints may perhaps stably dwell in heaven and the rest stably on earth: and this might agree well enough with the theory of different degrees of glory; but it does not appear to comport with the representation that all will be admitted to a kingdom prepared "from the foundation of the world." Mr. Mede supposes it probable that all the saints, when they descend to earth to receive their bodies, will remain here for a time and then migrate to the heavens. But the account of the consummation of all things in the 25th of Mathew, represents the saints as going directly from the judgment into a kingdom prepared "from the foundation of the world." Besides, this opinion suggests no use that is to be made of the new earth and heavens after that migration. And although so great a divine as Dr. Owen thought it probable that these lower worlds may be preserved, like the Jewish law after its abrogation, only as monuments of divine wisdom and goodness; yet I think it may be reasonably doubted whether the preservation of huge masses of dead matter, kept for no other use than to be gazed at, would be an exhibition either of wisdom or goodness. This remark contradicts the opinion that these lower worlds will be the places where inferior orders of saints will grow and ripen for the highest heaven; for then the time would come when all

the saints, elevated to the empyreal heaven, would leave the new heavens and new earth deserted, and wholly useless but as objects to be gazed at. The most probable opinion seems to be that which was suggested before, viz. that the principal abode of all the saints will be the highest heaven, but that they will occasionally visit and reside in these lower worlds. The angels who minister to the Church, do at present often visit our earth; and doubtless they visit other worlds, where they have opportunities to learn the wisdom and goodness of God by examining his works. Some such ends, and others now unknown to us, may probably be answered by the excursions which the saints will make to the new heavens and new earth.

We are accustomed to conceive of the saints as dwelling, all of them, constantly in one place, and never on any occasion leaving that abode. As this is the most simple idea, and well adapted to our infant state, no great pains are taken in the Scriptures to give us more complex ideas of the future world. But our Saviour speaks of "many mansions" in our Father's house. And it is easy to conceive that the beauty and glory of those mansions may be greatly increased by their being divided into many, rather than consolidated into one. When we lift our eye in a clear evening and contemplate the numberless worlds revolving above our heads, we are struck with a sense of greater beauty and skill than though we contemplated one immense world formed by a union of all these orbs. The symmetry of the whole and the sweet variety wrap the mind away with admiration of the beauty of creation and of the wisdom and power of the Creator. And the creation will forever be more beautiful and glorious, and a greater exhibition of the Architect, for being divided into "many mansions." The time will probably never come when creatures will not need to contemplate the creation, to enlarge their ideas of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God. The time will never come when they will not be enchanted with the beauty and variety of his works. The time will probably never come when they will cease to be refreshed with variety and change. A passage from world to world, which will doubtless be performed with incomparably more ease than journies now are from country to country, will instruct and delight them: and

it may reasonably be supposed that all the worlds which they inhabit, will, in the way they travel, seem to them as much one kingdom as the American states seem to us one commonwealth. And if it shall at last be found that all the planets and stars were created and are reserved for this very use, and now stand in heaven to preach to men the future glory of the saints, it will greatly appear in what sense all things were created for Christ, according to the doctrine of the apostle.

To the question, "what purpose will these material things serve?" Mr. Mede replies by asking, "What purpose would they have served had man continued in innocence? And what use will there be of the body and bodily senses in heaven?"—"They will serve," continues he, a most noble purpose, even that to which they were originally destined; viz. the illustration of divine power, wisdom, and goodness, and also for the residence and comfort of the saints." Tolet says, "As the palace of a king is adorned for the glory of the king, so this whole world will be adorned and perfected for the sake of the glorious sons of God." Chrysostom says, "As the nurse of a royal infant, when he succeeds to the kingdom, is a partaker of good things on his account, so the creatures which have ministered to the comfort of the sons of God, when the latter shall inherit the kingdom, shall partake of the glory. Or it may be that the creatures will be restored to increase the glory of the sons of God; as when a father, about to exhibit his son in a public and splendid manner, clothes even the servants splendidly for the sake of the glory of the son."—Willet says, "The earth will be the seat of the just, that where they have suffered much, there also they may triumph and praise God." And indeed I think with him, that it must be highly interesting to the saints to visit a world which they once watered with their tears, and as far as former places can still be distinguished, to contemplate the spots where they once suffered, and where they wept and prayed together. It must be interesting to them, if the place can then be marked, to gaze on the spot which was once wet with their Redeemer's blood, and on the places which were filled with his sighs and tears. It must be

interesting to see the world which their sins helped to destroy, illustriously restored by the power of their beloved Saviour.

And what a glorious triumph will the Son of God herein obtain over his enemy. When the conflagration shall have burnt out the last taint of sin, and those worlds which Satan hoped finally to ruin, shall rise from their ashes more glorious than at the beginning, and the universe shall be restored to more than its pristine splendor, filled with the blessed persons and exulting songs of countless millions snatched from the shambles of hell, then how complete and glorious will his triumph be. Alleluia! Victory and dominion and glory to him who bruised the serpent's head and rebuilt demolished worlds!

And then how vast will the plan of restoration appear which Christ undertook to accomplish.—When suns and stars shall rise from their ashes, clothed with splendors before unknown; when the new creation shall appear so extensive that the whole Church, as important a part as it is, will be, as John represents it, but as a new city to a new universe; when it shall appear that the blood of Calvary and the power of Jesus rescued all the works of God, (a few forlorn outcasts excepted,) from the hands of destroying devils; then methinks I hear the saints calling aloud to infidels: This is the Jesus whom you despised: this is the substance and fulfilment of that Bible which you laughed to scorn. What think you of the great plan of redemption and of our Messiah now? And again ten thousand voices will shout, Alleluia: victory and dominion and glory to him who saved a dying race and rebuilt demolished worlds. If the fame of warriors who defended a people's rights, and of statesmen who raised a single nation from oppression, are heard in the ends of the earth and tremble in the breath of remote posterity, what praises shall resound through heaven and earth to him who raised from ruins a stupendous universe, and displayed countless worlds in all the glories of a new creation. And this is the Jesus and this the plan of restoration which infidel insects scorn and contemn. Then will commence the golden age and halcyon days more happy than poets feigned. Then will be realized all those splendid descriptions of

restoration, and of the glory and peace of Messiah's kingdom, which glowed under the pencil of enraptured prophets. These are "the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

Lift up your heads, ye people of God, and sing, for your redemption draweth nigh. What though you are poor in this world, the new heavens and new earth will be all your own. Shortly you will own suns and stars, each of which in value would exceed this earth were it all of gold and diamond. Ye who must now walk on the earth lame and halt, while the world rattle by you in their splendid equipages, shall shortly make easy excursions from star to star and from world to world. With a band of glorious and happy spirits, ye shall walk abroad on a summer's day to visit other worlds, to touch at distant constellations, to revisit this little globe, and here sit and remember the days of other years, and mark where your enemies died and rose and went to hell. Of what little consequence it is how you are circumstanced in this world, provided you can obtain an inheritance in the new earth and heavens. This life is but a moment, but that will endure forever. I must press you with that exhortatory inference which Peter drew from these heavenly truths: "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace."

I cannot avoid dropping one word for men of the world. Where will you be when these new heavens and new earth shall be displayed? Through all the revolving ages of the coming world, where will you be? While the saints are walking from world to world, exalted to the dignity and glory of the sons of God, where will you be? Dying thus, you will be separated from all good men, and shut up in prison with a few filthy malefactors, whose number compared to that of the saints, will, I hope, (considering the countless millions who will be saved in the millenium,) be only as the few malefactors in our dungeons to the mass of society. Can you who pity the infamy of these wretches, endure to share the far greater infamy of the reprobate?—Though unbelief may now prevent you from feeling for your future selves, it



will be your own selves still; and you will feel as exquisite a sense of disgrace as you would have done in this world. Flee, I beseech you, from this "shame and everlasting contempt:" flee from the infinite torture of endless burnings,—from perhaps eternally increasing agony: flee from the rage and torment of hellish passions: flee from the rending fury of devils; and seek the bosom of God; and seek a society that knows nothing but love; and seek eternal purity and honor; and seek an inheritance in the new heavens and new earth. What are your silver and your gold to the riches of those glorious worlds? What are your shops and your warehouses to that grand universal magazine of wealth? Drop from your arms this lumber which is devoted to the flames, and embrace those riches which will endure forever. Lay up for yourselves treasures in the new heavens and new earth, where neither moth nor rust shall corrupt. While this earth is fast going to decay, and the very scaffolding of nature seems falling, O prepare to sit on thrones in the new heavens and new earth. Prepare to enjoy the eternal God as your infinite portion. Escape from all the rivalries and enmities of the wicked, to feast on the tenderness of his boundless love forever and ever. Amen.

## **SERMON LI**

### **THE LAMB IN THE MIDST OF HIS FATHER'S THRONE**

And I beheld and lo in midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain. - REV. 5:6

In thinking of the exaltation of Christ we must not be careful to separate the two natures, and discriminate between the honors of the man and the honors of the God. With all this complex glory he has but one Person, and it is not so properly the glory of the man nor of the God, but of the Mediator. By a separation of the two natures, and

a failure to carry through all the periods and modes of his existence the idea of the same Person, much confusion has been introduced and some error. Thus when the Son of man is represented as coming down from heaven and returning to heaven, it has been inferred that his human nature must have had a previous existence, as the God could not change place. But this inference is made without considering that the same Person, the same Mediator, that was displayed in heaven, was afterwards displayed on earth, and then appeared in heaven again. He was the Mediator before his humanity existed. Then the scene of his display was heaven. When he became incarnate and appeared on earth, there were not two Mediators, one in heaven and another on earth. Earth then became the scene of the display of the one Mediator, as heaven had been before. The whole Mediator looked out of the eyes and spoke out of the lips of Jesus of Nazareth. When John approached him on earth and beheld him and worshipped him, though he saw nothing but the man, he saw the Person who constituted the only Mediator in existence: he saw the Person who had been displayed in heaven as the Mediator, and was now displayed as the Mediator on earth, and of course might be said to have come down from heaven. This carrying through all the states of his existence the idea of the same Person, the same Mediator, would prevent that misconception of texts which has led to a denial of his divinity, as well as that which has led others into the idea of the pre-existence of his human soul.

In this vision John had a view of the exaltation of the Saviour, and of something to remind him of the state from which he had been raised, the sufferings through which he had passed, and the true cause of his exaltation. He saw him in the midst of his Father's throne, surrounded by adoring saints and angels; but he saw him as the Lamb which had been slain, with all the marks of his death upon him. It was as the Lamb slain that he was exalted. In this view John had notices of the atonement made by his passion, and of the glorious rewards of his obedience "unto death." He beheld in a figure what the Saviour had done and endured on earth, and what he had found in heaven. All his sufferings and work in this lower world, and

all his reward and glory in the world above, were set forth, directly or indirectly, in this single picture; and it may lead us to cast a view over the whole.

I. There were notices of the atonement made by his sufferings. "A Lamb as it had been slain." He is called a Lamb in reference to the paschal lamb and other lambs offered in sacrifice under the old dispensation. These fully represented him who was meek, patient, unresisting, and who uttered no complaint against his murderers. They resembled him in that none were selected but those without blemish. But the point in which they were chiefly intended to set him forth, was that they were offered as a typical expiation for sin, their life being taken in lieu of the life of the transgressor.

If men were to be pardoned, it was necessary that Christ should die to answer the precise end of their punishment; that is, to convince the universe, as much as their punishment would have done, that God was determined to execute the penalty of his law on future offenders. The practical exhibition of this resolution was necessary to support the authority of the law, while, as a consequence, it showed God's love of holiness and hatred of sin, and his inflexible determination to be rigorously just towards future offenders. These ends were all that could be accomplished by the punishment of transgressors; and these being fully answered by the death of Christ, it became consistent with the authority of the law, not indeed to shield incorrigible transgressors; (that would have ruined the law;) but to extend pardon to the penitent and reclaimed. This was the precise end of the atonement; and this end was answered by the sufferings of Christ in our stead.

II. There were notices of the glorious rewards of his obedience. He was in the midst of the throne, surrounded by the living creatures and the elders, (the representatives of the whole Church,) who were offering their adorations and thanksgivings. This, and every other part of his exaltation, he received as the reward of his obedience "unto death." "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself

and became OBEДИENT unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, [to wit, the name of the Son of God;] that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

If there were any reasons why Christ should obey, distributive justice required that he should receive a glorious reward. And it was desirable in itself that there should stand forth one pre-eminent instance of the rewards of obedience, in order to show to the universe with what readiness and fulness God recompenses conformity to his law; thereby to exhibit how infinitely attached he is to holiness. Further, if it was necessary for Christ to be under law, it was necessary for him to obey in order to be holy, and of course in order to be accepted as an expiation; inasmuch as the sufferings of a sinner would have been deserved by himself, and could not have atoned for others. But it was necessary for him to be under law, that is, off the throne, that the stroke of the lawgiver might fall upon him, and that he might give satisfaction to one sitting on the throne and holding the rights of the Godhead. It was necessary that he should obey in the article of his death, that the stroke might manifestly come from the Lawgiver; for in no way could the Lawgiver officially strike but by commanding him to receive the blow. Nor could the Father in any character lay the stroke upon him, but either by forcing it upon one struggling against his authority, (in which case it would have been the sufferings of a sinner and of no efficacy to atone for others,) or by inflicting it upon one wholly ignorant of what was to happen, (which does not accord with Christ's frequent prediction of his death,) or by commanding him to die, and by his obediently yielding to the stroke. It was necessary for him to be obedient that he might be the well beloved Son; that so the Father's stroke might be as expressive of his determination to punish transgressors, as the eternal destruction of Adam's race would have been. In these respects his obedience was necessary even to his atonement.

But his obedience was further necessary that God might have an opportunity to deliver over to him as his reward all the positive good ever intended for Adam's race; and thus adhere to the principle on which he set out in the commencement of his moral government, never to issue a positive good, (except to set creatures out in existence,) but as the reward of a perfect obedience; a principle which cast the highest honor upon his law. As the reward of his obedience, Christ became the "Heir of all things;" and in this new sense was displayed as the Son of God. And as soon as he was appointed to manage his own inheritance, (as was fit,) he became of course the universal King. And being such, it was no more than suitable that he should be arrayed in kingly honors.

For all these reasons it was proper that he should be under law and obey, and that for his obedience he should be exalted to all the honors and possessions and power which he now inherits.

And as the inheritance which was to come to his people must first be given to him, and so come to them through him; and as it was proper that he should be made the distributor of his own estate; it was suitable that his people should receive all their blessings from his hand. But inasmuch as the blessings come originally from God, and this fact was not to be hid behind a Mediator, but to be forever displayed, it was proper to hold up the blessings as coming both from God and the Lamb,—originally from God and immediately from the Lamb. And so it is. We are directed to ask God to send us blessings on Christ's account, and we are directed to ask Christ to send us what he has received from the Father. Hence the notice of the throne of God and of the Lamb, as that which keep the curse from his new Jerusalem, and out of which proceeds "the pure river of life." Hence the blessedness of the saints is ascribed both to God and the Lamb. "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." In like manner God and the Lamb are associated as constituting the sun which illumines the heavenly city. "The city had no need of the sun neither of the moon to

shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." God is the source of the light and the Lamb is the medium through which it shines. He is "the image of the invisible God,"—"the word" by which the whole mind of God is expressed. By the works of creation produced "by him and for him;" by his providence which develops God's designs, (for the Lamb was appointed to open all the seals;) by his great mediatorial work; by the instructions which he has imparted in person and through his prophets and apostles; and by the Spirit which acts under him; he has brought forth all the light which has been shed on the character, government, and designs of God. Add to this, that the splendor surrounding his human body, and which he will impart to the bodies of his saints as the royal robes in which the sons of God are to be set forth, will pour immortal day upon the senses. In the same way God and the Lamb are associated as the temple of the New-Jerusalem. "And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it;" meaning that the vision of God and communion with him will be perfect and immediate, or through no other medium than the Lamb. Christians will not need those officers and ordinances which belonged to earthly temples,—those glasses through which they once saw darkly,—those imperfect ways in which they used to send up their worship; nor will they need houses for prayer when they have nothing more to ask. God and the Lamb will answer all these ends.

Not only will the Lamb impart as his own the blessings which he received from the Father, but as Heir of all things and universal King, he will claim his people for his property and subjects: and he is represented as keeping a book in which all their names are written, as men enter in books an account of their property, and as kings sometimes have registered the names of their subjects. None will enter the heavenly city "but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Amidst all the glory which will surround the Lamb that was slain, I see the different orders of creatures, and in the foremost rank the

redeemed, pressing forward to lay their honors at his feet. John had a vision of this, and makes the following report. "After this I beheld, and lo a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne and about the elders and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God, saying, Amen: blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be unto our God forever and ever. Amen." At another time he saw a grand jubilee held in heaven in honor of the Lamb; the redeemed first beginning the song, the angels then striking in, and before it was done the whole creation joining in the bursting praise. "And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders, [the representatives of the whole Church,] fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song.—And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; (and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands;) saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth forever and ever." Thus all creation, except the damned, join in the worship of God and the Lamb.

But who can conceive the gratitude which the redeemed will feel towards him who died for their lives? With what feelings did the affectionate John in Patmos say, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and

priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." But with how much greater gratitude will the redeemed in heaven, when they see from what they were raised,—when they feel the great salvation which he procured for them,—when they discover the dignity and glory of the Sufferer, and see in his hands and in his side the prints of the nails and the spear; with how much greater gratitude will they cast their crowns at his feet and ascribe to him all the glory of their salvation. John had once an opportunity to see them at this employment. He beheld the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fall down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth."

How delightful to contemplate the honors which encircle the Lamb in the midst of his Father's throne! After being here so long marred with grief and shame, how sweet to know that he has found a throne! After wandering an exile from heaven for more than thirty years for our revolt, and to seek through this wilderness that which was lost, we joy that he has found a home. After being so long unknown and neglected, we rejoice that he has found those who can honor his worth. After all the mockery of the judgment hall and the pretorium, we exult to hear the shout of all heaven in his praise. After the crown of thorns, we are enraptured to see him wear the diadem of the universe. After being cast out upon the wide world, not having where to lay his head, we triumph that a palace has received him. After depending for bread on the charity of his female followers, we are transported to see him the heir of all things and able in his turn to impart to others. After being so long a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,—after all the agonies of the garden and the cross,—we sing and shout for joy that he has found repose,—that he has found infinite and eternal delight in the glory of his Father and the salvation of his Church. Let him have his happiness and his



honors. Amidst all the sufferings of life, it shall be our solace that the man of sorrows is happy,—that the despised Nazarene is honored at last. Of all the luxuries that ever feasted the soul, the sweetest is to see the Lamb that was slain in the midst of his Father's throne.

My dear brethren, we came here to day to find him in the place of graves; but he is not here, he is risen.

"With joy we tell the scoffing age,

He that was dead has left the tomb:

He lives above their utmost rage,

And we are waiting till he come."

We had thought to come and stand and weep where Mary wept; but while we were coming, the angel descended and rolled back the stone, and lo the mangled body has taken its flight. We saw that body mangled; we saw the stripes cut deep into his sacred flesh; we saw his temples gored with thorns; we heard the loud roar of vulgar mockery; we saw him borne away on the tide of popular fury; we saw his cross erected; we saw his hands and feet extended and nailed to the wood. We stood weeping and trembling six hours as he hung on the torturing spikes, under the burden of our sins; we saw his mother swoon and sink to the earth; we saw John as pale as death; we saw heaven and earth convulsed; we heard his dying groan; we saw him committed to the sepulchre. And we had now come to embalm him. But he is not here. O could we hear him speak to us as he did to Mary before the sepulchre, with what transport would we also cry, Rabboni! and rush into his arms. Yes and we will embalm him still. We will embalm his name in our hearts. We will embalm it among our children and friends by the memorial of his love which we are about to set forth. We will embalm it by a life savoring of his loveliness. We will embalm it by our praise, which shall be prolonged while we have breath, and sink away at last upon our dying lips. And we will embalm it among the songs of the upper world. O if we are

permitted to come and stand where the elders bow before the Lamb enthroned, how will we bow and sing! When we shall look down to hell and see our old companions there, and then back to Calvary, and then look up and read the touching traces of love in those melting eyes, and among the prints of the thorns, we will embalm his name if love and songs can do it. We will tell all heaven of his love. If ever new inhabitants should come in from other worlds, they shall hear the story of Calvary. If commissioned in remote ages of eternity to visit other planets, we will carry to them the amazing tidings. We will tell the story to all we meet. We will erect monuments of the wonderful facts on every plain of heaven, and inscribe them all over with the story of the manger, the garden, and the cross.—While gratitude and truth remain, the name and the love of Jesus shall never be forgotten. It shall be the sweetest part of our heaven to see him on the throne,—to see him bending with infinite delight over his beloved Church,—to hear that shout of praise from all the redeemed, from all the angels, from all the holy creation. It shall be our heaven to bow with them and join the song.

But poor miserable sinners, where will you be? While all this burst of joy and praise is heard in heaven, where will you be? During all the coming ages of that glorious eternity, where will you be? While your blessed parents and friends are feasting above, O where will you be? Saying "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come and who shall be able to stand?"

## **SERMON LII**

HOW CAN I PUT THEE AMONG THE CHILDREN

But I said, How shall I put thee among the children and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the host of nations? And I said, Thou shalt call me my Father, and shalt not turn away from me. - JER. 3:19

These words were primarily addressed to the ten tribes of Israel, who had been carried captive about a century before by the king of Assyria. God seems to be revolving in his mind the immense difficulties in the way of restoring them to the character of children and to the land and privileges of their fathers, and inquires with himself, or proposes the inquiry to them, how so great a restoration could be accomplished. To the eye of reason it seemed impossible. They had been transported into the country of the Medes, and other nations had been brought in to possess their lands and to fill their cities. The whole authority of the Assyrian monarch, who at that time possessed almost all Asia, had guaranteed their country to its new possessors and confined them to the land of their captivity. The power of Assyria was continually increasing, and no prospect of the subversion of that immense empire appeared. The captive tribes had built houses and planted vineyards in Media, and had gradually become attached to that country as their home, and in the same proportion had become weaned from the inheritance of their fathers. The prospect of their ever being able or willing to return was daily decreasing. And to swell the difficulties, they who had been banished from the presence of God for their idolatry, were growing more and more heathenish from their connexion with the nations among whom they were scattered. But they must be recovered to holiness and to the pure worship of God before they could be restored to the privileges of the Church. To complete the seeming impossibility, all their past sins stood like mountains between them and God. And now the question arose, how could they who had done so much to wean the love of God from them, who were scattered among the heathen, attached to their new homes, growing more and more heathenish, held in captivity by all the power of the Assyrian empire; their former possessions desolated, their cities burned, and the wasted country in the hands of other inhabitants; how could they be

restored to the former character and privileges of Israel? Over these difficulties God seems to be pondering when he inquires, "How shall I put thee among the children and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the host of nations?" At last he seems to make up his mind, and graciously resolves, "Thou shalt call me my Father, and shalt not turn away from me." I will recover thee to holiness and keep thee holy by my power, and then I will restore thee to the privileges of my Church. This he partly did when he brought back the Jews from Babylon, among whom many of the ten tribes returned; and this he will do to a more perfect degree in the latter day.

Agreeably to the analogy of Scripture, the text may be applied to sinners in general; and then it will furnish us with this DOCTRINE, that there are very great, and to the eye of reason insurmountable difficulties in the way of putting sinners among the children of God and bringing them to the land of promise.

These difficulties may be classed under three heads; the greatness of their guilt, the strength of their corruptions, and the number and power of their spiritual enemies. Let us consider these difficulties distinctly.

I. The greatness of their guilt. They have sinned against God, by breaking his law, and by that law they are condemned to eternal death. How can they escape? The law must be supported, for it is the basis on which rest the order and happiness of the universe. But if the law be not executed how can it be supported? All the terrors of the unchangeable law of God are levelled against them, and how can they escape?

Further, their sins have been attended with many great aggravations. They have trampled on the authority and majesty of the infinite God. They have sinned against all the wisdom and goodness and mercy of God. Though he has nourished and brought them up as children, they have rebelled against him. Though he has been infinitely more kind to them than ever earthly parent was, his kindness has made no

impression on their hearts. In violating his righteous law they have attacked the foundation on which rest the order and happiness of his kingdom. They have sinned against the rights and interests of the universe. Have they not? They have refused to yield the throne to God; they have refused to love their neighbor as themselves; they have refused to extend their affections to God's immense and holy kingdom and to set up this as their beloved and highest interest; they have indulged that selfishness which would sacrifice God and his creation to advance their own ends,—the same selfishness that produces all the rancor and rage of the damned. In all this they have risen up against the honor and happiness of God,—against the comfort and glory of the universe. Their selfishness and pride have tended to disjoint and destroy the whole: and as they are chargeable with all the effects which their conduct tends to produce, they are as guilty as though they were now returning from the ashes of a demolished universe burnt down by their wicked hands. All this they have done; and when God has sought to reclaim them, they have resisted all the means which he has used for this purpose. They have neglected sacraments and prayer and the word of God. They have profaned sabbaths, profaned the house of God, and grieved his holy Spirit. They have sinned against light and against conscience. By their unbelief and sins they have murdered the Lord of life and glory in the very act of plucking them from destruction, and are daily trampling in the dust his sacred blood. How can sinners loaded with such enormous guilt be restored?

Further, the number of their sins is countless.—One violation of all these obligations,—one insurrection against all these sacred rights,—deserves eternal death. "The soul that sinneth," if it be but once, "shall die," is the tenor of the divine law. Indeed if one sin does not deserve eternal punishment, no number can. If one sin, for instance, deserves only a thousand years of punishment, then ten deserve only ten thousand years, and a hundred a hundred thousand; and as no collection of units can make an infinite number, (there being always two ends to the series,) no number of sins can deserve an infinite or endless punishment if one does not. What then is the demerit of a

single sin? And now if you can count the sands of the sea, rehearse the number of their sins. As often as their bosom has heaved with the breath of life, it has moved with rebellion against God.—Every moment that has passed over their heads has found them breaking that law which constantly stands over them and says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" and "thy neighbor as thyself." For thirty, forty, and fifty years they have been in God's world without ever striking one stroke in the great business for which they were created. All this time the talents which God gave them and commanded them to occupy for him, have been buried in a napkin. One sin deserves eternal punishment, and yet millions and millions stand charged against them. Their guilt, like mountains piled on mountains, rises to the very heavens and cries for vengeance: how can they possibly escape?

Shall I not stop here? Need another word be said to plunge them into eternal despair?—But this is not the end: for,

II. There is another difficulty, which consists in the strength of their corruptions. They are "dead in trespasses and sins." Their hearts are "enmity against God," wholly averse to his service, and wholly attached to sin and the world. And this enmity is so great that no persuasions, no motives, no means can subdue it. They are even opposed to the means which God has instituted for their recovery. They are opposed to Christ, the only deliverer sent from God to rescue them from ruin.—They are displeased with the terms and even with the blessings of the Gospel. Whatever attempts God makes to recover them, they resist. He sent his Son, and him they rejected. He sent his word, and that they oppose. He sends his Spirit, and him they grieve away. All the efforts and entreaties of God and man have been to no purpose except to harden them the more. Heaven, earth, and hell have been drained of motives, but motives are lost on beings resolved to reject a Saviour though at the expence of their own eternal ruin. They would sooner plunge into hell, than into the bosom of God. They would sooner lie down in fire for a long eternity, than love infinite beauty and be thankful for dying love. What then

can be done? What power can surmount these strong and numberless barriers?

Even after the soul is converted by divine grace, these corruptions continue to struggle. They hang upon it and hold it back in all its way to glory, and the poor backward thing must be carried the whole way in the arms of God. Every Christian knows and is often greatly alarmed at the strength of his remaining corruptions, which will not go themselves, and grieve the Spirit which comes to help him on his way. In us, that is in our "flesh, dwelleth no good thing." All that tends towards God in the best Christian on earth, is the result of a foreign influence. And should the best Christian, even in old age and on the borders of heaven, be deserted by this foreign influence,—from the threshold of glory, from the vision of the Lamb he would retreat, and urged by the malignity of his own heart, would plunge into everlasting darkness and blasphemy. Such strong resistance to salvation is made, from first to last, by all that is natural to the human heart. How then can sinners be saved?

Is it worth while to proceed any further? Need another word be said to extinguish the last hope of man?—But I have not even yet done: for,

III. There is still another difficulty, which consists in the number and power of their spiritual enemies. The world, the flesh, and the devil are leagued against them. Two worlds are embodied to oppose their passage, and they are in arms against themselves. They have to encounter the examples, the frowns, and the blandishments of the world. They have to encounter numberless invisible tempters, whose perseverance, skill, and advantages to ensnare are greater than we can tell. They have to encounter all the appetites of the flesh and all the corruptions of the heart. They are like infants besieged by veteran armies, with invisible pits and snares spread thickly around their feet, and they themselves covered with a stupor which disqualifies them for the least exertion. They are surrounded by victorious enemies, who hold them bound and hand-cuffed, and have lodged

spies and sentinels in their very bosom. Every creature of God seems leagued against them, and none in all the world is for them,—at least none that can afford them any effectual aid.

These are the mighty difficulties which lie between them and heaven. The great God as he ponders over these difficulties, seems to look around as though perplexed with their magnitude and number, and inquires, "How shall I put thee among the children?"

Must we then despair? On this spot must the last hope of a sinking world be entombed? Must we and our poor children lie down in everlasting burnings? Yes,—yes surely,—unless help comes from some higher deliverer. But hark! I hear a sound! It seems the voice of mercy. It comes floating down by the way of Calvary and bursts upon our delighted ear: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace" and "good will towards men." The remedy is found at last in the gracious sovereignty of God. The only way of putting sinners among the children is at length fallen upon. "And I said, Thou shalt call me my Father, and shalt not turn away from me." This gracious purpose of God, on which rest all the hopes of a dying world, implies three things.

1. That he will beget in sinners a filial temper. He speaks absolutely. "Thou shalt call me my Father."
2. That he will be a father to them; that he will pardon their sins and treat them with affection and care.
3. That he will keep them by his power "through faith unto salvation," "Thou shalt call me my Father, and shalt not turn away from me." He engages to take the work into his own hands, and to see to it himself that they never turn away from him. It is his business and care to carry on the work till it is completed.

It is remarkable that God assigns no other reason for doing all this than his own sovereign pleasure. He does not say, For such good works of thine I will bring thee to call me Father. In answer to the



perplexing question, "How shall I put thee among the children?" we hear only this, "And I said, Thou shalt call me my Father." I chose it should be so: I spoke and I alone. It is not said, Thou saidst thou wouldst call me my Father; thou chosest; but, I said. I was the mover: I fixed the event in my own gracious purpose. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

God is the Alpha and Omega of our salvation. He laid the foundation, and he must put on the top stone. He first formed the purpose, moved by nothing but his own amazing goodness. He sent his Son to make atonement, and atonement was made, full and satisfactory. He sent his Spirit to apply the purchased salvation; to awaken the stupid, to convince the awakened, to convert the convinced, and to train the converted for glory. And when the soul is brought to call him my Father, he most freely becomes a Father to it, and takes the finishing of its salvation into his own hands. All the resources for the salvation of sinners are found in God alone. There is no way in which these mighty difficulties can be surmounted but by the sovereign and invincible energies of divine grace. "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord." "My soul, wait thou only upon God, [—only upon God, —] for my expectation is from him." "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." These words sum up the whole matter. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." The ruin of sinners is entire; but in Christ they are complete. The ruin is so thorough and universal, that all created power can do nothing towards restoring them. They are dead,—completely and eternally dead; and their ruin is altogether from themselves: but in God is their help; help fully adequate to their necessities if they will but apply; help that will overcome resistance itself in every case fixed upon by infinite wisdom and love.

From this view of things it appears,

I. That the ruin of human nature is complete, and that the only hope of man is in the mercy of God through Christ. Some are in the habit

of representing human nature as somewhat imperfect, but found their hopes on the smallness of their sins and the general innocence of their lives. And hence they are disgusted at pointed descriptions of human depravity and ruin. Such descriptions discourage and offend them. But I hold it impossible to exaggerate the natural depravity and ruin of man; and I found my hopes for his salvation, not on his comparative innocence, but on the blood and Spirit of Christ. I condemn despondency as much as they; but I would seek to relieve it, not by imaginary notions of the smallness of sin, but by looking to him who came to save the chief of sinners. There is indeed abundant hope for man, but it does not lie in his comparative innocence, but in the grace and fulness of him who came to pluck a ruined world from the very jaws of death,—who came to wash them white in his blood who deserved to be trampled down into "shame and everlasting contempt." There is indeed abundant hope for man; but it is not because he is good, but because God is good. Let sinners awake to hope and to rapture as fast as they please, but let them so hope as to exalt Christ rather than themselves. Let the glooms of guilt be brushed from every soul, but let the light and hope come from Christ alone. Human nature is more sunk and lost in itself than human tongue ever represented or human heart conceived; and yet there is abundant reason for human sinners to fill heaven and earth with acclamations of joy for redeeming mercy. Is this gloomy preaching? I point out a more effectual method to banish gloom than any fond advocate for the purity of human nature ever propounded. Why will not this satisfy men? Ah, it has but one defect. It gives all the glory of their salvation to Christ and strips it from them. And is this deemed a defeat? Is this your gratitude to him who left the realms of glory to endure shame and suffering and death for you, that you might be lifted from despair to hope and to heaven? Do you now grudge him a little meager praise? Would you wish to filch it from him and to claim it yourselves? Have you no other returns to make but to affirm that you were not sick and had no need of the Physican? Is all the thanksgiving you have to bring a solemn charge that he rashly threw away his life? Come boldly forward, ye sticklers for the purity of human nature, and put your secret pleas into open language. Speak

out like men. Ah, will ye not start and turn pale at the sound of your own voice? Will not your blood curdle in your veins as ye utter the blasphemous sentence? Why then brood over feelings in secret which you dare not express? Or why support propositions and shrink from their legitimate consequences?

II. Let all men be exhorted to look to God alone for the gift of eternal life, and to cast themselves wholly on him for every part of their salvation. You cannot remove these mighty difficulties which lie between you and heaven. You who are Christians are deeply sensible of these truths, whatever else you may be unable to feel. Your eyes are daily upon the heavens whence "cometh" your "help." But let me press this point on those who are yet in their sins. Who shall raise you, poor, prayerless, unsanctified souls, from the "horrible pit" and "miry clay?" Who shall purge from you this world of guilt? Who shall subdue the stubbornness of your corruptions? Who shall deliver you from all your spiritual enemies? Here you lie bound by this three fold chain, which all the men on earth and all the angels in heaven cannot dissolve. All creation cannot relieve you. Your own independent efforts cannot relieve you. You must forever sink deeper and deeper in this "horrible pit" unless God should bend a pitying look upon you, —unless God shall stretch forth his hand and raise you from destruction. You lie wholly at his mercy. If he frown you die, if he smile you live forever. You are altogether in his hands, and all creation cannot take you out. What then is to be done? Will you therefore turn your backs upon him, and under the dreadful pretence that you have nothing to do, take no further care for your salvation? Under the pretence that God must do the work, will you indifferently turn away to other matters? Rather ought you not to go to him and cast yourselves upon him, and by faith and prayer engage him to undertake for you? If a child is conscious that it cannot walk without the aid of its parent, does it therefore flee from its parent? Does it not rather creep to his feet, and hang upon his knees, and put its little hand into his hand, to be supported and led by a parent's care? Go ye therefore and do likewise. Look to the Spirit of Christ to subdue your stubborn hearts. Look to the power and grace of Christ

to deliver you from your spiritual enemies. Look to the blood of Christ to cleanse you from guilt. Look to the mercy of God to pardon your sins and adopt you as his children. Thus cast yourselves heartily and without reserve on the power and grace of the adorable Trinity, and keep your eyes on the heavens whence "cometh" your "salvation." Lay aside all hope of relieving yourselves,—all hope of obtaining relief from others, and put forth your hand and take hold of omnipotent grace.

III. "If the righteous scarcely" are "saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" If such immense difficulties lie in the way of the salvation of Christians, and of sinners who are thoroughly awakened, what will become of those who are asleep in carnal security? Are there any present who know themselves to be in "the gall of bitterness," and yet are unconcerned about their state? Know ye, my unhappy hearers, that all the difficulties which have been enumerated lie in the way of your salvation, and they must all be surmounted or you must endure a miserable eternity. With so much to be done are you still asleep? Life is rapidly wearing away, and you have never yet begun your work. What calculations are you making for eternity? When are all these difficulties to be surmounted? Do you flatter yourselves that they will be removed while you sleep? This is one of the incoherent dreams of delirium. When are you then to awake and begin this mighty business? Thirty, forty, fifty years of your life are past, and the great business of life not yet begun,—nor any serious attempt to begin it,—nor any anxious thought about making the attempt, or even about neglecting it so long. And yet all this time it is as true as the being of a God, that you must meet and surmount all these difficulties or make your bed in hell. Yea it is true that while you delay, these difficulties are hourly increasing. What phrenzy has seized your brain? O if there is one glimmering of reason left,—if one lucid interval of sense,—hear this expostulation and awake without delay. Hasten to the throne of God and cast yourselves at his feet, and throw yourselves upon his mercy. Do it, I beseech you, that your souls may live. Do it before you leave your

seats. Do it now. — Have you done it? If not you deserve eternal wrath for that neglect.

Whatever be the issue you have been warned. You may remember this warning when you lie tossing on a dying bed. You may remember it when you stand trembling at the bar of God. While the heavens are passing away and the world is on fire, perhaps I may hear you cry, Ten thousand worlds that I had listened to that sermon! Take it and carry it with you to judgment, or it will inevitably follow you. It will certainly meet you there. God grant that it may not rise up in judgment against you.

# SERMON LIII

## WHAT AILETH THEE?

What aileth thee? - GEN. 21:17

This pointed question I wish to put to those who, while they wholly neglect religion, complain of the doctrines of the Gospel as blocking up their way to heaven. Though God has wrought miracles of mercy for our guilty race; though he has sent his Son to die for us, and has offered salvation to all on the easiest possible terms, nay has followed men with the most tender entreaties; yet murmurs are raised through all the world against him and against the way of life which he has opened, as though he had done nothing but oppress a miserable race.—And what is more astonishing, these murmurs come chiefly from those who wholly neglect their own salvation and the means which God has appointed. With all the inconsistency of the slothful servant, they bury their talent in a napkin, and then complain of God as a hard master, "reaping where" he hath "not sown and gathering where" he hath "not strowed." Their grand objection is, that their salvation depends on God, who holds the decision of their fate in his own hands, and of course "hath—mercy on whom he will have mercy." They are not willing that this doctrine should be true, or if true that it should be preached. They wish to have the decision of their fate in their own hands, and yet are not willing to do that which would decide it favorably. If pressed to become religious, they excuse themselves with the plea that they are not able. They strenuously maintain that they cannot change their own hearts, and that the decision of their fate rests with God. They show a zeal in the argument which discovers that they are not to be beaten,—that they will not suffer their fate to be in their own hands; because then they would have a disagreeable task to perform; they would have to set about working out their own salvation; they would have to engage in family and closet prayer, in religious conversation,

in meetings for devotion. They would have to renounce the world and take their heart from idols. They would have to spend their days in meditating upon God, in humbling themselves for sin, in renouncing their own righteousness and depending on a Saviour, in watching and wrestling against their own corruptions. All this they are unwilling to do, and therefore are anxious to make out that they cannot. They throw their fate out of their hands and will not have it there, lest it should impose on them disagreeable duties.

But when you take the other side of the question, and insist that their fate does depend on the sovereign will and decree of God; though this is the necessary inference from their former plea, they object and complain again. It is hard that they cannot have a voice in the decision of their own fate,—that God should create so many who he knew would fall, and whom he was determined not to renew,—that they should be required to do impossibilities,—that their salvation should be suspended on conditions which they are unable to fulfil,—that do what they will they cannot change the purpose of God nor promote their own salvation. Some of these men, at the moment that they are covering themselves with the plea of inability, (which certainly leaves their salvation to the election of God,) deny the doctrine of election. To excuse their neglects they plead that they cannot; and though this inevitably casts their salvation on the will and election of God, they deny that election. And why? Because they cannot bear to have the decision of their fate in the hands of God. They will have it neither one way nor the other. Other sinners who admit the decree of election, murmur against it as taking away their power, as being partial and unjust, as being full of discouragement, and object to its being preached. Some of this class, while they admit their dependance, deny their obligation; and as soon as they are forced to admit their obligation, complain of their dependance and want of power. They are not willing to be both dependant and under obligation; nor are they willing to have the power in their own hands, for that would impose duties which they are unwilling to perform. They love to excuse themselves with the plea that they are not able, and yet they complain of the want of power. They love to put the

business out of their hands to get rid of the obligation, and yet they murmur that it is in the hands of God. Let me come at the conscience of these men and demand of them one by one, "What aileth thee?" What do you want? What alteration would you have? What would satisfy you? "We have piped unto you and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented." If we say you have power, you will not have it so because that would lay you under obligations; if we say you are dependant, you resist because that puts your fate out of your own hands. How then would you have it? Do you know your own minds? The fact is, that you wish your destiny in your own hands, and yet would excuse yourselves from obligations.

Poor sinner, here you are in God's world, guilty, condemned, and going on to judgment. In what way do you hope to escape from the dreadful condition into which you have plunged yourself by sin? A Saviour is provided and offered to you; in what way do you expect to obtain a part in him? Take any ground you please, only keep to it. What ground then will you take? One thing you must distinctly understand. You cannot support the plea of inability and at the same time deny the doctrine of election. One ground or the other must be given up. If you cannot change your own heart, then God must change it if it is changed; and as he is immutable, he must have eternally determined whether to change it or not: and then he must have eternally determined, (for all men by nature are in the same condition,) whose hearts he would change and whose he would not. And this is election. If on the other hand you can, (in every sense of the word,) change your own heart,—or more properly speaking, if the heart does in fact change without the special interposition of God, then the doctrine of election is false; but you must never again plead your inability. Take which ground you please, but do not attempt to hold both.

If you say that you can change your own heart in every sense of the word,—that the doctrine of election is false and ought not to be preached; it is all very well: only prove it false by actually changing your own heart. What ministers preach on this subject cannot harm



you. It cannot lessen your power. They say indeed that your heart is so opposed to God that it never will love him of its own accord. If they are mistaken in this matter, you need not be disturbed by what they say: their preaching leaves you where you were before. It is only for you to prove their errors by turning your heart yourself. If you will set about this matter, no minister will attempt to hinder you; they will all rejoice in your success. Come then, change your own heart, and begin at once to love your Maker. You are under infinite obligations to love him. He is love itself. His holiness and justice are only modifications of love. His moral government, with all its tremendous sanctions, is dictated by nothing but love; and it opened a way for all those miracles of mercy and of truth and of the glory of God which are displayed in the Gospel. He solemnly commands you to love him this moment. You are pressed with the whole weight of his awful authority. Come then, begin at once to love your Maker.

Is it done? If not, how long a time do you ask for the purpose? It behooves you to do it as soon as possible, for life is uncertain. You may die before another morning; and if you die unchanged, you roll in everlasting fire. How long a time then will it require? If it is a week's work, certainly, with death at the door, you ought not to delay a moment. Will you promise then to come here with a new heart the next sabbath? Why should you hesitate? If you are independent of God in this matter, and have all that is necessary in yourself, what should hinder? what should occasion delay? what should raise a doubt? Thus you see that we open the door wide. Never complain again that the preaching of election blocks up your way to heaven. You now have a fair chance to go by your own power. Go, and no one will hinder you. If you have a more pliable heart than we have supposed, it is all well; now is the time to prove it.

But remember that to love God is a very serious matter. It is not to have a few emotions of selfish gratitude, a few excitements of animal passion. It is to love him for what he is in himself; it is to love him better than every other object, and to take the heart from the world. "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." "No

man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." To love God is to love his law and government, to hate sin, to feel the justice of your condemnation, to renounce your own righteousness, to come as a broken hearted and empty handed beggar to plead for mercy, to cast yourself upon Christ and heartily to approve the way of salvation by him. Now if your heart will do all this of its own accord, let it be done. No body will hinder you. You ought to do it. You ought to do it now. Infinite obligations lie upon you. Infinite dangers attend a moment's delay.

But perhaps you will admit that God himself has said,—we have already considered what ministers preach,—perhaps you will admit that God himself has said, that your heart is so opposed to him that it never will turn of its own accord. Let us then stand for a moment on this ground. Do you dislike this declaration? Do you believe that God is mistaken? Be it so: the declaration then will do you no harm. Certainly God will not hinder you if you are disposed to turn to him. Prove the mistake then by turning without his aid. If your heart is better and more flexible than he has represented, the way is still open for you to turn. His declaration does not prevent you: it does not take away your power. One thing is never to be questioned; if you will renounce the world and give your heart supremely to God, and repent of your sins and cast yourself upon Christ, he will accept you. He has declared without any exception, "He that believeth—shall be saved." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "A broken and a contrite heart," in whomsoever found, he will "not despise." The invitations and promises are to all.—"Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Now if you will accept these invitations and turn to God, he will certainly receive you. No declaration or decree will keep you off. If you have a heart to turn, God will not prevent. He says indeed that you will not; but if you will, all shall yet be well; he will certainly receive you. You stand on as fair ground as it is possible for a sinner to hold. If you do not turn it will not be owing to another; it will be your own fault. Why then do you complain? "What aileth thee?"

But perhaps, while you deny election, you are willing to admit that you cannot change your own heart yourself; but you insist that by seeking you can induce God to change it for you. Be it so; why then do you not induce him? Why are you buried in the world and neglecting prayer and the Bible? If earnest prayer and solemn attendance on all the means of grace, are to induce God to do this great work for you, why are you not about it? To come once a week to his house for entertainment or for fashion sake, and to bury yourself for the rest of the week in the world, is this the course of seeking which is to induce God? Why are you not besieging the throne of grace day and night with tears? If his decree of election is only a design to give a new heart to those who seek it with an old heart, and seek it without his special influence, what are you waiting for? Then it is your own fault that you have not induced him long ago. Why then do you complain? How unreasonable to neglect religion altogether, and then spend your life in murmuring against the doctrines of the Gospel, and the way of salvation as too exclusive and difficult.

But perhaps you will change your ground and admit the doctrine of election and your dependance on God, and that you can neither change your own heart nor induce God to change it. And then you complain again. What is the matter now?

Do you complain of your general dependance for life and all its blessings, and particularly for holiness? This is only to complain that you are a creature. God could not have made creatures less dependant either for life or holiness, for he is necessarily the source of both. It was impossible for him to make them self existent and independent; for this would have been creating other uncreated Gods. Your complaint then is this, that you were created. And is this really the charge which you mean to bring against your Maker?

But you complain that it depends on his special interposition to change your heart. What a strange complaint is this! That circumstance is owing to you, not to him. Why is his special interposition necessary to change your heart? or why is any change needful? It is because you are wickedly opposed to him, and your opposition is so strong that motives cannot induce you to turn. He has pressed you with all the motives which heaven, earth, and hell can furnish, but all in vain. He has exhausted entreaties, but entreaties are lost upon creatures so unyielding. It is an everlasting blot on creation that God has to speak a second time to induce creatures to love him. But all the motives in the universe, urged with all the eloquence of heaven, cannot induce you. This dreadful stubbornness is the only reason why a special interposition is necessary. And this necessity which you yourself have created, and which is an eternal shame to you, you allege against God. "O shame, where is thy blush?"

But rushing from one extreme to another, you at length positively declare that you have no natural ability to love God. Then you can be under no obligation. No command from any being could lay you under obligation to carry that mountain, because you have not natural ability to do it: that is, you have no power if ever so much disposed.—But can you say that you have no power to love God if ever so well disposed? The physical faculties of a rational soul constitute that power. Wherever there is a rational soul with competent light, there is one who can certainly love God if his heart is well disposed: there is one then that has natural ability; there is

one that can be laid under obligation by a command. Men do not depend on God for their natural ability, only as they depend on him for their rational existence. The dependance of sinners which is so much talked of, is for the conquest of those stubborn hearts for which they alone are to blame. They ought not to have such hearts; and the necessity of God's interference is because they are so stubborn that no motives will subdue them. Their dependance for such a conquest of their wilful opposition, does not lessen their obligation, because it does not lessen the natural ability on which their obligation rests. Being rational, they have power to love God if their hearts are well disposed; and that power, which is the basis of obligation, is what is meant by natural ability, and is not diminished by that stubbornness which will not yield till God subdues it,—is not diminished therefore by their dependance on God for a new heart.

Do you still say that you have no natural ability to love God? This dreadful allegation represents the ever blessed God as the most horrible of all tyrants, commanding impossibilities, and inflicting eternal torments for non-performance. It contradicts of course the whole tenor of his word, which represents sinners as complete moral agents, with full powers and perfect obligations, and wholly to blame for not returning to him. But I must be permitted to tell you that you do not believe this plea yourself. Did you really believe that you are in the hands of such a tyrant, would you be thus at ease? Would a man locked up in a burning house be playing with toys? When you come to me trembling like Belshazzar, I will believe you in earnest. But now I must consider your plea only an excuse from a disagreeable duty.

But while you are complaining of God as a hard master, requiring more than you are able to perform, you are actually doing nothing. Is this the way to treat a master who requires too much? I hear him say, "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strowed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received my own with usury."

You complain that you have no power. But God has not taken away your power. If you have lost it you have thrown it away yourself. But you have not lost it. You still possess entire natural ability to do all that God requires. The only impediment lies in your unreasonable opposition to God. And this being the case, will you tell me that you cannot love him? that with all his glories shining around you, you cannot find it in your heart to love such a God? that with all your enormous guilt upon you, you cannot repent? Do you carry about such an abominable heart as this? And do you cast the blame of all this upon God?

If you are not yet satisfied, it is because you wish for one of these four things: first, to have that religion acceptable to God which you are disposed to practise of your own accord without any special influence from him; a religion consisting in natural integrity with a heart set upon the world; or secondly, that God should be bound to give you the acceptable religion on your seeking it with such a temper as you now possess: (in either case the issue would be under your own control, independent of any special influence or special decree of God:) or thirdly, that he would give you the acceptable religion without your seeking it at all; or fourthly, that he would save you without any religion, and be your character what it may.

In regard to the first and fourth of these wishes, viz. to be saved without any religion, or with no other than that of common morality, with a heart supremely attached to the world; I remark, first, that you ought not to expect God to change his religion for you. His religion is that of the heart, consisting in love to God and man, in deadness to the world, and in a practice growing out of these affections. This is far unlike that superficial morality which leaves the heart in the possession of idols. You ask God to change his religion to gratify a rebel, and to lower it down to something unworthy of himself. Secondly, it is impossible for him to make that right which is wrong, or that wrong which is right. In his requirements he tells you what is right and what is wrong. He cannot change those requirements without falsehood,—without declaring right to be

wrong and wrong right. It would also be giving up the rights of the Godhead,—the claims of God to the hearts of his creatures. It would convert a law which is the greatest blessing to the universe, into a general curse, and into a disgrace to the Lawgiver. Thirdly, it is impossible for God to grant this request without ruining you. He could not make you truly happy with a heart set upon idols, even though "the outside of the cup and—platter" should be "clean." That would necessarily cut you off from the enjoyment of heaven, as disease disqualifies a man for relishing a feast. You had better never been born than be excused from loving God.

As to the second wish, viz. that God should be bound to give you the true religion on your seeking it with your present temper, that is, with enmity against him, with impenitence and a total rejection of Christ; or in other words, a wish to induce him by such seeking to change your heart; on this I remark, first, that the disappointment of this wish creates the main difficulty with every sinner who is too enlightened to suppose that an honest natural man has the true religion. The failure of this wish is the pivot on which election turns. If the natural man, under the influence of what is called common grace, can induce God to change his heart, he makes himself to differ from others, and the doctrine of a discriminating election falls. If he does not induce God, election stands. And from perceiving that he cannot exert this influence on the divine mind, arises his chief complaint against God. The awakened sinner, without any proper dependance on Christ, hopes to the last that he shall induce God to change his heart, and that it will be done as the fair reward of his exertions. But this is self-righteousness in perfection. Secondly, it is inconsistent with the character of God to respect the prayers of an unholy man, because they are full of selfishness and self-righteousness, and are not offered with any proper dependance on Christ. The man himself stands on his own ground separated from Christ, and is not viewed by the Father through the medium of Christ. God cannot accept his prayers without setting aside the whole plan of redemption and distinctly rewarding sin. Therefore it is said, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Your request would

change the whole plan of salvation and the established mode of God's intercourse with sinners, and bring an everlasting blot upon his name.

And yet if you are ever carried through regeneration, you will first be made anxious and pray and earnestly use means, until you give up all for lost and lie dead at his feet. You never will lie dead at his feet until you have thus exhausted your own strength. This is what is called the preparatory work, and always, I suppose, more or less takes place in the case of adults. If then you can keep from anxiety and prayer, you can probably keep from regeneration.

In regard to the third wish, viz. that God would give you the true religion without your seeking it at all, that is, while your mind is too indifferent to seek it,—while your heart is wholly engrossed by other objects; this is a wish as presumptuous as it is vain. Since the fall of man, no mind so stupid ever received the true religion, and none ever will, as we have every reason to believe. I admit that there is no true seeking till the heart is changed, and that this grace is in every instance bestowed on those who never properly sought it. But this does not lessen the unreasonableness of the careless sinner, who, with arms of rebellion in his hands, stupidly wishes God to bestow upon him an infinite blessing without an effort or an anxious feeling on his part.

Thus it appears that your four wishes are all unreasonable, and equally unreasonable are the complaints which those wishes suggest. Your murmurs against God and against the doctrines of his word, are only the selfish cavils of an interested party. You have no cause of complaint. God is in the right and you are in the wrong. Admit this conviction, I beseech you. Take all the shame and blame to yourself and clear your Maker. And under a deep conviction of the rectitude of his ways and the unrighteousness of your own, go and cast yourself at his feet and take refuge in his boundless mercy.



# SERMON LIV

## CAN THESE BONES LIVE?

And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? and I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. - EZEK. 37:3

Can these bones live? When this question was put to Ezekiel he was standing in vision by a valley full of bones,—bones that were "very dry" and scattered abroad. To the eye of reason it appeared impossible that bone should ever come to its bone, that sinews and flesh should be gathered upon them, that breath should enter into them, and that they should stand "up upon their feet an exceeding great army." He saw nothing in the bones, nothing in himself, nothing in the whole creation that could produce this change. When therefore God put the question to him, "Son of man, can these bones live?" what could he answer but, "O Lord God, thou knowest"? Thou only canst produce this change; thou only knowest whether it will be done.

This valley of bones represented the whole house of Israel in Babylon, dead to all hope, and most of them dead in sin; whom God intended to raise to holiness and restore to the land of their fathers, and to whom he directed the vision to be thus explained: "Ye shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves,—and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land." Placing them in their own land, was only setting them up in the world after they were made alive; their resurrection consisted in rising from the death of sin by the power of the Holy Spirit. The vision therefore illustrates the natural condition of men in general, "dead in trespasses and sins" and cut off from hope, and their resurrection to spiritual life by the power of God.

Methinks I am standing to-day on the margin of a valley full of dry bones,—the bones of my kindred, at whose death my tears have often flowed. As I bend over the remains of those dear to me and mourn

the wide desolation, I perceive the bones to be very dry. I see them disjointed and scattered through the valley in ruinous disorder. While I stand fixed in grief, a whisper comes from heaven, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I start at the joyous sound. I look at the valley again. To the eye of reason such an event seems impossible. The whisper swells upon my ear, "Son of man, can these bones live?" Agitated with hope and fear, and certain on whom the event depends, what can I answer but, "O Lord God, thou knowest"?

Can these souls that are dead in trespasses and sins, ever be revived? If they cannot, they must soon sink into the eternal death. They must burn in unquenchable fire. Can they not be raised?—They might be formed into beings capable of inconceivable and endless enjoyment,—capable of everlasting service and praise. Precious in our eyes is their very dust. What pity that such materials should be worse than lost, and made fuel for the flames that shall consume others. It is a loss great enough to fill a world with tears. Can they not be raised? This question must soon be decided. The ground is already rocking under them. Whatever is done must be done quickly. Can they be raised?

Their death is their own fault. It is the death of sin,—of supreme selfishness and pride armed against the government of God, against the dying love of Christ, against the rights and interests of the universe. It is such a death as deserves eternal reprobation,—as crushes them under mountains of guilt,—as makes them odious in the sight of God, mere masses of putrefaction. Can they not be raised from this disgraceful death?

To the eye of reason I confess the case appears hopeless. As desirable as such an event is,—as distressing as it is to see our kindred lie among the slain,—sense and reason must forever despair.—Their death consists in strong opposition to life and to all the means of restoring life; and yet they cannot be made actively alive without their own consent. Every means has been used to obtain that consent, but in vain. God has sent his own Son to die, to render it

consistent for them to live and enjoy life. That Son has suffered and died and risen, and stood over them and entreated them; but they have rejected his love and turned their faces to the earth and resolved to lie in death still. He has prepared a life for them more blessed than that which they lost; he has described to them the high beatitudes of that life and the horrors of that eternal death into which they must soon plunge, until heavenly eloquence is exhausted; but like the deaf adder they have stopped their ears. He has sent many messengers to renew the entreaty, but all to no purpose. Sermons, which have been poured into their ears for twenty or thirty years, might as well have been poured into the grave. The Bible has in vain raised its authoritative voice,—in vain has sent its beseeching tones to the ear of death. Sabbaths and sacraments have returned to solicit them in vain. The heavenly Spirit has breathed through the valley; but him they have resisted and grieved away. Ministers have preached, parents have wept, Christians have prayed, God has entreated: but all to no purpose: they still love death rather than life. Every thing that heaven and earth could do in a way of means has been done, but they are still buried in the world as though this was their eternal home. All that has been done cannot bring them to pray in their families or even in their closets. All cannot bring them to raise one earnest cry for mercy or to shed one tear for sin. They live as jocundly as though they were not undone,—as though they were not sinking into eternal fire.—They sport with death and play with damnation. They mock at the authority of God and defy his wrath. While he is looking on,—while he holds his sword to their breast,—they dare his omnipotence. That sword smites their companions by their side, but they regard it not. In the glass of a dying bed, in the glass of new opened graves, they see their own face, and straightway go away and forget what manner of persons they are. Years revolve and push them onward to the tomb, till their trembling limbs totter over the pit; but they remain as careless about their future destiny as on the day they were born. If their conscience for a moment disturbs them with anticipations of a judgment to come, instead of resorting to Christ, they resort to their inoffensive lives, or to a new course of duties, or to a denial of future punishment, or to downright

infidelity. Some of them seem to think that if they can insult the threatenings of God with a joke, it will stop his approaching wrath. Many of them do not think salvation worth the pains of examining the conditions on which it is offered, by a careful study of the Scriptures. Amidst the full blaze of Gospel light, they live and grow old almost as ignorant of religion as pagans, and are ready to seize every error without examination which is calculated to quiet their conscience and quell their fears. Instead of giving "diligence to make" their "calling and election sure," they are hurrying from amusement to amusement, while death and judgment are posting on to meet them, and on the verge of eternity are scattering every serious thought in scenes of dissipation. All this time God is warning, Christ is pleading, angels are wondering, Christians are trembling; but all in vain. What hope then remains that they will ever turn and live? Their hearts have hitherto been able to resist all means and motives; what prospect that they will not continue to resist? Instead of growing softer they are hardening every day. If they resisted yesterday they are more likely to resist tomorrow. The power of habit is growing stronger upon them every hour. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?" The Spirit of God is departing, (if it has not wholly forsaken them,) and Satan is hourly entrenching himself in their hearts. What chance then remains? Certainly their chance is small, and to the eye of reason their restoration appears impossible. And yet they are looking forward to future conversion with a confidence that can risk their salvation on the issue without an anxious thought. They think God will certainly spare them though he spare not others, or they dream that they can at any time bring themselves to life. Thus they rest, while perhaps at this moment there are a thousand chances to one that they are not to "escape the damnation of hell."

Must Christians continue to live in such a valley of the slain? Must their hearts bleed forever at the daily sight of miseries which they cannot relieve? Must they always walk up and down in the place of graves and weep over the dry bones of their kindred? What can prevent? What hope can be formed of the resurrection of a single

being "dead in trespasses and sins?" "O that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people."

Must we then give up all for lost? Must we resign the whole impenitent world to everlasting despair? Yes certainly,—if God does not interpose. Yes certainly,—if he does not exert almighty power,—the same power that will at last call sleeping nations from the tomb. Will he exert this power for those who are now before me? I cannot tell. He has told no man. Will one of the impenitent of this assembly ever see the kingdom of God? That is a secret wrapt up in the archives of eternity. Unless God raise the dead the dead will not revive. Whether he will raise one of these I cannot tell. In respect to the careless, there is not the least symptom in their favor,—not a particle of evidence that they have not to spend their eternity in hell. In respect to all the impenitent before me, this I know, (for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it,) that they will never do anything to help God to raise them or to induce God to raise them. They will do nothing but oppose till God makes them "willing in the day of" his "power." Though their anxieties and struggles and prayers are made a means in the hands of the Spirit to carry on the preparatory work, yet they themselves do not help but oppose their resurrection. The selfishness, pride, self-righteousness and unbelief which fill their prayers, do nothing but oppose. If God lets down an arm to raise them from death, it will be wholly self-moved. After all their cries and tears and attendance on means, (without which the preparatory work could not go on,) if he raises them to life he will be as much self-induced as though he were to convert an infidel in his sleep. Their convictions and struggles and subsequent despondency and dying to all hope from themselves, prepare them when life is restored, to see to whom they owe their salvation and how great is the debt. It is therefore in accordance with the wise and merciful purposes of God to make them anxious, to set them upon the use of means, and by the light poured upon their conscience to force them to cry for mercy. If they can keep from this anxiety and use of means, they will certainly keep from salvation. But all their anxieties and

cries, though useful in other respects, do not induce God to change their hearts. If he does it at all he does it of his own accord, "because he delighteth in mercy." If he never performs this act,—if he lays upon them his eternal strokes,—he will be just.—They richly deserve his wrath. He is under no obligation to them. He has never bound himself to them by covenant. He will not violate the laws of justice nor any promise to mankind if he leaves every impenitent sinner in this house to perish.—For aught I know he will. For aught you know he will.

And yet he is more ready to "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him," than parents are to give bread to their children. If these sinners would ask aright he would certainly answer. They ought to do it; but they will not do it; and never will, till, uninduced by their cries, he makes them "willing in the day of" his "power." Whether he ever will, no mortal man can tell. And yet among all the crowd of careless sinners you cannot find one but is confident that he shall be saved,—that God will spare him however he deals with others, or that he can at any time prepare his own heart, and that he certainly will before he dies. And yet all this time the question wholly depends on the sovereign will of God. "It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Let no sinner trust to his own future will. That future will depends on God.

Does this theory convert sinners into machines, or form any excuse for their deadness? No; they would be actively alive at once if they were not wickedly opposed to life. The greater that opposition the greater their guilt. But the opposition is so great that none but God will ever subdue it. In this precise thing their moral dependance lies. It depends on God to conquer their criminal opposition to life. That is all. They have no excuse for this opposition. They ought not to make it. But since they do, it depends on God whether to subdue it or not. They will never aid nor induce him to exert this power, they will only oppose. He is not bound by justice or promise to exert it for any individual. Whether he will do it or not is a secret wrapt up in his

own inscrutable will. The intentions of sinners to become good at a future time, have no other influence than to ruin them by delay.

When therefore I see many around me "dead in trespasses and sins," I can form no opinion respecting their future fate. The prospect is dark. If they are still stupid and prayerless, there is not a symptom in their favor. If a voice from heaven should ask me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I could only refer it back and say, "O Lord God, thou knowest." God only knows whether one of them will ever see the kingdom of heaven, or whether they will all sink together to eternal despair. He this moment sees the throne of glory where each one will reign, or the bed in hell where each one will lie. My only hope for any of them rests on his eternal purpose to raise many of our race from death,—to put life into them without their aid and in spite of their opposition. For what individuals he will do this, he must himself decide, uninfluenced by man. He is ready to hear the prayers of his people for individuals. But unless he has chosen those individuals, he will not give his people, when they pray for them, the spirit of those prayers to which the promises are made. He will himself decide the fate of all. He will have "mercy on whom he will have mercy." If men will not be good of themselves,—if they will all refuse, and oblige God to compel them,—pray give him the common right of a man, to determine whom he will compel and whom he will not. He is under no obligation to any. All deserve destruction. They whom he leaves have only their deserts. They are not injured by his free grace to others. That grace to others is none of their concern. Has he not a right to do what he will with his own? If he gives some their exact due and bestows a free gift on others, who has a right to complain? But complain who will it alters not the case. He will not alienate the rights of the Godhead for the unreasonable murmurs of rebellious worms. God will decide your eternal fate. He will decide in regard to each of you who are impenitent, whether he will change your heart or leave you to harden in sin till you die. If he should call out any one of you from the crowd and ask me, Can that sinner live? I could only answer, "O Lord God, thou knowest." This is all that parents can say in respect to their Christless children. Can that child

of your affections live? They have nothing to answer but, "O Lord God, thou knowest."

And now, my dear hearers, do you ask me why I state these things before you? It is not to torment any of you before the time; it is with an humble hope that God may make the truths profitable to you. My wish is to convince you that you are in his hands and to bring you to his feet. That is the only place where any sinner ever found mercy. He is your best friend who endeavors to bring you there. Be not angry at these statements, but rather bless God that you now distinctly see where you must go for relief. This whole subject teaches you that you must go to the feet of God and there lie till he shall lift you up; and it teaches you nothing else. O could I see you there I could hope. You have often urged your dependance on God, not as a reason to bring you to his feet, but as an excuse for indolence and stupidity. This was a strange perversion. Make no such use of this doctrine any longer. I hope that it may be blest, in the first place, to awaken your anxiety. If God intends to bring you to repentance he will first make you anxious,—he will fill you with such a sense of sin and ruin as will press from your lips strong cries for mercy. And though he will not listen to impenitent cries, yet without that previous state of anguish and supplication, he is not likely to bring you to repentance. I hope, in the second place, that this statement will awaken Christians to pray for you, and with a new sense of dependance. If God intends to save you he will probably first put a spirit of prayer for you into the hearts of some of his children, that he may convert you in answer to prayer. For though he will decide your fate himself, uninfluenced by man, yet if he intends to save you he will dictate prayers in answer to which he may confer the infinite blessing. I hope, in the third place, that this exposition may lead you to fear and reverence him on whose will your salvation depends. Certainly it ought to lead to this. The loose notion of dependance which you heretofore had, led you only to throw your duties from yourselves upon God. But I hope it will not be so now. After all you have heard, will you, under the plea that if you are saved God must save you and you have nothing to do, idly turn away to other



matters? Will you thus trifle with him on whom your salvation depends? With so much at stake upon his will, dare you turn your backs on him and rush after idols? Will you refuse him the homage of your prayers? Will you any longer provoke him by your unbelief and sin? Will you violate his laws and assail his throne? And all this while he is looking on? all this while his will is to decide your eternal fate? Is it prudent thus to treat an almighty Sovereign who has you in his hands? Is it safe to rush thus upon the thick bosses of his buckler? What infatuation has seized thee, O presumptuous worm? Stay, stay thy mad career. Drop those weapons from your bloody hands.—Fall down at his feet. There say, I resign myself a prisoner into thy hands, to be disposed of as thou shalt see fit.—Look to his bleeding, dying Son. Look to the interceding Priest. And then, collecting your whole soul into one effort, say, Accept that life in lieu of mine. Hear that intercession for the vilest of traitors. God be merciful to me a sinner! —Do this from the bottom of your heart and you shall live. Do this and you shall find yourself in the arms of a forgiving Parent. Do it speedily or you die forever.

## **SERMON LV**

### **ARROWS SHARP IN THE HEART OF ENEMIES**

Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee. - PS. 45:5

While tyrants are wading to empire through the blood of slaughtered armies, and marching to the music of a nation's groans, there is a Conquerer of a far different sort. He too has his arrows and his two-edged sword, and goes "forth conquering and to conquer;" but his track is not marked with desolation and wo;—his course is not

proclaimed by the cries of widows and orphans. Mercy is perched upon his standard, and in his van marches salvation. He wounds but to heal, and kills but to make alive. "On his head" are "many crowns, —and his name is called, The Word of God." When the Gospel was sent forth, then this glorious Conqueror girded his sword upon his thigh, according to the prayer in our context: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty; and in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things." This is a devout prayer for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in all the fulness of its blessings: and although the idea of severity to enemies may be included, and a full view of the Conqueror as here arrayed may disclose a Monarch marching into a rebellious province, reducing some to obedience and destroying others, yet the idea of mercy plainly preponderates. Although the Gospel, which is the grand weapon employed, may be "set for the fall" as well as "rising—of many," and may prove a "savor of death unto death," yet who does not know that its leading feature is mercy? To this latter view of the subject I shall confine my attention, and endeavor to celebrate the gracious triumphs of our King. I shall,

I. Examine the process of his individual conquests.

II. Contemplate the general march of the Conqueror.

I. I shall examine the process of his individual conquests.

"Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies," (that is, the enemies of thy kingdom,) "whereby the people fall under thee,"—fall prostrate at thy feet after the manner of vanquished foes. Several ideas are comprehended in these words, which, followed out in their proper order, will lead to a right apprehension of these individual conquests.

I. It is plainly implied that the King marches against none but enemies. This settles the previous character of all who are subdued,

and of course the natural character of all mankind. The text does not confine its view to the conquest of thieves and robbers: it looks at the general extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. It does not confine its view to the reduction of pagans, unless all besides pagans are real subjects of his kingdom and heartily obedient to his laws. If you can find any in Christendom, any even among the baptised, who do not submit to his laws in heart as well as in practice, (for the heart is respected in his requirements,) you find those who, as really as pagans, have yet to be reduced to subjection to his empire. And all who have occasion to be thus reduced, are his enemies according to the text. If then you can find any with the Bible in their hands, who have not truly repented and forsaken their sins, who have not exercised a saving faith in Christ, who do not live a life of prayer, who have not heartily renounced the world, who do not love God supremely, who do not possess the spirit of martyrs, (for all these are essentially characteristic of his subjects,) you find those who still remain the enemies of Christ. "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." But "he that is not with me is against me." In a word, all who are yet to be brought into the kingdom of Christ, that is, all the world except real Christians, are his enemies.

2. The reduction of these enemies is the work of Christ. The history of all genuine conversions is written in these words: "Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee." Every new subject brought into his kingdom is a trophy of his conquering power. His empire is extended only by conquest. Allow that the text has reference to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and all this follows with irresistible certainty.

3. We are now prepared to examine the process by which these conquests are made. The first inquiry is, What are these arrows by which the enemies are transfixed? Doubtless they are the same with the sword mentioned in a preceding verse.—Now the sword of Christ is represented as proceeding out of his mouth;\* and long ago he said by a prophet, "He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword,—and made me a polished shaft." "The sword of the Spirit" is expressly said

to be "the word of God;" and we are told that "the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." No doubt then that the arrows which he infixes are the truths of his word. This infixing is accomplished by the agency of his Spirit, whose office work it is to "convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." In an hour when the mind is thoughtless and wandering upon the world, it is made to feel one of these truths, and then another, and another still, with more or less power. The precise order is not the same in every case; but sooner or later the same truths get into every mind thus affected. The sinner is made to feel, to a degree unknown before, that there is a God who "is angry with the wicked every day;" that he himself is the creature of God sent into the world to serve him; that he has wickedly neglected the work; that he has violated the laws of God in numberless instances, in thought, word, and deed; that for his sins he is justly condemned to eternal death. By such views he cannot but be deeply affected and dismayed. The careless world pronounce him mad: but wherein is he mad? Is it madness to believe the truths of God? The things which he sees and feels are everlasting verities; and the only difference between his present and former state is, that then he did not realize the truth, now he does. Formerly he lived in unbelief, like the rest of a careless world, heedless of the things which God has spoken; now he believes them.—And who is the madman, he that can disbelieve infinite veracity, and rush on to eternity unmindful of the awful declarations of God respecting that world, or he who views things as they are?

It is a fashionable opinion among the gay, that men submit to the empire of Christ in a placid manner, without any distress or perturbation; that as religion is a pleasant service, all gloom at the entrance upon it must indicate a morbid state of the imagination. But this does not accord with the representation of the text. The latter speaks of the heart of a rebel transfixed with arrows: and if arrows enter a heart there must be pain. And to look at the thing in its own light without a figure, how can a man wake up and find himself an

enemy to God and under condemnation, and not be distressed? How can the sins of his life be laid open to his view without filling him with confusion and anguish? How can "the wrath of God," which "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness," be applied to him without producing trembling and dread? You say, he ought to repose on the mercies of God in Christ: and so he will as soon as he has fully seen his need and humbled himself for his sins. But are there no pains of sickness to be felt before he will apply to the physician? Is there no view of ruin before he will prize the grace which came "to save that which was lost?"—before he will flee to the refuge provided? Are there no bitter tears of repentance before he can be pardoned? And is it necessary to suppose that all these views are communicated in a moment? Is it not more consistent with the nature of the human mind, with facts recorded in Scripture, and with the testimony of daily experience, to suppose that the views must pass in succession, and often in slow succession? that the mind, hard and obstinate as it is, must ordinarily linger for a considerable time under a sense of guilt and ruin before it will embrace a Saviour? And is it not reasonable to suppose that one who has been so deep in guilt, will be held off a while, (like Miriam who was left to "be ashamed seven days,")\* before he is admitted to the embraces of pardoning love? It is perfectly philosophical and scriptural and agreeable to experience, that a sinner should remain a while in darkness and distress before he tastes the sweetness of forgiving mercy. And there is too much reason to fear that those who condemn these temporary glooms, and find no difficulty in reposing at once on divine mercy without a conflict or a pain, have never seen their need of mercy, and do in fact rely rather on the general clemency of God to which they feel themselves justly entitled.

But our text carries the idea farther. I have said, if arrows enter a heart there must be pain; I now add, there must be death; and if life succeeds, it must be by a resurrection. By these arrows the heart of Paul was pierced on the plains of Damascus; and he himself tells us the effect: "When the commandment came, sin revived and I died." The majesty and purity of God opened to his view; the strictness and

extent of the divine law stood before, him; his own sins rolled upon him like a dark cloud of thunder; he saw himself to be utterly condemned, utterly unable to atone for one sin, utterly ruined, helpless, and hopeless. Then it was that he died to all hope of justification by the law,—all hope of helping himself,—and pronounced himself a dead man. Then, and not till then, he lifted an eye to the Saviour,—lifted it from the bottom of the grave, and rose to a new life of hope,—rose to eternal life in him.

The work which the Saviour came to accomplish was nothing less than to raise the dead. He did not come to new-model an old life, but to raise men from their graves. He came to be, in every sense, "the resurrection and the life;"—to raise to spiritual life the "dead in trespasses and sins,"—to raise to the life of hope and to eternal life those who had seen themselves to be dead in the sentence of the law, and had died to all hope of helping themselves,—and finally to raise the body from the grave. Every part of his work is a resurrection.

And now to present the whole under the figure of the text. This glorious King and Conqueror, finding a rebel in arms against him, thrusts him through with the arrows of truth, fills him with the anguish of conviction, lays him dead at his feet, and then raises him to the life of hope and to life eternal in himself. This single figure presents the whole process of supernatural conviction and conversion, and proves the reality of such a work.

Here I pause, and ask my hearers whether they have ever experienced such a change. If you have not, you have no part in Christ. This is precisely the change intended by the Saviour himself when he said, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." If you have not felt the arrows of truth penetrating your hearts, filling you with remorse and anguish and repentance, showing you the justice of your condemnation, causing you to die to all hope of recommending yourselves to God, leading you to look up from your graves to the Saviour of sinners, and raising you to a new life in him; you may be

moral and charitable to the poor, but you have no part in Christ. You still lie under condemnation, and dying thus, must sink into eternal wo. Have you then, my dear hearers, ever felt those arrows penetrating your souls, and felt them extracted by him who applied the balm of Gilead? How beautifully is this process described by the tender and classical Cowper!

"I was a stricken deer that left the herd  
Long since: with many an arrow deep infix'd  
My panting side was charg'd, when I withdrew  
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.  
There was I found by One who had himself  
Been hurt by th'archers. In his side he bore,  
And in his hands and feet the cruel scars,  
With gentle force soliciting the darts,  
He drew them forth, and heal'd and bade me live."

II. Let us now contemplate the general march of this divine Conqueror.

The great work of subduing a rebellious race is taken into his own hands;—a glorious truth, which, though offensive to wicked men, lays the only foundation of human hope. He gave bonds to undertake this wonderful campaign when there was none to induce him, none to speak of our miseries, none to plead in our behalf. He undertook it from no desire of fame,—with no reward in view but the pleasure of relieving the wretched and bestowing on prostrate rebels freedom and life. He undertook it in full view of the perils of the war and the many pains and scars it would cost him. The scene of the battle was

not to be a single district or kingdom, but a world. The interest at stake was the dearest interest of God and his creation.

The high conflicting parties were the strongest in the universe. The army collected to oppose this mighty King, made up of all the inhabitants of two worlds, was the greatest host that ever was marshaled since time began. The army of Xerxes was a unit to this. Against such an immeasurable host, who for ages had been entrenching themselves throughout the world, in every temple, in every school, behind every throne, in every heart, he went forth single-handed. He girded his sword upon his thigh, he mounted the chariot of his Gospel, and marched directly into the heart of Satan's empire. Wherever he came he conquered. At his approach devils fled, their temples and altars fell, their oracles grew dumb. The Roman empire, the chief seat of Satan's visible kingdom, shook to its centre, and afterwards opened to the Conqueror and fell prostrate at his feet. Wounds he carried, but the very blood he shed dissolved the strongest hold of Satan, the heart of man. He sent forth his arrows and three thousand were pricked in the heart at once. He marched through the nations, breaking down the prisons which Satan had reared to confine his wretched captives. Hundreds of millions who had been confined in dungeons from their birth, were loosed from their chains and brought forth to joyous light. Wherever he came freedom and joy sprung up around him. He marched down the ages, scattering his arrows from his quiver and bringing his enemies to his feet. He still rides through the nations "conquering and to conquer." His arrows never miss their mark. No trumpet is sounded before him: his march is silent and unobserved by the world, but it is uninterrupted still. While the world dream that he has retired from the earth, he is extending his conquests every hour. It is the chief employment for which he lives. All the piety of the present generation in the four quarters of the globe, is the fruit of his recent conquests. Every saint on earth is a vanquished rebel, whose heart was once pierced by the shafts of his quiver. God speed thee, thou glorious Conqueror! Go on and prosper. "In thy majesty ride



prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness;" and may the blessing of millions ready to perish come upon thee.

His trophies are not wasted provinces, but prisoners set free, souls delivered from the destroyer, sighs and groans suppressed, and the sting of death extracted. These are his trophies; these are his spoils. The high minded spirit of chivalry celebrated the feats of disinterested knights, who roamed the kingdoms, as imagination feigned, to deliver oppressed females from enchanted castles or from the grasp of giants and genii. But how much more disinterested and benignant a Deliverer is here,—marching through the nations and rescuing the oppressed and those that have no helper, from the tyranny of Satan. "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty?" Yea "even the captives of the mighty" are "taken away and the prey of the terrible" is "delivered." O the divine benevolence of this godlike course! Again we say, the Almighty God speed thee, thou glorious Conqueror! We will follow the wheels of his triumphal chariot, and shout as we go, "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" to redeem a wretched race: "hosanna in the highest."

How many millions has this benevolent King subdued, from Abel to the present day. How many even of us. How many of our dear children and friends. Has not some of us seen a parent or a brother delivered from eternal slavery and ruin? Has never a parent among us seen a child dispossessed and restored to his right mind? In the hour when that parent stood with his child to thank his Deliverer, did he not say again, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh" to save our children from eternal death?

But the most glorious triumphs of this divine Conqueror are reserved for ages yet to come, which the voice of prophecy and the signs of the times declare to be now at the door. His hand is brushing away the papal kingdoms, and dropping spiritual Babylon, like a millstone, into the mighty deep. His shafts will shortly pierce the veil that hides from the seed of Abraham the glories of their Messiah; and some of

you, I trust, will live to see that long lost race restored to the land of their fathers. His hand will break the Mahometan powers, when they assemble on the mountains of Israel to disinherit the restored tribes, and will thus put a final end to that delusion which has long enchained one-tenth part of the human race. His bow will bring down many nations which are now kneeling to gods "of wood and stone." His arrows will pierce the priests of Brahm and Boodha, and lay the dervises of Turkey at his feet. They will sing his triumphs on the banks of the Ganges and in the deserts of Sahra. They will celebrate his victories on the frozen beach of Kamtschatka and in the sultry regions of Congo and Peru. The mosques of Mecca and the pagodas of Hindostan shall be converted into temples of the living God: and the enemy who deceived the whole world, ejected from all his dominions on earth, shall be confined to his prison for a thousand years. For a thousand years shall he who hung on Calvary reign over this restored world, with all his enemies under his feet, with none to question his messiahship, with none to deny his godhead. At the end of this period he will triumph once more over "Gog and Magog;" and then, as the last act of his dominion on earth, will judge the world. And when he shall have committed all his enemies to prison, and shall be returning, at the head of his redeemed Church, towards heaven's gate,—going home from all his wars and victories, covered with scars and honors,—how will they shout his triumphs as they ascend: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." And when they have conducted him to his throne, they will pour the eternal strain "as the sound of many waters:" "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing." And the whole sanctified creation will send forth the loud response: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

My dear hearers, fall down at the feet of this divine Conqueror, and submit to his empire, and venture your eternal all upon his mediation. If you refuse, know you that he has other arrows with which to reach your heart. "God shall shoot at" you "with an arrow; suddenly shall" you "be wounded." They that will not have this King to reign over them, shall be brought forth and slain before him. He will reign till all his enemies are made his footstool. His first advent, with all the benignity which attended it, was foretold in terms terrible to the wicked. "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple.—But who may abide the day of his coming?—Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." And that coming in his kingdom which is yet future, is predicted in language equally alarming. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?—Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat? I have trodden the wine press alone:—for I will tread them in my anger and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." Terrible things are to be accomplished upon the wicked, which will cause men's hearts to fail for fear. "And the kings of the earth and the great men and the rich men and the chief captains and the mighty men and every bond man and every free man," shall hide "themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and" shall say "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

## SERMON LVI

## SALVATION TAKEN INTO GOD'S OWN HANDS

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; (which my covenant they broke, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord.) But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know ye the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." - JER. 31:31-34

It is sometimes useful to contemplate the duties which devolve on us as agents, and sometimes the hopes which arise from the agency of God. To the latter of these subjects our text naturally directs our attention.

The old covenant referred to in this passage, was that which was made with the Hebrew nation at Sinai. It was the covenant of grace couched under types; types which had the "shadow of good things to come," but "not the very image" nor the substance "of the things," and could never "make the comers thereunto perfect." Besides, it was in no sense an absolute, but in every sense a conditional covenant; the agency of God not being pledged for those supplies of the Spirit which would ensure a fulfilment of its conditions. In this respect it resembled the law. It is added as a consequence of all this, "which covenant they broke." Though it was sent forth from among the glories of the burning mount, while Sinai quaked under the weight of the incumbent God and the earth trembled beneath his feet,— "which covenant they broke." But it pleased God to promise a new dispensation of his covenant in the latter day, not indeed exempt

from conditionally as addressed to agents, but accompanied with effectual power. In this new dispensation he brings out to view his own agency upon the heart and takes the salvation of his people into his own hands, and engages to accomplish it himself. The tenor of this covenant is more distinctly stated in the next chapter: "They shall be my people and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me forever; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me."—Had only a covenant of works been held out to the world, suspending the salvation of men on their perfect obedience; or had a covenant been proposed which offered pardon, without engaging the spiritual influences necessary to a fulfilment of its conditions,—a covenant which offered pardon and yet suspended salvation on the unassisted or unsecured exertions of men, not a child of Adam would ever have reached the kingdom of heaven. Both of these covenants have been tried; the one with sinless man in Eden, the other with sinning men at Sinai: and although the Spirit was granted to the nation of Israel, it was because to Abraham had been made the promise of a holy seed, and "the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after," could not "disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." And blessed be God, the covenant that was made with Abraham is still in force and is extended to the Christian Church. It will be my object to show,

I. That according to the plan of grace revealed in the Gospel, God has taken the work of salvation into his own hands;

II. That this circumstance lays the only foundation of human hope.

I. According to the plan of grace revealed in the Gospel, God has taken the work of salvation into his own hands. The great design originated in the mind of God. In the ages of eternity it arose out of his own self-moving goodness, without the counsel of any creature,—without the intercession of any creature,—without respect to the

merits of any creature. It was his own purpose,—his own favorite choice,—induced by nothing but a regard to his own glory and compassion for a ruined world. Having conceived the design, it was he that prepared the means of its execution. He organized the whole plan without the counsel or solicitation of any creature. Eternal ages before creatures had existence, the covenant of redemption between the Sacred Persons was formed, in which every circumstance relating to the salvation of the world was settled. From the resources which were found in the ever-blessed Trinity, the means of atonement and redemption were derived. The Second Person stood forth and offered himself to die in a human form to expiate human guilt. The offer was accepted, and in return a numerous seed were promised him, whose names were "written in the book of life." The plan of redemption thus settled, these lower worlds were formed. Man was placed on the earth. He fell. Immediately an intimation of the great purpose was made to him. The design was still further disclosed during the lapse of following ages. It was known on earth that God would redeem his people; but so far from man's being consulted in regard to this design, he knew not the means nor the manner of its accomplishment. In the fulness of time the Son of God appeared on earth "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and by once offering himself "to bear the sins of many," he brought in "everlasting righteousness" and "perfected forever them that are sanctified." He arose from the dead for their justification, and in his own release from the sins he had borne, received the seal of their acquittal and salvation. All this was done by God, independently of creatures. And now the charge of applying to the promised seed the benefits of redemption, was committed to Christ, who, with the consent of the Father, sent out the Holy Spirit to bring invitations to a universal world, and to subdue as many as the Father had given him. The work of enlightening the world by the preaching of the Gospel, was taken into the hands of the blessed Trinity, who employed in the work such human instruments as wisdom saw fit; but it was God and not man who undertook to provide that the Gospel should be preached to every nation under heaven. It was the blessed Trinity who created the Christian Church, and undertook the

charge of it, and settled the point that it should be supported and enlarged, until its overflowing glory should fill the world. The management of the Church and all her interests,—her preservation, advancement, and final triumph,—the whole has God himself provided for without the counsel of creatures. His purpose is fixed and will not change. She shall live; she shall be enlarged; the gates of hell shall not prevail; her overflowing glory shall fill the earth as the waters fill the sea. In like manner God has taken into his own hands the salvation of every individual of his elect. It belongs to him to awaken the conscience, which never would be done if not done by him. It belongs to him to convince of sin, which never would be done if not done by him. It belongs to him to subdue the resistance which the heart is sure to make to the calls of the Spirit,—resistance which, if he did not subdue it, would forever prevail. And after he has overcome the sinner by superior strength and changed the heart of stone to flesh, it belongs to him to carry on the work of sanctification. This also he has taken into his own hands. It is his province to subdue the remaining corruptions, to deliver from the wiles of Satan and the snares of the world, to clear all obstacles from the Christian's path and to bear him in his arms all the way to heaven. The work is all the Lord's,—undertaken for his own glory,—undertaken from love exhaustless and invincible, and as the Lord liveth it will be accomplished.

II. That God has taken the work of delivering his people into his own hands, is the only foundation of human hope. This doctrine of divine agency and human dependance, though it is opposed by all that is proud in man, by all his love of independence, by all his hatred of divine government, is yet one of the sweetest doctrines of the Christian system. While the world complain that their salvation is dependent on the will of God, they may be very sincere, but really they know not what they do: for they murmur against that which is the only foundation of human hope. Had not God taken the salvation of men into his own hands, to begin, to carry on, and to perfect it according to his sovereign pleasure, not a fallen creature would ever have reached the kingdom of heaven. There is not a Christian on

earth who could have atoned for his own sins, or conceived the wonderful plan of atonement by the death of an incarnate God. Had not God contrived and executed this plan, no provision could have been made for the salvation of men. There is not a Christian on earth who could have secured the privilege of being born and brought up under the light of the Gospel, had not God ordered his lot in this manner. Not a Christian on earth would ever have awakened himself from the slumbers of sinful repose,—would have poured upon his own conscience the convincing light of truth, would have subdued his own resistance and translated himself from darkness into marvellous light. The best Christian on earth, with all his attainments, would never overcome another sin,—would never gain another triumph over the world,—would never demolish another idol,—would never escape another snare of Satan, but for the power of God. Sustaining the combined assaults of earth and hell, what can he do? An infant puling in its mother's arms, might as well attempt to hurl the sun from his orbit and turn all the angels out of heaven, as a poor feeble creature, in his own strength, to overcome two worlds with his own house divided against itself. His only hope is in God. At what time he is afraid he can only trust in his eternal rock. Surrounded by armies stronger than he, with all their weapons pointed at his heart, like Jehosaphat he cries out to God for aid. Inclosing in his own bosom a host of rebels, constantly disposed to mutiny and to tumult, with no check upon them but guards which are furnished from heaven, what could he do if the heavenly aid were withdrawn? Beset from without and from within, he must soon be swallowed up if the God of his salvation did not appear for him. Finding every inch of ground disputed by the enemy, and his own mind revolting from the contest, what hope can he have but in the God of the armies of Israel? Well, let the heavenly powers aid him to prostrate long ranks of the foe;—let him a thousand times shout victory in his passage, until he arrives on the very confines of heaven;—let heaven with all the splendor of its glory be disclosed to his aged eyes, and the songs of seraphs fall upon his withered ear;—let then the heavenly aid desert him,—and from the threshold of glory,—from



the vision of the Lamb he would retreat, and, urged by the malignity of his own heart, would plunge into eternal darkness and blasphemy.

The Christian who feels his own weakness, and discerns the number and power of the enemy, will resort to this delightful truth as the only ground of hope, "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord;" and a thousand times will he say, with an eye lifted to heaven and fixed as marble, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him." Knowing that his case is desperate unless God plucks him from the midst of a thousand deaths; perceiving that an attempt in his own strength to break through all the difficulties between him and heaven is altogether hopeless; sensible that he cannot take a single step alone,—that without Christ he can do nothing; he finds it sweet to lay his soul over on God,—by a distinct and deliberate act to deliver into the hands of Christ all that he holds dear for time and eternity, and to commit to him every part of his salvation. Sweet is the act of taking the glorious perfections of God for the pledges and agents of his salvation,—to reach out and take hold of omnipotence,—to feel a sense which it is not easy to express, but which may be indistinctly signified by saying, he feels imbosomed in God, and sheltered there from every danger and enemy.

That God has taken the salvation of individuals into his own hands, will excite no uneasiness except in those who would rather trust themselves than God,—who would rather reign themselves than that God should reign. But remove from real Christians this foundation, and all their hopes and efforts will sink into motionless despair. The only encouragement they have to "work out" their "own salvation," is that "God—worketh in" them. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

From this doctrine is also drawn all our encouragement in relation to the interests of the general Church. Who shall protect her from all her enemies? Every pious minister and every Christian yields the

point, and concludes that if God does not support his own cause in the world, he must sit down in tears and give up all for lost. When we look abroad into the streets and see them filled with pollution,—with reeling animals that spew the name of God from their drunken lips; when we see the mixed multitude driving furiously after the world, without a care for God or their souls; the most affecting events, the most solemn judgments unable to rouse them to a serious thought, when we behold those who profess the name of Christ buried deep in the world as those who have been long dead,—with no seeming care for the kingdom of him who purchased them with his blood; when we behold the ministration of the word produce no effects, and not a soul under all the pleadings of divine love moved to inquire the way to heaven; the eye of benevolence, filled with tears, looks round and inquires, Is there no redress? The heart of benevolence, bleeding at every pore and trembling for the ark of God, can seize on nothing to sustain its hopes but the blessed truth held out in the text.—The work of saving men is God's own work. The cause of religion is God's own cause. I know that not another soul will ever be converted in this congregation unless it be accomplished by the power of God. After human efforts have spent themselves to no purpose, this one consolation is left: the work of saving these poor perishing souls who are going down to destruction from our land by millions,—the work of preserving religion in this congregation,—is taken into God's own hands. There we leave it; easing our bosoms with a long sigh, there we leave it.

Come hither ye pious parents, who anxiously look on the children of your love, whom you have brought into a state of depravity and condemnation, but whom you know that you cannot restore: come, bring them and leave them here. After all your tender concern what will become of them after death,—after all your prayers and tears and discouragements,—bring them in your arms and leave them here. You and your whole families may here repose. Will that darling child be saved? You cannot tell. You exceedingly desire its salvation, but you know that you cannot save it. Will that child be saved? your beating heart again inquires. The decision of this question is reserved

for infinite wisdom and love. You have confidence in God that he will do right. You love him better than you do your child. You put the work of saving your children over upon him and calmly resign them into his hands. Do you not now feel a substantial peace in reflecting that God has taken the whole work of saving men into his own hands? While your children are clustering around you, and you are regarding them with a tender tear, say, Christian parent, would you for a thousand worlds change this blessed truth?

Come hither ye pious ministers, who seem to labor in vain and spend your strength for nought,—who often look around on the people of your charge and of your heart, and know that you shall soon meet them at the bar of God, and yet see most of them buried in the world and sin: come hither, after all your distresses and discouragements,—after your anxious days and restless nights; come, for here a little light begins to dawn;—it brightens,—it breaks upon the soul with glorious effulgence. The work of succeeding your ministry and saving the people committed to your care, is taken into God's own hands. It is his own work; it is his own cause: with him you may safely leave it.

Come hither ye pious and expanded souls who bear upon your hearts the general interests of the Church,—who have been long praying for the kingdom of Christ to come: here you may settle and rest. The work of preserving and enlarging the Church and consummating her glory, is taken into God's own hands. He who set up this object without consulting the wishes or opinions of men,—who has placed his heart upon it as his own favorite interest, as the chosen means of spreading his glory before the inhabitants of all worlds,—who for this purpose created and redeemed, preserves and governs the earth,—he will take care of the Church, and as sure as he is possessed of omnipotence, will bring to its aid sufficient strength to advance it to perfection and glory.

Come hither ye doubting Christians, who are overwhelmed with fear for your own safety,—who tremble before your spiritual enemies, and often anticipate an eternal train of evils: come and rest your anxieties

on the covenant of God, the only, the all sufficient ground of hope. God has taken into his own hands the salvation of his people. "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel:—I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people;—for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more." When I contemplate this promise, "I will put my law in their inward parts,—and will be their God, and they shall be my people," I am prepared to say, There lies enclosed the last hope of an expiring world. I approach nearer to it; I gaze upon it; I hear it say again, "I will be their God and they shall be my people;" my mind whispers to itself, In that promise is embosomed the only hope on which my trembling soul relies. It may be that God will look upon me. I fix my eyes on the heavens: Will God be pleased to undertake for me? I read the text again: I put my life in my hands and cast myself at his feet, pouring out this sum of all my hopes, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean."

Here also is the only hope of unrenewed sinners. Come hither ye mixed multitude of impenitent men, and contemplate the only chance which remains for your salvation. Unless that God whom you have made your enemy by wicked works, undertakes for you, all heaven and earth cannot save you. Unless that God whom you daily disobey, to whom you refuse to cry for relief,—unless he in mercy to your poor perishing souls, begins and carries on and completes your salvation, you are undone for eternity. Will you any longer treat your only helper with so much neglect and abuse? Remember that you are in his hands. One frown from him and you are plunged into eternal wo; one smile from him and you live forever. O realize your condition. Hasten to cast yourselves at his feet. "Seek—the Lord while he may be found; call—upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Amen.

# SERMON LVII

## ABRAHAM'S STEWARD

And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left. - GEN. 24:49

Notwithstanding the awful destruction of the antedeluvian world, a second general apostacy, about the time of the birth of Abraham, had covered the earth with darkness and threatened to bury the last remains of true religion. On this account God separated Abraham from his father's house, in Haran of Mesopotamia, and removed him to the land of Canaan, in order to preserve a distinct and holy race. Nahor, the brother of Abraham, still remained in Haran, and retained in his family, with some impure mixtures, the worship of the true God. Among his sons was Bethuel, the father of Laban and of Rebekah.

When Abraham had grown old and approached the time of his death, both his pious and parental anxieties were engaged to provide a wife for Isaac, who, instead of seducing him to idolatry, would strengthen him in religion. Such a one he could not find among the inhabitants of Canaan; and besides, it was not proper to mingle the holy seed with the proscribed descendants of Ham. His eyes were therefore turned to the family of his brother Nahor. He called the steward of his house and bound him by an oath not to take a wife for Isaac of the daughters of Canaan, but to go into Mesopotamia, and bring thence one of the posterity of Nahor. Having received this commission, the steward took ten of his master's camels, and servants to attend him, and commenced his journey. When he approached the city of Haran, he earnestly prayed God to prosper the enterprise and to point out the person designed for his master's wife. In answer to his prayer, Rebekah, the granddaughter of Nahor, a virgin of great beauty, came forth to meet him, and was made known

to him as the one intended by heaven. The good man was deeply affected and "bowed down his head and worshipped," and said, "Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth." The news flew to the house of Bethuel that Abraham's servant was at the well without the city, and Laban hastened to bring him and his attendants into the house. And when meat was set before him, he said, "I will not eat until I have told my errand." He then gave an account of Abraham's family, of the great wealth which God had given him, of the object of his journey, and how Rebekah had been designated by a sign from heaven as the mother of the chosen seed and then concluded his address in the words of our text: "And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." They had received all the information they could expect,—information abundantly confirmed by the extensive fame of Abraham. They knew him to be the favorite of heaven, chosen for the father of the faithful. What need then of delay? To have put the question aside without taking it into immediate consideration, or to have sent the servant back without an answer, would have been an affront to the heir of an excellent and noble family. An explicit and immediate answer was demanded, and an explicit and immediate answer was given.

Let us apply this piece of history to illustrate Gospel truth.

The union between Christ and the Church is frequently represented by that between husband and wife. They are united in the tenderest affection,—in sympathies ineffable; each feeling exquisitely the joys and sorrows of the other. When she sees him in the garden or on the cross, how does she sit and weep her life away. And how does she awake to rapture at those events which give him to see of the travail of his soul. On the other hand, whatever favors are done to her he accepts as done to himself; and whoso toucheth her toucheth the apple of his eye. They are united in a marriage covenant, in which he has engaged to provide for her as long as he lives, and she has promised to forsake all others and cleave to him. Like husband and

wife their desires are one, their happiness is one, their trials are one, their interest is one. Like a wife she bears her husband's name and honors, and is in affectionate subjection. And like a bridegroom he has gone to prepare a place for her, and when he has made it ready he will come again and receive her to himself.

If then the marriage union and that in particular between Isaac and Rebekah, may be considered an emblem of the union between Christ and believers, the embassy of Abraham's steward may illustrate the work of Gospel ministers. These ought to imitate the frank and honest zeal of this pious servant. They should tell their errand with all possible despatch, and should insist on an immediate and unwavering answer. This is my duty. "And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me."

But you ask, what is the treatment expected? I answer, the same that was expected in the case before us. Had Rebekah feigned a consent without actually forming the connexion, she would not have dealt kindly and truly with the family of Abraham: And Christ does not ask for a false profession, or a mere outward service, or a service extorted by anguish of conscience or fear of punishment, but one proceeding from cordial love. Rebekah and her family would not have treated Isaac kindly and truly had she been given to another, the decided enemy of Abraham's house. This would have been adding injury to neglect. And how is the Saviour grieved when sinners reject the tenderest overtures of his friendship, and join themselves to Satan and the world. The kindness which was demanded by Abraham's steward was that Rebekah should go with him and become the wife of Isaac: and the kindness which I entreat you to show to my Master is, that you would join yourselves to him in love and in an everlasting covenant, and intrust yourselves to his honor and protection. By all the love and truth which he has displayed, he has given you abundant reason to confide in him, and it is reasonable that you should trust him for time and eternity. He has been at vast expense to redeem you, and you ought to consent to be redeemed. You ought

eagerly to grasp the provisions which the tears and blood of Calvary were expended to purchase for you.

But you who are not wedded to Christ will have many objections against all this. And that these objections may appear in all their strangeness, let us put them into the mouth of Rebekah on the occasion before us.

Suppose her to say, You describe indeed the beauties of the country and the virtues of your master; but I have never seen either. Just so unbelief calls in question all the realities of another world. But let me reply to her. Though you have never seen either Canaan or Isaac, yet eye-witnesses of unquestionable veracity have told you of their existence and their excellence. But if you doubt, go and see for yourself; and if you are disappointed, then you may return. So say I to you. Thousands who have tasted that the Lord is good, and by faith have been assured of the realities of another world, have testified of these things. But if you believe them not, come and see for yourselves; and if you are not satisfied, you may then return.

Suppose her further to object; How shall I forsake the favorite walks of my youth; the trees, the garden, the fields, which are endeared by so many tender recollections? And how shall I leave my friends in whose bosom I have so long reposed? Yes, these you must leave; but far more lovely scenes and dearer friends await you. Go, and you will never wish to return. And may I not say to those whose heart-strings twine around the present world, Go, and you will never wish to return. Angels will be more pleasant companions than any you renounce. The happiness of religion will far exceed the pleasures you abandon. And the splendors of the New-Jerusalem will surpass all that you leave on earth.

Aye, she replies, you say I shall never wish to return, and this is the very reason why I am unwilling to go; for how shall I abandon all my favorite objects forever? And so men have been heard to say, I have but one objection to setting out in religion; I fear I shall never be



disposed to return. But will you not be free agents still, and empowered to return if you please? And if you are not disposed, will it not be because you are happier in the condition you have found?

Suppose her still to object; The way is long, and obstructed by rivers and sandy deserts, and exposed to robbers and savage beasts. True, the way is long; but a much longer way have men often trodden in quest of the objects of avarice and ambition. The way is long, but the happiness which lies at the end will abundantly recompense your pains. Though obstructions are in the way, they are not insurmountable; and though there are dangers, yet behold the servants of Isaac sent to guard you safe to his mother's tent. Go, and the Lord God of Abraham shall attend you. And look ye not at the length and difficulties of the way to heaven. Greater hardships are you daily enduring in the service of the world. Harder is the way of transgressors than the way of wisdom. Sinners take more pains to get to hell than Christians do to obtain the heavenly crown. And if you talk of danger, far greater are the dangers of staying behind. And behold a faithful band of angels sent to protect you home. And the arm of Abraham's God will be your defence.

Do I hear her say, I fear I shall grow weary of the way, and have longings after home, and return, and be a derision to my acquaintance, and bring dishonor upon Isaac? Away with such pretences. If you had any regard for Isaac's honor you would not disgrace him by such frivolous excuses. And if you loved him as much as this objection would seem to imply, you would break through every hazard to meet him. How often do we hear people refuse to set out in religion for fear they shall not persevere, and so bring dishonor upon Christ; as though to remain his enemies was the best way to show him respect, and as though they really avoided his service out of concern for his honor. It is all evasion and pretence.

But I hear her say, I am unworthy of so great and good a man, and it is impossible that he is sincere. Be it so that you are unworthy, yet if he is not sincere, what means this company of servants and camels

sent five or six hundred miles? What mean these ear-rings and bracelets and jewels, the pledges of his love? And if, unhappy sinners, Christ is not sincere, what means the host of servants sent to invite you? What means the accompanying train of bibles and churches and sabbaths and sacraments and effusions of the Spirit? What mean all your temporal mercies? What mean his sweat, his tears, his blood?

But none of these objections did Rebekah make. Nor these nor any others did it become her to make. It was her duty and her interest to accompany the servant to Canaan. It was the express will of God, as revealed to Abraham, and more particularly to the steward at the well of Haran. And why should she not obey? She was not solicited to form a union with a bad man. Isaac was every way worthy of her affection. She was not invited to mix with strange blood. Isaac was her near kindred, and as such had a prior claim. She was not sought for one of the cursed descendants of Ham, but for the heir of all the promises. She was invited to become one of the children of Abraham, and to share in all the blessings promised to his house. She was not invited to unite her destinies with an obscure and ignoble family, but with one which God by his favor had distinguished from all the families of the earth,—one on which angels attended,—which was visited by the Lord of glory,—one under the care and management and laws of the God of heaven. She was invited to habitations illumined by divine revelation, to share in the devotions of sacrifice and the benefits of circumcision. She was not invited to the dreary deserts of Arabia, but to the rich and well watered vales of Canaan, which God had selected from all other countries, to honor and to bless and to put his name there. She was not solicited to form an alliance with poverty. Isaac was a wealthy prince. She was not sought as a servant, but to be the partner of all his joys and cares, of his riches and honors,—to receive his respectful attentions, and to move the most delicate sympathies of his heart. The overture was not prompted by a fit of passion, but by deliberate purpose. She was not invited to a temporary union, until the fickleness of fancy should wander to another object, but to a connexion as durable as life. She

was selected from all the women of the earth. There were many daughters of Canaan fair and more noble, among whom he might have made his choice. But he passed by them all and set his love on her. He had taken much pains to obtain her, and had shewn her great respect by sending a company of servants, with valuable presents, five or six hundred miles. And after all had she refused to return with them, she would not have dealt kindly and truly with their master. Had she rejected this offer, such another she never would have received. She must have connected herself with one of the heathen of the country. And what could she have expected from him? Rich he might have made her, but he could not have made her happy. He might have brought her into miserable thralldom to his false gods, but he could not have given her the blessings of Abraham. She was not unwise enough to make such a choice. She went with the servants of Isaac. She became a mother in Israel; and generations then unborn have long blessed her name.

My dear hearers, when you look at this case you cannot but see how wise it was in Rebekah to make the choice she did. But greater reasons urge you to connect yourselves with the spiritual Isaac. He has sent his servants to woo you with overtures the most tender and the most sincere. In delivering their message they would approach you with all the meekness of love, having no other object in view than the interest of you and their Master; an office of kindness which methinks ought not to give offence. Permit me therefore to deliver my message freely.

I am come to woo you for Christ. It is the will of God that you should go with me and become "the bride, the Lamb's wife." I do not ask you to accompany me to a land of darkness and drought, but to the charming scenes of Zion,—to a country well watered with the river of salvation,—to the bright fields of heaven,—to the glories of the New-Jerusalem. This is the blessed habitation which the Bridegroom has gone to prepare for you; and he has sent ministers and angels to invite and conduct you home. Will you accompany us to Canaan and become the children of Abraham? I have not come to solicit you for a

wicked prince, but for the brightness of the Father's glory, the favorite of heaven, the heir of all the promises. I have come to invite you to unite your destinies with a family which the God of heaven delighteth to honor; to live under the laws of the Eternal King; to partake of the privileges of the Church, the vision of holy objects, the fruition of heavenly pleasures; and to inherit all the good which God has spoken concerning Israel. It is not a stranger that solicits your love, but one of your near kindred; not of another race, but one who has human nature,—who has eaten and drunk and wept in this miserable world. Be not afraid of him, he is your brother. His heart is the seat of all that is tender. His honor and his love will secure you the gentlest treatment. You are not invited to the embraces of poverty and want, (as those imagine who suppose religion a joyless thing:) your proposed Husband is the Heir of all things, and commands all the treasures of the universe. You are not addressed by one of ignoble blood. He is the Son of the immortal God. He is the King of angels. Cherubim and seraphim are his humble relations. And yet he would raise you from the depths of infamy to be his glorious bride. By such a union with God's own Son, you would become the children of God. What are the children of earthly kings to this? He wishes you not for menial servants, but for the partners of all his joys, the objects of his tenderest sympathies,—his bride, and if you would be nearer still, the members of his body,—the apple of his eye. This is no fit of passion, suddenly raised and as suddenly to subside. He has loved you with an everlasting love: and should you consent, his love would never change. No divorce, nor death itself, which dissolves all other nuptial bands, would separate you from his love. Come away, for he hath set his love on you and chosen you out of all the worlds that he hath made. He might have selected other planets, but this alone has tasted redeeming grace. He might have set his heart on the recovery of fallen angels, who were of a nobler race, and wooed him a bride in the chambers of hell. But all others forsaking, he hath made you the enviable object of his choice. Come away for he hath set his love on you.

Great are the pains which he has taken to obtain you. For this he lighted up the sun, moon, and stars. For this he founded the earth, and in the waters laid the beams of his chambers. For this he has taken all the angels into his service. And O for this was Calvary stained with blood. He saw his bride dying in a loathsome prison. She had fled from him and was perishing for her crimes. Yet in his forgiveness and pity he redeemed her with his own life. And because she still rejected him, he has been sending his servants to entreat her, and with them has sent many earnest of his love. And here still she sits, resisting his solicitations, and insensible to all his astonishing condescension. And such another offer she will never have again. Well then, go and join yourself to a heathen husband.— And now what are you the better? What can Satan and the world do for you? They may promise fair but they never perform. Can they wipe the tear of grief? Can they cleanse the soul from guilt? Can they support in a dying hour?

And now what hinders? "All things are ready, come unto the marriage." The Father's consent is obtained. But for this the Bridegroom must shed his sacred blood. He has himself made all the provisions necessary? If you want a wedding garment, his righteousness has wrought one. The marriage supper is all prepared, and nothing is wanting but your consent. It will grieve me to carry back word that you will not come.

I have told my errand: "And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." I come in the name of a Master whose honor will not brook delay. You have his message, and have heard all that you can hear from him.—The case, as plain as it ever will be, now lies before you. You are to expect no greater light and no different means. The light and means which you have are sufficient to do all that light and means can do. For if you will not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither would you be persuaded though one rose from the dead. You now know, as well as you can hope to know in this world, what immeasurable wealth belongs to Christ, and that all this wealth

would be yours. You know also that you are deeply in debt, and that without this relief you must perish in prison. You have all the information you can expect respecting his character, and can determine now as well as at another time whether you can like it or not. If you cannot, why there is an end to the matter, for his character will not change. If you can, be ingenuous and declare it. It requires no long time for consideration, nor should the consideration be postponed. The magnitude of the question and the earnestness with which he urges his suit, both forbid delay. If ever he will be worthy he is worthy now. If then you ever intend to receive him, consent at once. But if you never intend it, frankly inform him, that he may know what he has to do. In every point of view he has a right to an immediate answer. Ah, my dear hearers, when your interest required his decision, did he hesitate thus? As soon as your necessities were known, he flew on the wings of love to your relief. He did not waver a moment. As soon as the question was put, Will you shed your blood to save your bride from death? he eagerly replied, Yes, to the very last drop. She has wronged me much, but I will die for her, and pardon her with my dying breath. Amidst all the mighty difficulties and sufferings through which he passed, not a single doubt ever seized his mind. And now will you hesitate when he asks for some returns? Sirs, my Master would know what you intend to do. God and holy angels are looking down on this assembly to see what answer you will give to their Beloved who makes this overture. And while God and angels are looking on, I will go through the house and ask you one by one what answer I shall carry back to him that sent me. My aged friends, "If you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me." Shall I wait for your decision? Will the middle-aged prepare their answer? Will you deal kindly and truly with my Master or will you not? If you would wish for a moment to deliberate, I will go to the youth. My dear young friends, are there any of you who will consent to go and be eternally united to the Lord Jesus Christ? Methinks I hear some secretly replying, "Yes, I will go." Well, come along, blessed youth, as many as will, and be assured of a kind reception. Shall I now return to heads of families, and let them know that some of those who have not lived half as long as they, are

determined not to wait for another invitation? And why should you stay behind? I am indeed unwilling to leave you. Already have you delayed too long. For thirty, forty, and fifty years has this affectionate offer been pressed upon you, and yet you have formed no decision. You must not delay any longer. Answer me then to this explicit question; Will you become united to Christ and share in a blessed immortality, or will you, with Dives, lie down in everlasting burnings? Eternity hangs on the decision. Your soul is at stake. O decide. Will you be happy or miserable forever?

After all, I fear there are some in different parts of the house who have not yet given their answer. It is distressing to leave them thus. I will go through the house once more and apply again for their decision. Suffer me to turn to those on my right hand. Sirs, I have a commission from the Lord to put this solemn question to you; Will you deal kindly and truly with my Master and live, or will you refuse and die? And are there not some more on my left who will consent to go and be united to Christ? The Saviour is waiting for your reply. O do not weary out his patience and provoke him to leave you and seek his bride among another people. Trifle with him no longer. For know, the Son of God, with all his condescension, is conscious of his dignity still. He knows it is an infinite stoop in him to look on you. He knows what returns he ought to receive. And ere long he will assert his rights and vindicate his injured honor. They who will not take shelter in his bosom, shall soon feel the weight of his almighty arm. His persuasive invitations will turn to angry thunders; and then ten thousand voices will proclaim, "The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

When Abraham's servant received his commission, he said, "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me." And Abraham said, "If the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath." Whether therefore you will hear or whether you will forbear, I humbly hope that I have delivered my own soul.

# SERMON LVIII

## THE WATCHMAN

So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand. - EZEK. 33:7, 8

Then the office of a watchman is responsible and solemn indeed, and they who sustain it must carry to the ears of sinners those denunciations of death which the word of God contains. The text imports that they will be tempted to keep back the evil tidings, for fear of distressing and offending those they love. And such temptations are often felt. It is no pleasure to a tender watchman to excite pain and complaint. It was no comfort to the prophet that he was forced to be a man of strife; and sometimes he was pressed so hard by frowns and rebuffs, that he sunk under them and said, he would no more speak in the name of the Lord.

It is impossible for a minister to deliver the whole message of God without giving offence to some. And the reason is, that the character and destiny of sinners are such as they cannot bear to hear described. The truth is, that heaven and earth are at variance. The world is not as it was made, nor as it ought to be. It has revolted from God; and God esteems the character of unregenerate men as bad, and is as angry with them, as any watchman ever represented. Else why is every page of his word filled with solemn accusations and complaints, which call forth resentments against this book more than against any other book on earth? Why is it that every eye, as soon as it is opened, sees this controversy to be as real as the existence of



God? Why was this beautiful paradise changed to a vale of tears, to be chastened with griefs and shaken with tempests? Why did a view of divine wrath against the world press out the bloody sweat of Gethsemane? Did not the agonies of Calvary show that God was angry with men? If all these proofs fail to strike, one is at hand which, one would think, could not be resisted. Why is it that when sinners die, God puts them into an eternal hell? Does this evince no anger, or anger less dreadful than the watchmen represent? It evinces anger greater than human tongue ever described or human heart conceived. Settle it then that heaven and earth are at variance, and that God has a controversy with men.

Under these circumstances he sends forth his ambassadors, (whom by another figure he calls watchmen,) to assert his claims, to justify his ways to men, to convince them that he is right and they are wrong, at the same time to make overtures for reconciliation and to press the invitations of heavenly mercy. Now some sinners seem to expect that these ambassadors, instead of maintaining the honor of their king, will take the part of a revolted world against him, will sigh and condole with them as with poor injured beings, and will soften his charges and relax his requirements as being too severe. But how could they expect this? Would not any ambassador from an earthly court, who should thus betray the honor of his king, be despised by a universal world? And why should you require the ambassadors of the heavenly king to be the basest of mankind? Some who live in open sin, and others who "sacrifice unto their net and burn incense unto their drag;" who cannot be prevailed upon to lift one cry for mercy during the week, but spend their breath in profaning the divine names and reproaching religion; when they come to the house of God, cannot bear to hear anything but the soothing tones of mercy and peace. But what have they to do with peace? The grand secret is, that the natural heart wishes to be left in the undisturbed possession of its own pleasures, and to be solaced with self-esteem and with the hopes of future bliss. And because God spoils this self-esteem by his reproaches, and disturbs these pleasures by his commands, and crushes these hopes by his threatenings, therefore "the carnal mind

is enmity against God." And in proportion as the watchmen disturb its pride, its pleasures, and its hopes, the carnal mind is enmity against them. It would be well pleased to pursue its own pleasures unaccused of sin and soothed with the hope of future blessedness. But to be charged with rebellion, to be urged to relinquish its dearest idols, to have its peace assailed by the prophecy of evils to come, this it cannot bear.

My unhappy friends, as one of the watchmen I declare to you that it is not my pleasure to give you pain. Could you point out any way in which I could disquiet you less, which would comport with the duty I owe to God and with tenderness to your immortal interests, and for which you yourselves would not reproach me another day, I would gladly spare you. I have not desired the woful day, O Lord, thou knowest! But you see from our text that the responsibility of a watchman is great, trembling with presentiment of a judgment to come; that a serious account is to be taken of him, and a strict search made upon him for the blood of souls. I therefore dare not amuse you with softer tones, and neglect to warn you of the sins of your heart and the retributions of eternity.

True, God is merciful, but he is also holy and just. True, a Saviour's invitations, as they proceed from the throne of love, melt on every angel's ear; and all the enchanting sounds of grace and tenderness ought to be proclaimed on earth. But other sounds have proceeded from the lips of God. True, religion is sweet; but a poor condemned sinner has something more to do than to keep holydays and sing along the road to heaven. He has first to settle a heavy account with his offended Judge. And this will cost him many a heart ache and many a bitter tear. Though religion is pleasant, the entrance into it is gloomy, and gloomy things must come to his ears and to his heart. A hardened sinner does not want so much to be built up as to be pulled down; not so much to believe that he may be pardoned as that he needs pardon; not so much that there is a physician as that he is sick. You may hold up the remedy and descant on divine mercy, and till men feel that they are undone, they will vacantly gaze at the pretty

display, smile in your face, and think no more of it. You may tell them of the joys of religion, and they will answer, If this is all you have to say, our own tastes assure us that we can be happier in other things. Or if the mind is convinced, a conviction of the joys of religion, without a sense of guilt and ruin, will never make the sinner die, as Paul did "when the commandment came." It may exhilarate, it may draw tears, it may produce animal religion and make him live the stronger. It may enlist his selfishness on the side of religion, may prevent him from openly opposing it, may induce him to put on a profession and form of a thing deemed profitable; but it will never bring him to the foot of the cross, to lift the cries of a dying sinner for mercy. Christ is the only door by which men enter into religion and into life; and none will enter by this way but those who feel their guilt and ruin. Without these apprehensions one may have a blind, selfish religion; but a full exhibition of these truths is necessary to prevent a thousand deceptions, to make judicious Christians, to point to the very spot to which the remedy is to be applied, and to state the precise good for which application to Christ is to be made. Had not the terrors of the law been needful, they would not have been displayed on every page of the Bible, nor would the apostles have used this motive to persuade men.

In the process of bringing sinners to Christ, the several successive operations of instruction, awakening, conviction, and conversion are produced by the instrumentality of awful, soul-humbling, as well as comforting truths. For instruction there must be a display of every part of God's character, not the least essential of which is his displeasure against sin. For awakening the terrors of the law are manifestly necessary. We may fondly hope to see careless sinners overcome by the mercies of God, but experience proves that they are not so ingenuous,—that they are made of sterner stuff. They are under the dominion of selfishness, and you must ordinarily touch their interest to move them. We must display the terrors of the law to produce conviction also,—to impress sinners with a view of God's character and their own,—to show them the dreadful nature of sin, the extent of their guilt and ruin, and their perishing need of a

Saviour. In the law they read both their character and doom. And when the watchmen describe these in the most terrifying and humbling terms, they are only the organs by which God utters his law. A mere exhibition of mercy is not sufficient for conviction. How many sinners will sit and weep at a description of Christ's sufferings and the mercies of God, and by these mercies and tears encourage themselves to live without God in the world, and never think of crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And do not these persons need to know something of a condemning law? True, holy love is too disinterested to be excited by fear; but it is not love that is first to be produced. The mind must be awakened and convicted before it will love as redeemed sinners do.

Now what means can have a greater tendency to convict a sinner of his guilt, ruin, and helplessness, than plainly to describe to him his guilt, ruin, and helplessness, drawing proofs from the whole character of God, from the holiness and extent of his law, from the many obligations which sinners have violated, and from the unutterable punishment which they deserve? A deep sense of these awful truths is the very conviction desired; and one would think that a clear statement of the truths themselves would be the readiest way to make them felt. True, the mere statement will not convict, nor will the statement of any other truth convict without the action of the Spirit. But what part does the Spirit take in this matter? He only prepares the heart to be affected with the truths of God, and thus enables them to take hold of the mind and become motives to it. He never dissolves the connexion between action and motives. Those truths then which are best adapted to move the mind as it is moved under conviction, are the means by which conviction is to be produced. And what truths can these be but those whose impression is the very conviction desired? God may make use of any truth or any event to awaken the mind. Sometimes a rash word has been used to impress him who uttered it or him who heard it; and sometimes a sinner has been roused to a view of his misery by observing the comforts of Christians. But whatever truth or circumstance may be employed to awaken the mind, conviction of these soul-humbling

truths must follow or the impression comes to nothing. And what way so ready to produce the conviction as to urge the truths themselves? Why take a more circuitous route and not come right to the heart? This direct course, you say, will give offence. But to whom? To none but those on whom milder themes have been tried in vain. Good men will not be displeased. Those only will who have resisted all gentler motives and need some severer remedy in the last resort. And are their complaints reasonable and to be heeded? They are not reasonable. They will not yield to milder arguments, and yet they refuse to hear arguments of a graver cast. They pretend that by soothing accents they might be more affected, and yet by soothing accents they refuse to be won. Whether Sinai thunders or Calvary weeps, it is all the same to them. They have chosen their own way and are determined not to be disturbed in the way they have chosen. But would it be kind to them, would it be faithful to God, to gratify this fatal wish?

Nor is it unreasonably degrading to sinners to hear their character and fate described. If they will degrade themselves by sin, the eternal God has a right to accuse and threaten; and they may know that he will not be scrupulous to execute, the pride of sinners notwithstanding. And the same God has a right to command his ministers to denounce his wrath. And when they obey, and tremblingly lay their hands on the bolts of his thunder, they do no more than he commands them. When they solemnly declare that men are sinners, and that impenitent sinners will be consigned to eternal fire, they say no more than the truth, which God has seen fit to reveal, not to torment before the time, but in tender love to men; which he has strictly commanded his ministers to proclaim, and which he has promised to bless. They say no more than the prophets, than Christ and his apostles said. These heavenly messengers took no circuitous route to come at the point, but with the simplicity and decision of "yea yea and nay nay," declared the controversy which God had with men, and from lips warm with prayer poured fourth vehement curses against the wicked. Yes, the same lips on which the strains of immortal love delighted to play,—which when opening on

the theme of redeeming grace, breathed the fragrance of a thousand isles,—when they came to direct their breath against sin, would make an eruption which threatened to bury nations under the burning lava. They did not always dress their God in terrors; they clothed him also in the softer robes of mercy. All the perfections of God should be displayed, because all are useful for the conviction of men.

The last step in the process of bringing sinners to Christ is conversion; and for this the same truths are needful. True, fear will not produce holy love, nor will the hope of finding religion happier than sin produce it. Nor will addresses to any of the passions, nor will any form of moral suasion produce it. Did not men need a radical change of heart,—did their opposition to God arise from mere misconception of his character, then a representation of his mercy might remove prejudice and the work would be done. But no, they have no relish for his character after every explanation; and therefore not moral suasion, and nothing but the Spirit working a thorough change in their temper, can produce love. How then does the Spirit produce it? Not by convincing the sinner that he might make a profitable bargain by exchanging the pleasures of sin for those of religion, but by bringing a condemned rebel to submit and to fall in love with the glories of a holy and redeeming God. This is done by acting in his proper office. And what is his proper office? Hear and remember. "When he is come he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." And how did Paul arrive at love? "When the commandment came sin revived and I died." The truth is, love is to be considered not merely in its own simple form, but as the basis of repentance and faith.—And by what motives does the Spirit lead the mind to repentance and faith? Repentance is exercised in view of all the glories of God's character, particularly his holiness, justice, and displeasure against sin; in view of the purity and justice of his law, the exceeding sinfulness of sin and its desert of eternal punishment. These then are the motives by which the Spirit excites repentance, and therefore these awful and pride debasing truths are the best adapted means which men can use to excite repentance. And what are the motives by which the Spirit awakens faith? This grace is

exercised in view of the holiness of God and of his law, the evil of sin, the ruined and helpless state of the sinner, and his need of a Saviour: in view also of the mercy and truth of God and the fulness and glories of the Redeemer. These then are the motives by which the Spirit excites faith. These soul humbling and God exalting truths of course are the best adapted means which ministers can use for this end. And does not a view of the demerits of sin have some influence to excite love also in its own proper form? Yes, even love. Behold the pardoned sinner washing her Saviour's feet with her tears, and hear him say that to whom much is forgiven the same loveth much. A view of the evil of sin will forever heighten the love of the redeemed: therefore a judicious exhibition of this truth will serve to promote love on earth.

For these several reasons I dare not suppress or soften those sublime and terrible truths which the divine law pronounces, lest my God should take me away; and with my present convictions I never shall,—unless indeed upon one condition,—and on this I will make the agreement with you. If you will all, my dear hearers, become the friends of God, I will sound his threatenings against you no more. I would it were thus. I confess I am weary of this gloomy part of my duty. I would much rather, from the fountain of the promises, pour into your yielding hearts the consolations of religion. Come be the friends of God, and I will give you pain no more. But while many of you delay, neither tenderness to you nor the dread responsibility of a watchman, will allow me to suppress these awful truths. Do any yet plead that they might be more influenced by tender topics? Prove it then by being influenced by them. By the tenderest accents of mercy you have been often addressed. Arguments have been brought, as was fit, from the yearnings of immortal love and from the bloody dust of Calvary. Every wound of a dying Christ has pleaded with you, and a thousand melting invitations warm from heaven have mingled their sounds about your ears. Prove then your doctrine true by turning to God. Mercy has exhausted her sounds upon you, and if she would continue to plead, she must repeat the same sounds again. If then such sounds can move you, why, my beloved friends, do you not

come? What obstruction is there in the way? O come. Else, and if you still complain that harsher means are used, what a strange appearance will you make in the eyes of heaven! Refusing to be melted by the voice of mercy, yet unwilling to hear the voice of justice! A king finds some of his subjects in unreasonable rebellion and condemns them to the rack, but in mercy sends his servants with offers of pardon upon condition that they lay down their arms. They reject the offer, and then complain that accusations and threatenings are added. "Let the king," say they, change his words, or let his servants change them. Perhaps we might consent if softer terms were used." Presumptuous men! And did you think to confer a favor on the king by accepting pardon? Know ye that he has no need of you, and it was in mere pity that he made the offer. And since you will not accept of mercy, receive your sentence, Ye shall surely die.

Now then, my friends, my reasons are all before you, and I hope to be justified by your conscience while I proceed to execute the commission given me in the text. God has said to the wicked, "O wicked man, thou shalt surely die," and the watchmen are commanded upon their peril to sound the alarm. I therefore solemnly declare in the name of God, that there is a dreadful war waged by all the divine perfections against sin,—that all the power which supports the rights of heaven has taken the field,—that every glory of the Godhead points a livid lightning at your breast,—that the inviolable honor of heaven's King is enlisted and is coming down to crush a rebellious world.

In equally solemn tones I declare, as my office bids me, and call every angel to witness, that in this war God is right and the world is wrong. This great truth while I live I will declare, and hope to pronounce it with my dying breath. God is right and the world is wrong. I wish it were set forth in broad letters upon every forehead, and with a pen dipped in heaven were written upon every heart. I wish it were posted in sun beams at the corner of every street, and were graven with the point of a diamond on the rock forever. God is right and the world is wrong. Let this great truth pass from land to



land to prostrate nations of unknown tongues, and rolling through every clime, bring an humbled world to their Redeemer's feet.

Standing on my watch tower, I am commanded, if I see aught of evil coming, to give warning. I again solemnly declare that I do see evil approaching. I see a storm collecting in the heavens; I discover the commotion of the troubled elements; I hear the roar of distant winds. Heaven and earth seem mingled in conflict; and I cry to those for whom I watch, A storm! a storm! get into the ark or you are swept away.—Ah what is it I see? I see a world convulsed and falling to ruins; the sea burning like oil; nations rising from under ground; the sun falling; the damned in chains before the bar, and some of my poor hearers with them. I see them cast from the battlement of the judgment seat. My God, the eternal pit has closed upon them forever!

## **SERMON LIX**

### **THE WEEPING AT THE LAST DAY**

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.- LUKE 13:28

In some future day when men are sunk in stupidity as in the days before the flood,—when they are eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven. The blast of the last trumpet will rouse the world from sleep, will raise the dead and summon the universe to judgment. The heavens shall pass away with a great noise; the earth shall be on fire; the sea shall burn like oil. In the open space between heaven and earth, the Son of man, arrayed "in the glory of his Father" and surrounded with saints and angels, shall fix his throne of judgment. "Before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another

as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." The books shall be opened, in which are recorded all the actions of men; the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed; every idle word shall be brought into judgment; every dark corner of the life shall be laid open; the shame of sinners shall be exposed to all. The Judge shall then say to those on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But to those on the left hand he will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." In that day there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when the wicked Jews, the children of the covenant, who boasted their descent from Abraham, shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and themselves thrust out.

These words lead us to reflect on the miseries of the wicked at the last day.

It will be the time of the final separation of near and dear friends. The line of division will sunder many a father's house. A parent will be on one side and a child on the other; a husband on one side and a wife on the other; brother will be parted from brother and sister from sister. When sinners shall look away beyond the gulph and see in heaven their former acquaintance, the companions of their youth, their neighbors, those who met them from sabbath to sabbath in the house of God, who used to sit on the same seat and stand by their side in prayer;—when they shall look up and see the members of their father's family, those who were nursed at the same breast and partook of their youthful sports,—when they shall see a father, a mother, a wife, a child, forever separated from them, and admitted to that banquet from which they are eternally excluded,—O then there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Their sorrows will be increased by a remembrance of the opportunities and privileges they have lost. This remembrance will be awakened in the Jews when they see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

in the kingdom of God. When sinners shall look back to sabbaths which dawned upon them with heavenly light,—to seasons in the house of God under awakening sermons,—to days when they might have had frequent access to prayer meetings,—to years in which their closets offered them a retreat for prayer and their Bible lay mouldering on its shelf; when they shall look back to days in which the Spirit of God moved upon their minds,—to hours when their souls were awakened to prayer by a sense of eternal realities, and when their hands seemed to take hold of the very threshold of heaven; when they shall look back to days of divine power when Jesus of Nazareth passed by, when multitudes pressed into the kingdom of heaven and almost bore them in on their shoulders; when they shall reflect how near they came to heaven and yet fell short; then will they "mourn at the last when" their "flesh and" their "body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof." "I had a soul but prized it not, and now my soul is gone."

In that day they will call upon every being that has ears to pity and relieve them, (as the rich man cried to Abraham,) but will find them all deaf to their prayers. They will entreat God to mitigate his wrath and give them a little respite, but will only receive this answer: "Because I—called and ye refused, I—stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye—set at nought all my counsel and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock" now "your fear cometh." They will entreat their parents, their brothers, their children, by all their former love, to send some one to "dip the tip of his finger in water and cool" their "tongue," and will not move compassion enough in all heaven to grant this small relief. They will cry to rocks and mountains to cover them, but rocks and mountains will have passed away. They will pour their lamentations on the ears of hell, but no sound will come back but groans and reproaches. Not a solitary friend will they find through the bounds of universal being. They will see an enemy in every creature they meet. No companions will they have but devils and the frightful ghosts of hell, who will only prove their tormentors. Ten thousand times will they wish that they

could spend their eternity alone; but even this boon will be denied them. On earth they thought that if worst come to worst they should have company enough; but now they find that the more fuel the more fire.

They will utterly despair of all good,—of ever seeing another pleasant hour or pleasant thing to eternity. They will utterly despair of one moment's respite from pain, or the least mitigation. All happiness will have flown forever. If a single day of comfort could come after ten thousand ages of misery, they would have something to look forward to; but now they have nothing but the blackness of darkness forever, growing still darker as the ages of eternity revolve. They are utterly undone, and their constant cry will be, O that I had never been born! O that I could sink into nothing and be no more!

An unspeakable aggravation of their misery will be their guilt and shame. When their eyes are opened to see the eternal love against which they have always been in arms,—the infinite majesty which they have insulted and defied,—the dying compassion which they have trodden under foot,—and that immeasurable good which they have sought to destroy, they will be crushed under guilt and shame beyond the reach of thought. Remorse will be the never dying worm that will gnaw their vitals. As dreadful as eternal damnation is, and as selfish and proud as they will still remain, they will feel that they deserve it all. With all the haughtiness of their pride raging without restraint, to be held up to public scorn, so polluted, so degraded, so accursed, will fill them with agonies of shame not to be described. The contempt with which they will be regarded by their former acquaintance,—their former dependants,—their former admirers,—the infamy of your state prisons is glory to this.

The passions of the damned will be left unbridled. Their selfishness and pride, their malice and envy, will rage without restraint. A tempest of passion will tear and rend them with the fury of whirlwinds. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.—They will gnash upon God, they will gnash upon his saints, they will gnash

upon their tormentors. Those who have known the agony which only one of these passions can effect, may judge of the torment produced by them all when every restraint is taken away.

But that which will blast and wither all their powers is the wrath of an infinite God,—a God from whose hands none can deliver them. In this life the anger of God is less regarded than the displeasure of men: but in that day they would rather have all creation incensed against them than God alone. When they awake and find him their enemy whose being and power are above created thought; when they fall into his hands and are lashed and broken by almighty strength; how will they stand appalled and overwhelmed. The cloud that darkens the earth and breaks in jarring thunders on the affrightened town; the earthquake that with tremendous roar suddenly bursts upon the astonished city; these awaken terrors not to be described: but neither the thunder that jars the world, nor the earthquake that heaves the agitated ground, nor the shriek of sinking thousands, can raise such terrors as the wrath of an incensed God. When the damned, overwhelmed with guilt, shall behold God their enemy,—their infinite enemy,—their eternal enemy,—an enemy from whom none can deliver them,—and shall see all the energies of his justice engaged to crush them as a worm beneath a falling rock,—the terror that will appal them,—but language fails; I leave imagination to supply the rest.

Need I advert to any bodily pains to render their sufferings complete? But God has said that they shall be cast into a lake of fire. He has said it often, and has never unsaid it. He has never hinted that the representation is figurative; and I know of no consideration drawn from Scripture or reason, against the literal construction of these numerous texts. If you say, it is too dreadful to be believed, I answer; if it is not fire it must be something as bad, or the Scriptures have practised a great deception upon us. And if it is something as bad, why may it not as well be literal fire as anything else? Besides, if there is any place where figures are not employed, it is on the judgment seat, in the act of passing a judicial sentence. This is

certainly the case in human affairs. But he who is to be the Judge has told us exactly what the sentence will be: "Then shall he say—unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And is this judicial language from the judgment seat nothing but poetry?

To complete the misery it will be eternal. On earth few cases are so bad as not to admit of the hope of amelioration. The deepest wretchedness looks forward, with some expectation, to those numerous casualties which, hid in the womb of future years, may tinge with a brighter hue the sable web of life. But there no chance remains for hope to fix on. All is blank despair: all is eternal misery. Could they escape after they had suffered as many millions of ages as there are stars in heaven, added to all the sands of the sea, and all the spires upon the mountains, and all the leaves in the forest, the sunken eye of hell could be illumined with hope. But FOREVER,—that one word withers all their expectations and rivets them to infinite despair. And if their misery is eternally to increase, so that what they now endure is nothing to what they expect, then it is infinite despair multiplied into infinite despair.

I would drop down among that despairing company a thousand ages hence, and ask them, What now think you of the Bible? of sabbaths? of opportunities for prayer? of the day of probation you enjoyed in yonder world? What now think you of your former folly in putting off religion and neglecting your souls? I should be answered by one loud and universal groan. But blessed be God, I am speaking to a different assembly,—to an assembly of living men, in a world of hope. But am I not speaking to some who will be in those circumstances at last? God knows. I fear there are some such in this house. How many of you have lived twenty, thirty, forty years without religion, and still are sunk in stupidity! In this state of stupidity the greater part of those who have passed the middle of life, in all probability will die. They will go on making a thousand excuses and hoping for future conversion, until they open their eyes in torment. Thus men have done in all past ages; thus they are likely still to do. And why should

this congregation be exempt? I will not conceal my anxiety. My soul is distressed with the apprehension that I shall another day see some of my hearers crying to rocks and mountains to cover them, and cursing the day that they ever heard a Gospel sermon. All the entreaties of God and man cannot bring them to pray in their families, nor even in their closets. All the blaze of light around them cannot stop them from making excuses and casting the blame of their impenitence upon God. We may weep over them till our hearts break, and yet they will not have an anxious thought about their well being in all future ages; and yet many of them have already passed the period of probable conversion. If they fully believed that the grave would terminate their existence, I should not wonder. But perhaps they all believe that they shall live as long as the throne of God endures. With such a creed,—to be anxious to provide for old age, and take no thought for all the years between seventy and a thousand,—between a thousand and an epoch which numbers cannot reach,—this is madness,—this is folly that wants a name.

My dearly beloved hearers, practise no longer upon yourselves the cruelty of tigers. Have some compassion on those souls for which a Saviour died. Have mercy on yourselves: have mercy on me. O for mercy, mercy, mercy! I cry to you as a dying man for relief. If you will not hear these supplications, perhaps you in your turn may stand and pray to one in vain, and in vain say, Mercy, mercy, mercy. My prayer to you is for this one boon, that you would be happy yourselves. Grant me this and I ask no more. I entreat you by that compassion which "looked down from the height of the sanctuary—to hear the groaning of the prisoner and to loose those that" were "appointed to death;" I beseech you by that love which bled on Calvary,—by that patience which has called after you from your childhood. I warn you by all the dreadful weight of your guilt, by the terrors of a dying bed, by the solemnities of the last judgment. In the name and by the authority of the eternal God I charge you not to make your bed in hell.

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