

**Selected Writings of
James Madison Pendleton**

Volume 3 of 3

**Compiled and Edited by
Thomas White**

SELECTED WRITINGS
OF
JAMES MADISON PENDLETON

VOLUME III

Theological



JAMES MADISON PENDLETON
(1811-1891)

SELECTED WRITINGS
OF
JAMES MADISON PENDLETON

IN THREE VOLUMES

Volume III

Theological

- *Selected Writings on Various Topics of Theology*

COMPILED AND EDITED BY THOMAS WHITE



The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc.

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Thou hast given a *standard* to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth.

-- *Psalms 60:4*

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THE WALDENSIAN EMBLEM

lux lucet in tenebris

“The Light Shineth in the Darkness”

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**SELECTED WRITINGS OF
JAMES MADISON PENDLETON
*IN THREE VOLUMES***

VOLUME ONE — HISTORICAL AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

- James Madison Pendleton and His Contribution to Baptist Ecclesiology
by THOMAS WHITE
- Reminiscences of a Long Life
by JAMES MADISON PENDLETON
- Article on the Death of J. M. Pendleton
by M. M. RILEY

VOLUME TWO — ECCLESIASTICAL

- Selected Writings on Various Aspects of the New Testament Church
by JAMES MADISON PENDLETON

VOLUME THREE — THEOLOGICAL

- Selected Writings on Various Topics of Theology
by JAMES MADISON PENDLETON

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Introduction

This volume is the third volume in a three volume series containing selected works of James Madison Pendleton. As this volume may be purchased separately from the other volumes, an introduction to the life of Pendleton is necessary. For a complete discussion of Pendleton's life and contributions to Baptist ecclesiology, see volume one in this series. For his writings which discuss ecclesiology, see volume two in the series. The current volume focuses on selected theological works by James Madison Pendleton.

A Brief Biography of James Madison Pendleton

James Madison Pendleton was born on November 20, 1811, to John and Frances Pendleton at "Twyman's Store" in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, during the presidency of the person after whom he was named—James Madison.¹ In the autumn of 1812, Pendleton's family moved to Christian County, Kentucky. Here Pendleton was reared by "pious Baptist" parents where he attended "the neighborhood schools, at such times as he could be spared from labor."²

¹ James Madison Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life* (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1891), 8. The article in *Baptist Theologians* incorrectly identifies Nov. 11, 1811, as the date of James Madison Pendleton's birth. For a complete biography see William Huddleston, "James Madison Pendleton: A Critical Biography" (ThM thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1962). For a more thorough discussion of Pendleton's influence, see Thomas White, "James Madison Pendleton and His Contributions to Baptist Ecclesiology" (PhD diss. Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005).

² J. H. Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptists* (Cincinnati: J. H. Spencer, 1885), 523.

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During his teenage years, Pendleton demonstrated an acute interest in spiritual matters. Just before turning fifteen, Pendleton used money earned from selling wool to buy his first purchase—a Bible. Pendleton said, “I prized it highly and found great use for it.”³ After turning fifteen, he decided to give great attention to religion, resolving to read his Bible and pray every day. After an extended time of reading his Bible, contemplating his own sinfulness, and attempting to save himself, Pendleton read a sermon by Samuel Davies from 1 Cor 1:22–24. After reading this sermon, he went into the woods to pray and understood for the first time the mercy of salvation through Jesus Christ.⁴

At age seventeen, on the second Sunday in April, 1829, Pendleton went before Bethel Church in Christian County, Kentucky, and told of his conversion experience which had occurred a few weeks earlier in those nearby woods. He was baptized by John S. Wilson the following Tuesday, April 14, in a creek not far from the meeting house.⁵

Pendleton’s formal education was limited. Because his father, in addition to being a farmer, taught school, Pendleton learned much at home but did not begin attending the neighborhood school until the age of nine or ten. Although work on the farm often interrupted his studies, Pendleton learned well, and in 1831 at age nineteen, he tried his hand at teaching in the western part of Christian County.⁸ This lasted for only three months, and he returned home discouraged and with only three dollars in his pocket.⁹ By the end of the year, Pendleton moved to Russellville, Kentucky, to study Latin grammar under Robert T.

³ Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, 22.

⁴ Ben Bogard, *Pillars of Orthodoxy, or Defenders of the Faith* (Louisville: Baptist Book Concern, 1900), 256.

⁵ Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, 27–28.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 15; 34.

⁹ Bob Compton, “J. M. Pendleton: A Nineteenth-Century Baptist Statesman (1811–1891),” *Baptist History and Heritage* 10 (January 1975): 30.

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Anderson.¹⁰ Early in 1833, Pendleton accepted an invitation to minister in Hopkinsville, where he would remain until 1836. This afforded him the opportunity to study at the Academy under the charge of James D. Rumsey, “who had a fine reputation as a classical scholar.”¹¹ Pendleton would focus his study on Latin and Greek. After moving in 1836, no further record of formal education exists. However in 1865, Denison University in Ohio conferred upon Pendleton the honorary title of Doctor of Divinity.¹²

Pendleton did not begin as the polished pulpiter which was to characterize his career. He began by leading prayer meetings during which he largely read Scripture. He did not consider these engagements preaching, but in February of 1830, to Pendleton’s astonishment, his home church licensed him to preach. He commented, “I thought it quite uncalled for and did not believe it possible for me to preach.” It was the fourth Sunday in September, 1831, when Pendleton preached what he considered his first sermon at a church called West Union about ten miles west of Hopkinsville. Pendleton commented on his effort, “To call what I said a ‘sermon’ would be flagrant injustice to that term.” He felt himself utterly incompetent to preach. His exhortations were very short, consisting of only a few sentences, and when he had said all he could think of to say, he “sought relief from his embarrassment in prayer.”¹³ Some agreed with Pendleton’s assessment of his preaching. One local pastor stated, “You say some pretty good things, but your preaching is neither adapted to comfort the saint nor alarm the

¹⁰ Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, 37. Anderson founded a school there in 1830. It was said of him, “In this profession he was preeminent, and was of incalculable benefit to the Baptists of Bethel Association, as well as others.” See Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptists*, 381.

¹¹ Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, 40. No further information can be found about this academy.

¹² J. J. Burnett, *Sketches of Tennessee’s Pioneer Baptist Preachers* (Nashville: Marwill & Bruce, 1919), 406.

¹³ Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, 31–35.

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sinner.”¹⁴ However, Pendleton did not give up but continued to improve.

In 1833 while studying in Hopkinsville, Pendleton simultaneously served at two churches, Bethel Church and Hopkinsville, who each gave him a hundred dollars a year. He commented, “Some may think that this was poor pay; but my deliberate opinion is that the pay was better than the preaching.” The arrangement with these churches was that he would preach one Saturday and two Sundays in the month to each of the Hopkinsville and Bethel churches. Before long, Pendleton’s church at Hopkinsville, of which he had become a member, called for his ordination. The ordination council consisted of four men and met on November 2, 1833.¹⁵

In the latter part of 1836, Pendleton was called to pastor the First Baptist Church of Bowling Green, Kentucky. He officially began January 1, 1837, and continued serving this church for twenty consecutive years with the exception of a few months, spent in Russellville, Kentucky, around 1850.¹⁶ He was the first man in southern Kentucky to devote himself to full-time ministry, making four hundred dollars a year. In August of 1837, Pendleton went with John Waller to the Russell Creek Associational meeting at Columbia in Adair County, Kentucky, on a trip that would change his life forever.

The trip to the Russell Creek Association would cover over seventy miles on horseback. The two gentlemen stayed the night in Glasgow, which was almost half way, with Richard Garnett, and Pendleton was introduced to his daughter,

¹⁴ Bogard, *Pillars of Orthodoxy, or Defenders of the Faith*, 258.

¹⁵ Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, 40–42.

¹⁶ Spencer, *History of Kentucky Baptists*, 524. In January 1850, Pendleton kept a commitment to Alfred Taylor by helping him with his church at Green River. The church at Bowling Green, having been without a pastor, invited Pendleton to resume his former place of service. Pendleton accepted and moved back to Bowling Green. See Compton, “J. M. Pendleton: A Nineteenth-Century Baptist Statesman (1811–1891),” 30.

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Catherine S. Garnett. Catherine, her brother, and another gentleman accompanied Pendleton to the associational meeting. After the meeting concluded, Pendleton had a thirty-mile ride back to Glasgow during which he became acquainted with Catherine. He wrote, "I was impressed with the excellences of her character and her general intelligence."¹⁷ In October 1837, Pendleton went to Louisville for the formation of the General Association of Kentucky Baptists. On his way home, he went about twenty miles out of the way to visit Catherine. On this visit, he informed her of his love for her and proposed to marry her. This took her by surprise. Thus, Pendleton urged her not to answer immediately. Before the end of the year, Catherine returned with a favorable answer to Pendleton's proposal, and on March 13, 1838, James Madison Pendleton and Catherine S. Garnett were united in holy matrimony. Beginning a family would not take long as the Pendletons gave birth to their first child on January 8, 1839. Their family would eventually include five children.¹⁸

In February 1852, Pendleton invited J. R. Graves to preach at Bowling Green. Pendleton commented to Graves, "I have never given the matter of alien immersion a thorough study and I will be glad to hear you preach on that subject."¹⁹ By the end of the meeting, Graves's preaching had convinced Pendleton to the point that he announced full agreement with him. Graves had excited the Pedobaptists on the issue of baptism so that several sermons continued to be preached upon the subject after his departure.²⁰ In fact, the attacks against Graves by Pedobaptists encouraged Pendleton to

¹⁷ Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, 52.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 66. John Malcom, his first son, was baptized in 1859. He and his father were on separate sides of the slavery issue, and young John joined the Confederate army. On October 8, 1862, he was killed by the fragment of a shell which struck his forehead. J. M. Pendleton claims that in not one of their letters was a harsh word uttered.

¹⁹ O. L. Hailey, *J. R. Graves Life, Times and Teachings* (Nashville: O. L. Hailey, 1929), 73.

²⁰ Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, 103.

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defend him more vehemently.²¹ Shortly after the revival, Pendleton preached at Liberty Church in Logan County and gave his reasons for being a Baptist. These reasons were later expanded into Pendleton's first book and published under the title, *Three Reasons Why I Am a Baptist*. The relationship between Pendleton and Graves continued as Pendleton became a regular contributor to the *Tennessee Baptist* which Graves edited. Pendleton wrote four articles in particular that addressed the issue "Ought Baptist to Recognize Pedobaptist Preachers as Gospel Ministers?" Pendleton answered negatively and his articles were later published in a booklet which Graves titled, "An Old Landmark Re-set."²²

On January 1, 1857, Pendleton left Bowling Green for Union University where the trustees appointed him head of the Theology Department. The trustees said, "They wanted a man who had learned his theology from the Bible."²³ As one of the conditions of his coming to Union, he also became pastor of the Baptist church in Murfreesboro. Pendleton taught between forty and fifty ministerial students. After the death of the President of Union University, Joseph H. Eaton, he acted as Chairman of the faculty.

²¹ J. M. Pendleton, "Letter to Brother Graves," *Tennessee Baptist* (June 5, 1852). Says, "And here is to say once for all, that when a minister visits this place at my solicitation, as you did, and conducts a meeting on principles which meet my hearty approbation, as you did, if after his departure, he is calumniated and persecuted, as you have been, I will defend him, though I hear a thousand thunders rolling through the Pedobaptist heavens."

²² Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, 103. The rights to this book were sold to Graves and first published in 1853. In 1856, Pendleton added an addition preface, made some corrections, and included an appendix on the fourth reason for being a Baptist-communion. Pendleton later revised and expanded the book. In 1882 it was published by the American Baptist Publishing Society under the title *Distinctive Principles of Baptists*. See Keith Eitel, "James Madison Pendleton," *Baptist Theologians*. Edited by Timothy George (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 188–204.

²³ Pendleton, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, 108.

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In 1858, Pendleton joined A. C. Dayton and J. R. Graves as joint editors of the *Tennessee Baptist*. Pendleton also served as editor of the *Southern Baptist Review and Eclectic* for the six years of its existence—1855 through 1860. With the Civil War approaching, slavery became an increasingly volatile issue. Pendleton's views on slavery had been clearly published in *The Examiner*, some of which were republished in a Nashville paper. He wrote more than twenty articles for *The Examiner* under the name "A Southern Emancipationist."²⁴ Pendleton clearly distinguished himself as an emancipationist and not an abolitionist. Emancipationists believed that slavery should be gradually eliminated while abolitionists sought to do away with slavery immediately. However, some still sought Pendleton's dismissal. The trustees did not wish for Pendleton to offer his resignation, so he continued to teach until the institution suspended service in April 1861.

Graves spent hours trying to convince Pendleton, the only Southern born member of the Landmark triumvirate, to support the Confederacy. Pendleton would not be convinced. He despised the flag which symbolized the Confederacy saying, "I was unwilling to look at it, because it was usurping the place of the flag of the United States—the flag of my heart's love. The 'stars and bars' were utterly distasteful to me."²⁵

Because of the war, the Pendleton family went north in 1862. After arriving in Hamilton, Ohio, Pendleton preached several times and accepted the call to serve as pastor of the church there. While serving there, his mother passed away. He ministered in Hamilton until October 1865, when he received the call to serve at Upland Baptist Church in Upland, Pennsylvania.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 122. Pendleton inherited a female slave when his mother died in 1863. The law did not allow him to free her so he hired her out and paid her the money she earned plus ten percent. He says, "I was not a slave-holder *morally*, but *legally*." See pages 127–28.

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While at Upland, he served as trustee of Crozer Theological Seminary, added thirty feet to the meeting house, built a new baptistry, and planted two churches. Twenty-five husbands and wives made professions of faith, and Pendleton eagerly baptized them. During this time, Pendleton published what he considered to be his “best and most important book” titled *Christian Doctrines*. This decidedly biblical theology was written specifically for the benefit of “colored ministers” in the South but was acceptable to other readers as well.²⁶

In June 1883, Pendleton resigned from Upland Baptist Church at the age of seventy-two under the belief that judicious ministers should not pastor after reaching the age of seventy. The Pendletons spent their remaining time visiting their children, and he continued to write. It was fitting that Pendleton ended his life where he devoted so much of it—Bowling Green, Kentucky. He died on March 5, 1891, at 12:40 P.M.²⁷ Those speaking at his funeral included such notable figures as T. T. Eaton and William H. Whittsitt.²⁸ Pendleton was buried in Fairview cemetery about one mile outside of Bowling Green. Mrs. Pendleton was buried in the same location on September 21, 1898.²⁹

SUMMARY OF THE WORKS IN THIS VOLUME

The following book contains many articles written by James Madison Pendleton. Most of these works have never appeared outside of the pages of the *Tennessee Baptist* newspaper or the *Southern Baptist Review* periodical. The only copies of the *Tennessee Baptist* or *Southern Baptist*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

²⁷ Unsigned article, “Editorial Notes of Death of J. M. Pendleton,” *Western Recorder* (March 12, 1891).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 198. Interestingly, Whittsitt was involved in a controversy while President at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary over the origin of Baptists in which Landmarkers were his chief opponents.

²⁹ Huddleston, “James Madison Pendleton,” 92. The information was apparently given through a letter written by Mr. Claude L. Thomas, Superintendent of the Fairview Cemetery, in a letter dated March 9, 1962.

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Review remaining are housed in various libraries on microfilm in a barely readable form. For this publication, the works have been retyped with some archaic language updated and Roman numerals replaced with Arabic numerals. These articles provide new insight into the theology and into the historical surroundings of J. M. Pendleton, but more importantly these articles reveal a man who typified the pastor/theologian. These articles will reveal that Pendleton contained the mind of academician with a heart for the local church.

The first few articles in the volume relate to the pastorate. The first set of articles is titled "Letters to Young Preachers." This work originally appeared as fifteen separate articles in the pages of the *Tennessee Baptist* newspaper. This set of articles discuss the following subjects in order: 1) introduction; 2) call to ministry; 3) the sacredness of your calling; 4) worldly wealth and the call to ministry; 5) take heed to yourself; 6) love and evangelize the lost; 7) take heed to what you preach; 8) present the Gospel in its doctrinal, experimental, and practical aspects; 9) the importance of the Scripture; 10) the dignity of deportment; 11) trifling words; 12) of scholars and preachers; 13) the preparation of sermons; 14) text or subject sermons; and 15) the minister's theological library. The articles are of infinite value to young ministers.

The second article, "Extemporaneous Preaching" establishes Pendleton's belief concerning the proper method of preaching. Pendleton believes that sermons should be presented without notes; however, these sermons must be well researched and thoroughly prepared. In addition, this article established his belief concerning the necessity of expositional preaching. Lest one be confused, Pendleton did not use notes with the sermons later printed in this volume.

The third, fourth, and fifth articles appeared in the *Southern Baptist Review*. These articles are titled respectively, "The Importance of Ministerial Piety," "An Able Ministry," and "A Good Minister of Jesus Christ." All three articles display Pendleton's concern for the spiritual maturity of those in the

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ministry. These articles also state that ministers should be gifted and competent in their abilities to perform the ministerial tasks. Pendleton presents piety as one of if not the most important quality for the Gospel ministry.

The next grouping contains several short sermons extracted from Pendleton's book titled *Short Sermons*. The five sermons chosen were deemed to be important for their theological implications, the topic discussed, or the fact that the sermon best represented Pendleton's preaching style. In order, they are: 1) "Not Ashamed of the Gospel" from Rom 1:16; 2) "The Inspiration and Utility of Scripture" from 2 Tim 3:16; 3) "Christ the Way, the Truth, and the Life" from John 14:6; 4) Justification from Rom 10:4; and 5) The Dying Christian Triumphant from 2 Tim 4:7-8. These sermons demonstrate Pendleton's common practice of developing an expository sermon and concluding with remarks which attempt to make the sermon applicable. The most important sermon in this collection is the sermon on the inspiration of Scripture where Pendleton clearly supports an inerrant view of the Scriptures. Pendleton printed many "Short Sermons" and many "Sabbath Morning Thoughts" in the *Tennessee Baptist*. The influence of these sermons cannot be determined but one can imagine that they were of benefit for many bi-vocational and otherwise busy ministers who perused the pages.

The seventh article is titled "Thoughts on Christian Duty." Pendleton states concerning these articles, "They were designed for Christians *generally*, and for young converts *particularly*." The various topics discussed include: 1) the Christian profession; 2) holding fast to our profession; 3) reading the Scriptures; 4) what are the requisites of availing prayer; 5) family worship; 6) public worship; 7) prayer meetings; 8) congregational singing; 9) growth in grace; 10) requisites to Christian usefulness; 11) the example of Christ; 12) Christian love; 13) humility; 14) Christian joy; 15) the government of the tongue; 16) separation from the world; 17) God's people are his witnesses; 18) the proper use of money; 19) the endurance of affliction; and 20) the prospect of death and heaven. If the current author could recommend but three

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of these short articles that speak prophetically to modern generations, they would be the articles on family worship, prayer meetings, and congregational singing. Pendleton in these articles emphasizes the necessity of dedicating family time to worship, of gathering for the purpose of extended times of prayer, and for singing that involves the entire congregation and is not entertainment driven. Despite special emphasis on these three, all of the articles are beneficial, especially to new or immature believers in Christ.

The eighth article is titled, "Thoughts on Giving" and includes fourteen articles originally published separately in the *Tennessee Baptist* newspaper. The topics addressed include: 1) more blessed to give than to receive; 2) how much do you owe the Lord; 3) God is the sovereign proprietor; 4) systematic giving; 5) do not wait to give; 6) do not wait (cont.); 7) Jewish sacrificial requirements; 8) as God prospers you; 9) weekly contributions; 10) on monthly or annual giving; 11) how much should you give; 12) reasons to give; 13) reasons to give (cont.); and 14) reaching the world for Christ. These articles constitute the closest Pendleton ever came to espousing a theology of giving.

The ninth, tenth, and eleventh articles come from the *Southern Baptist Review*. Number nine, one of more unexpected, is "A Plea for Thorough Female Education." This article argues for female education at time when it was not taken for granted. In addition, Pendleton being a Baptist joins John Dagg and others in this emphasis. The group often looked upon as not considering women equal actually fought for equal treatment through education. The tenth article is titled, "Obeying the Dictates of Conscience." In this article, Pendleton argues that conscience is fallible and cannot always be trusted to guide one into doing what is right because man is fallen. The eleventh article, titled, "The Atonement of Christ" can be found in a similar expression in his systematic theology, *Christian Doctrines* or in an expanded form in the book titled, *The Atonement of Christ*. This book written almost thirty years later contains a 173-page discussion of the same topic. Pendleton claims that this work is the result of a half century of study on the subject,

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and that his views of the atonement “may not be in entire accord with those of any writer known to me.”³⁰ The article contained in this volume discusses the nature, necessity, value, extent, and results of the atonement.

The next grouping comes from one of Pendleton’s best works, his systematic theology titled *Christian Doctrines*. In this collection of his works, the reader will find his “Preface” to the work which reveals the work as a biblical, systematic theology. By this the author means that Pendleton never intended to include all historical data, but simply to provide a biblical foundation for the systematic doctrines taught in the Bible. One chapter from that work is also included. The chapter chosen was “The Bible a Revelation from God” which seemed to fit well considering Pendleton’s overarching focus on Scripture. Throughout Pendleton’s work as a theologian, one will recognize that Pendleton believed Scripture was sufficient for all faith and practice. Following the regulative principle, he applied Scripture to everything and believed it gave principles if not direct commands that should be applied to every area of theology but especially to the doctrine of the church.

The last grouping contains several miscellaneous short articles from Pendleton which appeared in the *Tennessee Baptist*. These articles begin with two sermons: God Is Not the Author of Sin from James 1:13; and Salvation by Grace through Faith from Eph 2:8–10; before including five additional articles: Are The Heathen Saved Without the Gospel?; Free Agency; Divine Purpose and Free Agency; Questions: Missions and Anti-Missions Movement; and Theological Schools. Most of the titles explain the subject discussed. Of special interest is Pendleton’s support for missions and theological education.

This author will close this introduction with a fitting quote from Pendleton. He said in the preface to *Christian*

³⁰ James Madison Pendleton, *The Atonement of Christ* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1885), 7.

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Doctrines, “Every page has been written in the interest of scriptural truth, and for its maintenance. I trust that it has not been written in vain, but that the blessing of God will go with the volume which is now sent forth.” I suspect Pendleton would re-issue these remarks upon the republication of many of his best works.

LETTERS TO YOUNG PREACHERS



BY

JAMES MADISON PENDLETON



*Originally Published in various issues of the
Tennessee Baptist from April 14, 1860
through February 16, 1861*



LETTERS TO YOUNG PREACHERS

NUMBER 1

DEAR BRETHREN: I have no greater joy than to know that God has called you to preach the Gospel of Christ. It may be said of young men eminently, and of your preachers pre-eminently, that they are the hope of their country and the hope of the world.—Very soon the positions now occupied by the middle aged and the old, will be filled by those who are at present in the freshness of youth. Gray-haired fathers will be succeeded by their sons, and the destinies of nations will be committed to comparatively inexperienced hands. Who can be without solicitude when he remembers that in this great country of ours the young men are ere long to sit on the judicial bench, and lift up their voices in the halls of legislation? To them will be entrusted the dearest interests of the Republic. Their votes will determine under whose guidance will be placed the Ship of the State—whether it will have competent or incompetent pilotage.

Young men are objects of great interest to every patriot—to every philanthropist. If this is true of young men in general, it is emphatically true of young preachers in particular. The latter have much to do in the incubation of those principles of virtue and morality, which are indispensable to the perpetuity of our Republican Government. For it is true, as urged by Washington, that intelligence and virtue are the two pillars on which rests the fabric of our Government. The pulpit, however, promotes virtue and morality in an indirect manner. I mean to say that the great object, the primary object of preaching is not to make men moral in the common

acceptation of the word, but to affect their salvation. When saved they will unquestionably be moral for salvation through Christ is the best guarantee for the interests of morality. It is said of ministers of the Gospel that they watch for souls. Their business is not except in an incidental manner to promote the temporal interests of their fellow man. They labor for eternity. They watch for souls. How anxiously the physician watches the diseased body of his patient, that he may discover some encouraging symptom! What is the body? The results of a certain organization of matter—and destined in a little while to return to its native dust. All the interests pertaining to the body are comparatively trivial. But who can conceive the magnitude of the interests which pertain to the soul? “What is a man profited if he gains the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” Truly the soul is a jewel of inestimable value, and therefore he who instrumentally recovers this jewel from the rubbish and the ruins of sin, does a greater work than he who founds an empire. For know, you ministers of the Gospel, that every soul saved by means of your labors, will shine through endless ages as a bright gem in the crown of your Mediator-Lord. Would you not instrumentally place many such gems in that crown? Can it be done? If so how delightful, as well as solemn the responsibility of the ministry!

Here, however, a question may arise; for it has often arisen. That question is this: How may one know that he is called of God to preach the Gospel? In answer to this question I submit the following extraction from Wayland’s *Principles and Practices of the Baptists* (108,104). “We believe that there is such a thing as a call to the ministry; that is, that a man is moved to enter upon this work by the Holy Spirit. This call is manifested in two ways; first, in his own heart, and secondly, in the hearts of his brethren. So far as he himself is concerned, it appears in the form of a solemn conviction of duty resting upon him with such weight that he believes it impossible for him to please Christ in any other way than in preaching the Gospel. He dares not enter upon any other pursuit until he has made every effort in his power to be admitted to this work.” I beg these remarks to be

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remembered. They may be considered by many as obsolete and behind the age. It may be so, and yet the age may be wrong. There is a word of prophecy surer than this age or than any age. I know it is common to hear men, even among Baptists, talk of the choice of a profession, and of balancing in their minds whether they should be lawyers, ministers, teachers, or physicians,—They will say, perhaps, they dislike the turmoil of politics, the hard and irregular labor of a physician, the monotony of teaching; they are fond of study, of writing, and of quiet mental improvement; and besides, they can enter the ministry, get married, and settle so much earlier and so much more easily than would be possible in any other profession, that they, on the whole, prefer it. Now, I would always, dissuade such a man from entering the ministry at all. If he could, with just as clear a conscience, be a lawyer as a minister, let him be a lawyer by all means. The Church of Christ can do without him. He proposes to enter the ministry of reconciliation from merely selfish motives, and the Savior has no occasion for his services. He makes a convenience of the ministry of the Word; he uses it to promote his own objects; he is a hireling, whose own the sheep are not. If he begins in this way, in this way he will, unless the grace of God prevent, so continue. He will soon tire of his work and leave it for something else, or he will continue in it to shed around him on every side, the example of well-educated, cold worldly-minded selfishness.

More with regard to a call to the ministry in my next.



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NUMBER 2: CALL TO THE MINISTRY

DEAR BRETHREN: Many absurd things have been said and written about a call to the ministry. It has been referred to as a miraculous direction of the attention to the work of preaching, consisting in part at least of an audible voice from heaven, commanding the person called to go and preach the gospel. I once heard a preacher say that when he was called to preach “an angel stood before him with a golden sword, saying, take this and use it, or I will run you through with it.” In this instance there must have been a morbid action of the imagination. Men are not called to the ministry in this way. If the individual referred to had disobeyed what he considered the angel’s command, and had been slain with that “golden sword,” the interests of Christianity would probably have sustained no injury; for he was remarkably destitute of ministerial qualifications. But there is another extreme. Some have said there is no call to the ministry—that one church member has the same authority to preach as another—that preaching is a matter optional with every one &c. The truth in regard to a call to the ministry is probably about equidistant from these two extremes. That there is a call from God to labor in word and doctrine is evident from the Savior’s language: “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.”

I know not how language could more obviously indicate that divine agency is employed in sending forth laborers to reap the spiritual harvest. Prayer is to be offered to the Lord of

the harvest, and his prerogative to appoint and send forth laborers is fully recognized.

Occupying middle ground between the two extremes, I have mentioned, I maintain that there is a call to the ministry, and that it consists in supernatural impressions in regard to the ministry—impressions made by the Holy Spirit. I do not mean merely that the heart is animated with a desire to glorify God in the salvation of men, but that the mind is exercised as to the promotion of the glory of God and the salvation of men, *by means of preaching*. Every Christian desires in a greater or less degree to do good, but those who are called to the work of the ministry are led to think of doing good in a particular way—by preaching the Gospel of Christ. They regard this as a great work—the most responsible under heaven—they tremble at the thought of undertaking it—and still they feel that they must do it, or displease God and incur the disapprobation of the Savior, who died for them. If at any time they decide to dismiss from their minds all thought of preaching, they involve themselves in doubt as to their personal piety. The reason why they doubt most probably grows out of their inability to reconcile the idea of personal piety with a disregard of impressions to preach, made by the Spirit of God. I believe in the old doctrine which led Paul to say, “Necessity is laid up on me; yea, woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.” He who is called of God to preach, does not feel that it is submitted to his discretion to preach or do something else. He feels that he must preach—that is the business of his life—that other things must be kept in subordination to the work of the ministry.

It is proper to say too, that those called to the work of the ministry desire it, even tho’ they tremble in view of its responsibilities.—This, while it may seem paradoxical, involves no contradiction. “If any man *desire* the office of a Bishop, he desires a good work.”—The ministerial vocation is in some of its aspects inviting; in others it excites fear and trembling. Nothing is more generally discouraging than a consciousness of disqualification for so great a work; but if he who is called could believe himself qualified, there is nothing

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in which he would take so much interest and delight as in preaching the Gospel of Christ.

If it be asked, who is to decide as to a call to the ministry? I answer, those who are called, are the only judges of the exercises of their own minds and of the motives which prompt them to desire the ministerial work. Their hearts are invisible to the eyes of others. But in regard to ministerial qualifications others must judge. Aptness to teach is one of the preacher's requisites. Who can so appropriately judge of the existence of this requisite as those who are taught? The man himself must not decide. Will it be said that the decision of others may interfere with the call of God? I answer that a church in licensing one of its members to preach the Gospel—if the thing is done intelligently and properly—only recognizes in its action the fact that God has called that member to preach. The church, so far from interfering with the call of God, endorses and sanctions it. If it is said churches sometimes ere, I answer this is inseparable from human fallibility. Here we are obliged to leave the matter. A church is as apt to decide correctly as any other organization, and I think more so. At any rate, according to the New Testament, authority to preach the Gospel emanates under God from a Church of Christ. This is the plan established by the King in Zion, and it is the best plan.



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NUMBER 3: THE SACREDNESS OF YOUR CALLING

DEAR BRETHREN: You must never forget the *sacredness* of your calling. Yours is no ordinary vocation. It is doubly sacred. You, in common with all Christians, are called out from the world—called from darkness into light—from the bondage of sin into the liberty of the gospel—from the service of Satan to the service of God. This is a holy calling, for believers are called to be saints. Out of the saints, however, ministers are called. They are called from among their brethren. The ancient Israelites were called out from the nations of the earth to be the Lord's, and then the priests were called from their brethren "to minister in holy things." This fact will serve as an illustration of the position occupied by ministers of the gospel. I am justified, then, in saying that their vocation is emphatically a holy one. If the Israelites were a peculiar people, the priests were doubly peculiar. If Christians now are a peculiar people, it may be said, with strongest emphasis, that ministers are peculiar.

So sacred is the ministerial vocation that those who engage in it ought not to think, except with holy horror, of abandoning the work. They ought to prefer death to its relinquishment. To give it up and go to the profession of law or medicine is a transition equally abrupt and culpable. To engage in any business which will make preaching the gospel a secondary matter, must ever be regarded a criminal violation of ministerial vows. These statements need some qualification in a variety of cases. If ministers, because they are not supported, are obliged to engage in some secular

business to sustain themselves and families, and do so involuntarily and with deep regret, they are not to blame. It cannot be right for them to starve, or beggar their families. Paul's hands ministered to his necessities, and it is no disgrace to labor when occasion calls for it. Still the probability is that if ministers were more unreservedly devoted to their work they would be more liberally supported. I believe there is a disposition on the part of individuals and churches to help these preachers who are as earnest in their work as comparatively to forget their temporal interests. There are exceptions, I know. The spirit of covetousness has such possession of some individuals and churches, that nothing, so far as we can judge, can loose their purse strings. They can without emotion see ministers labor, toil, suffer, and die. The cause of God, if it prospers must prosper independently of such churches, and they are no doubt destined to speedy extinction.

No minister ought even partially to abandon his work except in case of necessity. By partial abandonment I mean preaching on the Lord's day, but making no preparation for the pulpit during the week; this failure to prepare resulting from engrossing secular engagements. If a preacher is placed under this dire necessity he must do the best he can—preach as well as he can—and God will no doubt bless his labors. There is a class of ministers, too numerous, I fear, who seem voluntarily to engage in secular pursuits. That is to say, there appears to be no necessity why they should do so. They can receive a competent support for their ministerial services, but they wish to become rich or, to say the least, independent, and they engage in secular pursuits. This is wrong. A competent support is all that a minister has a right to ask. If he feels as he ought, he will not wish to become rich by means of the Christian ministry. When God intends that poor men will become rich, I suppose he does not ordinarily call them to preach the gospel. Some one will ask what I have to say of those men who are known rather as teacher, farmers, traders, than as preachers. They have been ordained to the work of the ministry, but they seldom preach. They have no regular preaching engagements. Possibly they deliver a few sermons or lectures during a year, and they are

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as cold as icicles. Their hearts are not in the ministerial work. It may be their services as ministers are not in demand. Probably no church offers them a pastorate. What are they to do? It may be they ought to doubt whether God has called them to preach the gospel, and if upon due reflection they decide he has not, they ought to surrender to the churches to which they belong their authority to preach. What use is there in having preachers who do not preach? There are in all sections of the country some of these nominal preachers. They abound, I imagine, much more in the North than in the South, but their number ought to be diminished in the South.

This is rather a desultory letter. I began it and will close it by referring to the *sacredness* of the ministerial calling. Let every young preacher regard his work as holy. Let it not be contaminated with what may be termed the secularities of life. "No man," says Paul, "that goes to war entangles himself with the affairs of this life: that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." If this was true of the Roman soldier to whom the apostle specially referred, it ought surely to be true of the minister soldier of Jesus Christ.



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NUMBER 4: WORLDLY WEALTH AND THE CALL TO MINISTRY

DEAR BRETHREN: I have been requested to give my opinion as to the duty of those ministers who are in independent circumstances when they begin to preach, or who afterward derive property by inheritance. The question is whether it is incumbent on them to support themselves and families, and to expend all their worldly substance, if need be, in preaching the gospel? My views of this matter may be wrong; but such as they are, I now present them. It seems to me that among Christians one and the same law regulates pecuniary appropriations to the Lord's cause. That is to say, there is not one law prescribing what ministerial contributions will be, and another specifying what the contributions of lay members will be. All are required to give as the Lord prospers them—to give according to what they have and not according to what they have not. I do not see from the Scriptures that ministers are required to make greater pecuniary sacrifices than others. They are responsible to God for the use they make of their property, but not more responsible than all church members. They, with their fellow Christians, have been redeemed with the same blood, and the impulses of devout gratitude should prompt them to do what they can to promote the Savior's glory. Ministerial and Christian obligation is seen in all its strength and sacredness in the cross of Jesus.

The sentiment is entertained by some that if a preacher is able to live without compensation for his labors, he should receive no compensation. The sentiment is contrary to Scripture, to justice, to reason, to common sense. Who

hesitates to pay a farmer for his agricultural products because he can live if he is not paid? Who declines paying a mechanic for labor because he is rich? And so I might ask as to the lawyer, the doctor, the teacher, etc. With express reference to preachers the Bible says, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." It is not said the *poor* laborer or the *rich* laborer, but the *laborer* is worthy of his hire, evidently including all who labor in word and doctrine, without regard to their worldly circumstances. No minister, whatever is his condition in life, is under obligation to preach gratuitously for a church able to compensate him for his labors. I wish you, dear brethren, to pay special attention to what I now say. It is your business to preach, your duty to preach, your privilege to preach, and if you feel as you ought, you find your greatest comfort in preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. You must preach whether you are paid for your labor or not. If unpaid you will be under the painful necessity of preaching less than if adequately remunerated. Still you must preach—but if you preach without compensation, go among the poor and do your part in verification of the Savior's saying: "The poor have the gospel preached to them." You must not say, you dare not say, you will not preach unless you are paid. Should you do so, I do not know how you would refute the charge often brought against ministers—that they preach for money. You can, however, with manifest propriety refuse to preach to churches able but unwilling to minister to you in carnal things. You would do such churches an injury by bestowing on them gratuitous labor. You would foster a spirit of covetousness, and cause the gospel preached by you to be listened to with less interest. Men are so constituted that they appreciate that which costs them something. They undervalue that which costs them nothing. How is it possible for Pastors to train churches for Christian usefulness and efficiency if those churches are allowed, practically, to ignore one of the plainest dictates of common justice?

Of what I say in the present letter this is the sum: If you are independent or rich be sure to give to the Lord's cause according to your ability. Your obligations, however, in this regard are identical with those of your lay brethren.

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Sacrifices are required of them as well as of you. Again, if you have to preach for nothing, preach to the poor—preach to the impenitent—but do not accept the pastoral charge of churches that are able to pay you and will not. You would encourage them in disobedience to God. Beware of this.



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NUMBER 5: TAKE HEED TO YOURSELF

DEAR BRETHREN: Paul, in writing to a young minister, said, "Take heed to yourself." The admonition was important then; it is important now. Preachers must take heed to themselves so far as their *motives* in preaching are concerned. They must not preach to display themselves—their talents, their learning, their eloquence. This would be an entire perversion of the objects of the ministry. What rights have men, when they stand up in the name of the Lord, to make themselves prominent? Have they been called of God to do such a thing? Surely not. Their business is to seek the glory of God in the advancement of His cause—in the edification of saints and in the salvation of sinners. It is only when the divine glory is kept steadily and sacredly in view that ministerial duties can be acceptably performed. If any other object gains control of the heart it will contaminate every effort of the pulpit, Jesus, the great teacher and preacher, ever aimed at the glory of his Father. Apostles preached that God might be glorified, and no minister's heart should be animated with a different purpose. Yet as ministers are imperfect men—only partially sanctified—there is danger lest unworthy motives influence them.

I have thought that young preachers are often too much concerned as to what their congregations will think of them. They are perhaps too anxious to establish a reputation for talent and oratory. They wish to be said by their hearers that they are great men, preach great sermons, &c. They wish to learn incidentally, if not directly, what the people think of them, and every complimentary thing they hear is treasured

up as carefully as if it deserved to be remembered. Cowper showed his knowledge of human nature when he said:

O popular applause!

What heart of man is proof against your sweet seducing charms?"

Miserable man must that minister be who has his reward in human applause.

Poor reward indeed. The love of approbation has been wisely implanted in the heart—and its legitimate indulgence is well enough; that is to say, the approbation of the wise and good may be innocently desired—but the danger is in becoming solicitous about the praise of men. It has appeared to me that some ministers have too keen a relish for even indiscriminate commendations. The heart needs to be often inspected—its motives analyzed, and its impulses subjected to the most rigid scrutiny. See to it, young ministers, that you cherish no desire and tolerate the existence of no feeling incompatible with supreme solicitude for the glory of God. An anxious concern for divine glory will have a happy effect on your preparation for the pulpit and on the delivery of your sermons. I assume it as true beyond doubt that you consider it your sacred duty to prepare your sermons as well as possible. Do not dare to indulge the spirit of ease and sloth so ruinous to pulpit preparations. When you determine what subject to present for the consideration of your hearers, it is your business to inquire how that subject can be best presented. Let it be mentally arranged. If the rise of the pen will facilitate the mental arrangement—and with young ministers it certainly will—use the pen. Sketch your plan that the leading ideas you wish to present may be deeply impressed into your memory. Need I say that a holy zeal for the glory of God will have an important influence in determining the arrangement of your plan. It will prevent the introduction of any point on which you may display needless learning and exhibit even startling oratory—but with no rational expectation of glorifying God by benefiting the souls of the people. I know of no better way to exclude irrelevant, and I might say, injurious matter from a sermon than for the preacher's heart to be fully engrossed with a

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desire to glorify God and promote the interests of his cause. And then zeal for the divine glory must not only exert its influence on the composition of sermons but on their delivery. It will exert a wondrous influence. The same discourse—I mean the same as to arrangement—will not appear the same if delivered on one occasion with comparative indifference to the glory of God, and on another, with an ardent desire to magnify his name. Ministers are nothing without God—nothing in the study—nothing in the pulpit—nothing anywhere. They need to possess such spirituality of mind, such devotion of heart, as will keep them in constant communication with God, receiving from his fullness supplies of grace adequate to the demands of their vocation. Those who live, to use the expressive language of the beloved disciple, “dwell in God and God in them.” They are zealous for his glory, and to promote it is their great object when they prepare, and when they deliver their sermons. The only way to render this desire for the divine glory habitual is, to cultivate habitual communion with God. I conclude as I began, “Take heed to yourself,” young minister, and beware lest some improper motive stimulate you in your work.



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NUMBER 6: LOVE AND EVANGELIZE THE LOST

DEAR BRETHREN: In taking heed to yourselves you should see to it that you ardently love immortal souls, and earnestly desire their salvation. The example of Christ, as well as his teachings, ought to be powerfully influential on these two points. How he loved the souls of men! How he desired their salvation! Hence it is written, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." What more conclusive proof could he have given of his love for souls and of his desire for their salvation? He came into the world. Came whence? From heaven—giving up its glory—through rich becoming poor—and at last pouring forth his precious blood on Calvary.

Nothing brought him from above,
Nothing but redeeming love.

The depth of his love for souls can never be adequately comprehended by finite minds. It would require a full appreciation of the glory he had with the Father before the world was, as well as a thorough knowledge of the awful sorrows of the garden and the cross. His love for souls and his desire for their salvation made him willing to suffer and die. And the teachings of Christ in word accorded perfectly with the lesson taught by his example. Amid the ungodliness of the worldly generation in which he lived he said, "What does a man profit if he gains the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" His doctrine was that the soul is the infinitely noble part of

man, destined to survive the body's return to dust—destined to survive the world's destruction—the adjudications of the judgment—and then live in bliss or woe through endless ages. How vain appear all worldly interests as compared with those of the deathless soul! No man is fit for the work of ministry who does not ardently love the souls of men. I do not say that every man who loves souls ought to be a minister, but I do say that no man ought to be a minister who does not love souls.

The love to which I refer is inseparably conjoined with an earnest desire for the salvation of souls. The desire grows out of love. And here, I may say, that a minister can indulge no rational expectation of instrumentally saving souls unless he loves them. Why? Because if he does not love them he will not and cannot desire their salvation; and if he does not desire their salvation, he will not and cannot pray for it as he ought; and if he does not earnestly pray that the souls of his hearers may be saved, hope of their salvation, if indulged by him, is gratuitously indulged.

I think the annals of ministerial biography will show that those preachers most distinguished for the success of their labors have been those who, in the language of some one, have had "a passion for souls." God is accustomed to bless the earnest, faithful labors of his servants.

I have thought the pulpit of this generation deficient in love for souls and in desire for their salvation. There are very few ministers who, like Paul, warn their hearers night and day with tears. A minister weeping over his dying congregation and entreating sinners to be reconciled to God have ever been to me the most impressive object I have seen. I now think of men whose eyes once almost prodigal of tears, will never weep again. They had no literary titles—they were not scholars—they read few books except the Bible—yet they were eloquent men, because they were in earnest—and they were in earnest because they loved the souls of men. Their tears flowed fast, sometimes almost in streams from their eyes, while they dwelt on the Savior's love and urged sinners to accept the "great salvation." If I ever cease to reverence

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the names of those men, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.

There is a great deal of preaching now which indicates very little love for souls and very little desire for their salvation. The message of the Gospel is delivered, it may be, but who would infer from the manner of its delivery that its reception or rejection is a matter of eternal life or eternal death? How few preach as if they were about to step from the pulpit to the Supreme tribunal to give an account of their ministry! How few go from the pulpit to the closet, and falling on their knees, say with breaking hearts, "Who has believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" How few grieve over the inefficiency of their ministerial labors? How few, like the Apostle of the Gentiles, have great heaviness and continued sorrow in their hearts on account of the impenitent? Why is this? Because ministers now do not love immortal souls as they should do, and consequently do not adequately desire their salvation. If asked what is the remedy for this state of things, I answer, such piety, such spirituality of mind, as will keep the hearts of ministers in vital sympathy with the purposes of the Cross. Out of this sympathy will originate that love for souls and desire for their salvation, which will cause ministers to labor with the most anxious solicitude that in the conversion of the souls of their hearers Christ may "see of the travail of his souls and desire for their salvation," which will cause ministers to labor with the most anxious solicitude that in the conversion of the souls of their hearers Christ may "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." O, for a more earnest ministry! Of, for clearer conceptions of the value of souls!



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NUMBER 7: TAKE HEED TO WHAT YOU PREACH

HEAR BRETHERN: You should take heed not only to yourselves, but to what you preach. You are required to preach the Gospel. This Gospel is usually defined good news, glad tidings. The news refers specially to the way of salvation through Christ. The message of mercy to apostate man is through the blood of the Cross. It is because Jesus suffered, and rose from the dead, that repentance and remission of sins are to be preached among all nations. Preaching the Gospel is a phrase of very comprehensive import. Strange as it may appear to a superficial thinker the preaching of the Gospel really implies a presentation of the claims of the law. The system of faith which the Gospel reveals does not make void the law, but establishes it. Love is the fulfilling of the law, and the love which the law requires is not only required by the Gospel, but the requirement is enforced by much weightier considerations.

Salvation by grace through Jesus Christ clearly presupposes the following truths:

1. Man's obligation to obey the law of God.
2. His culpable failure to meet the obligation.
3. The justice of his condemnation by the law.
4. The impossibility of justification by works of law.

These truths may be considered the *substratum* of the Gospel. Please consider them. According to the first, man is under obligation to obey the law of God. This must be so, for otherwise he would be, in all respects, irresponsible to God. The Gospel could have no claims on him if the law had none. Ministers are required to preach the word—that is to preach in accordance with the word of God—and this they cannot do unless they exhibit with suitable frequency and prominence the doctrine of human accountability.

That man has culpably failed to meet his obligations to God is a second truth to which I have referred. This failure by no means implies that God demands too much of his creatures. His claims are infinitely just and reasonable. To disregard them is, therefore, inexcusable wickedness. The greater the equity of these claims the more intensely criminal is a violation of them. They have been violated by all men—not by a few tribes or nations merely, but by universal man. When God looked down from heaven to see if there were any that did do good, his worldwide observation, called forth the words, “*there is none that does good, no not one.*”

The third truth mentioned is that man’s condemnation by the law is just. This follows necessarily from the facts already stated. If man is under obligation to God, and if he has culpably violated this obligation, he must be justly condemned. The law must pronounce a righteous sentence against him. To deny the justice of man’s condemnation by the law would be a virtual denial of the justice of the law itself. If it be a just law it cannot pronounce an unjust sentence against a transgressor. Another fact sets this matter in a very clear light: Salvation is of grace. This cannot be unless man is justly condemned by the law. What grace could there be in deliverance from the curse of the law on the supposition that exposure to the curse is unjust? Could not deliverance be claimed as a matter of right?—as a matter of debt?—Admit, however, that man is justly condemned by the law, and grace at once shines forth in his deliverance from its curse. Being justly condemned he deserves not deliverance, and, therefore, when he obtains it grace reigns in its bestowal. And this anticipates what I purposed to say of the

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fourth truth announced—the impossibility of justification by works. Some may think I have dwelt too long on these points. If so, my apology is that the Gospel is never preached in its glory and fullness unless the law is preached in its holiness, its justice, and its spirituality. There is a spurious religion which ignores the sinner's guilt and condemnation—precludes the self-abasement which prompted the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner"—but true religion begins with penitential shame and self-loathing, nor dispenses with these emotions any where in the pilgrimage of life. He who is not conscious of the ravages of a disease in his own body will never feel that it is a matter of personal concern to avail himself of a remedy. He cannot possibly feel the need of a remedy. So the sinner must feel himself received and lost before he will ever give to Christ the reception which he deserves, and which the Gospel claims for him.

I would have young ministers, and old ministers too, to dwell on man's ruin by sin—his just condemnation, his utter hopelessness—with a view to aggrandize the grace that extricates him from such a condition and makes him an heir of glory.



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NUMBER 8: PRESENT THE GOSPEL IN ITS DOCTRINAL, EXPERIMENTAL, AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS

DEAR BRETHREN: You should take heed to yourselves that you present the gospel to your hearers in its doctrinal, experimental, and practical aspects. There are some who are styled doctrinal preachers. By this it is meant that they dwell chiefly, if not exclusively on the doctrines of the gospel. This is an imperfect mode of preaching. Far be it from me to depreciate a doctrinal exhibition of the great truths of the gospel. It is highly important and even indispensable. It lays the foundation of whatever is valuable in experience, or useful in practice. There are two fundamental gospel doctrines which involve all collateral and dependent doctrines. They are man's utter ruin by means of sin and the way of deliverance from this ruin through Jesus Christ. The first of these doctrines is unpalatable to impenitent sinners. They have no fondness for it. They reject it as a slanderous denial of what they claim for themselves. But what of this? Will ministers keep back a truth of infinite importance because their unregenerate hearers are not partial to it? By no means. The truth must be preached whether men "hear or forbear." They must be told that sin has proved their ruin and that they are guilty before God. The second doctrine—the way of salvation through Christ—must be exhibited. It must be shown how God can be just and the justifier of the believer in Jesus. This is the very essence of the gospel. The first of the doctrines, fully recognized as true, involves all that is meant by repentance—the second, heartily embraced, comprehends all

that is meant by faith. And here we see that a doctrinal presentation of these truths is philosophically and scripturally prior to an experimental knowledge of what repentance and faith signify. Experience results from a reception of the doctrinal teachings of the gospel. To illustrate: The resurrection of Christ is a doctrine—it is something taught. To know the power of his resurrection from death in trespasses and sins to newness of life. This is affected through Christ's atonement the crowning proof of the value of which is supplied by his resurrection from the dead. Again, the love of God to man is a glorious doctrine which when cordially received secures an experimental endorsement of the language. We love him because he first loved us.

Much has been said in modern times in depreciation of experience. Still it is true that no man can rationally decide that he is a Christian without an appeal to his experience. It is impossible to be a Christian without exercising repentance, faith, love, &c. These terms indicate emotions of the mind or rather the heart. How then is it possible for any one to know that he repents, believes, and loves without appealing to the state of the heart? It cannot be.

Young ministers must always remember that religion, though it has to do with the intellect, is not exclusively an intellectual operation. Through the intellect it reaches the heart. There its life and power are felt, so that he who believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself. There is not merely a theoretical admission of the truths of the gospel, but an experimental realization of their power.

In pursuance of the provisions of the new covenant God puts his laws in the mind and writes them on the heart. Paul said to the Corinthians that you are the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not on tables of stone, but on fleshy tables of the heart. The heart is preeminently concerned in matters of religion; and what the heart feels is comprehended in experimental godliness. Unless the heart is right, nothing else can be right.

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It may be said of experimental religion that it is the link which unites doctrinal and practical religion together. It is midway between the two. There is one passage of scripture which presents doctrine, experience, and practice in connection. It is this: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness." The phrase "bare our sins in his own body on the tree," teaches the doctrine of atonement—"being dead to sin" is the experimental results of the doctrine—while living to righteousness, or living righteously, is the practical end secured by the doctrine through the experience.

It must never be forgotten that the grace of God which brings salvation teaches us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Faith must be shown by the works it produces. The good tree must bear good fruit. Ministers must see to it that there is, among their hearers, no Antinomian disparagement of the practical part of the religion. The grace of God it is true, first reaches the heart, but through the heart it reaches the life and exerts its influence in every department of human action.



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NUMBER 9: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SCRIPTURE

DEAR BRETHREN: The Bible is the storehouse of Theology. It contains the revelation of God to man. It is unlike all other books. Read it as often as you may, you will find something new. Other books can soon be exhausted of their contents. Every idea they contain, expressed or implied, may be gleaned from their pages. Not so with the Bible. It is an inexhaustible mine, the richness of which can only be partially explored; but you must carry on your explorations as far as possible. Every minister is under the most sacred obligations to learn as much as he can about the Bible. He cannot know too much of the Book which is able to make wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Hence, as an acquaintance with the original Hebrew and Greek in which the Scriptures were written, is greatly promotive of knowledge of the inspired records, I advise every minister who can, to become a Hebrew and a Greek scholar. This advice I can hardly expect to be influential, except with young men. Those who have reached middle age are usually too much occupied with other matters to devote much time to the acquisition of languages. Nor are all young ministers able to become Hebrew and Greek scholars. The circumstances surrounding them render it impracticable. Their knowledge of language is confined to their mother tongue. Let them not be discouraged. The English Bible, though not perfect, is a good version. Many, many able ministers have read no other; they have preached the truth as they have learned it from this version, and God has crowned their labors with abundant success. And here I of

course call in question the soundness of the judgment which decides that a man must be a linguist before he is a preacher. Such a decision I do most heartily disapprove and condemn.

But it was my purpose when I commenced this letter, to urge on young preachers the necessity of such a familiar acquaintance with the Scriptures as will render the quotations they make, accurate. It is astonishing how few preachers, whether old or young, can quote from the Bible correctly. One of the chief excellences of a sermon consists in a suitable interspersion of Scripture in all its parts. If a proposition is to be established, to be effectually done, it must be proved by the Word of God. If a theme is to be illustrated, the Bible furnishes the most apt illustrations. If motives are needed to excite to action, the inspired volume supplies them in rich variety. How important, then, that ministers be acquainted, intimately with the Word of God. And how important that their sermons have direct reference to the Bible!—Some may inquire with amazement, if all sermons do not have this reference? I answer, no. Some sermons have very little to do with the Bible. They are Essays on virtue, morality, &c; such Essays as the philosophy of Socrates without the Bible, would enable one to deliver.

A sermon ought to be vital with Scriptural truth—the truth as it is in Jesus. And when an effort is made to express that truth in the language of the Bible, it should be a successful effort. The effect of a failure to quote correctly may be very injurious. The minister who wished to prove the doctrine of justification by faith, had a very important object in view, and might have established his position if he had quoted accurately Rom 5:1. But did he establish it when he quoted thus? “Therefore being justified, we have peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ.” This language does not prove the instrumentality of faith in justification, but that we have peace with God by faith. A different point is established. “Therefore being justified by faith,” &c. makes the matter plain. It will be asked, how could such a blunder as the foregoing be made? I answer; a want of familiarity with the Scriptures has led to many blunders just as egregious. I

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mean to say, that inaccurate quotations are often made, not because ministers are embarrassed, and forget what they aim to say, but because they are not intimately acquainted with the language of the Bible. Why are they not more familiar with the contents of the inspired pages? Because they do not study them sufficiently—They do not, like David, meditate on the law of the Lord day and night. There is not a want of memory, but a failure to exercise memory. It would be well for ministers, before they preach, to make a special effort to familiarize themselves with those portions of the Word of God of which they wish to avail themselves in their sermons. This would involve a profitable exercise of the faculty of memory. Any man who will try, can acquire the habit of quoting Scripture correctly. Let no one dispute the truth of this statement till he makes an earnest effort to do what is here recommended. How differently would many sermons appear if they abounded in accurate quotations of the Word of the Lord! How much, too, would congregations learn, in this way, of the holy Scriptures! I urge young ministers to acquaint themselves as thoroughly as possible with the Bible, and to see to it that their quotations from it are distinguished for perfect accuracy.



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NUMBER 10: DIGNITY OF DEPORTMENT

DEAR BRETHREN: *Propriety of deportment* is a subject which imperatively claims your attention. Whatever talents you possess, whatever may be the extent of your learning, whatever eloquence you may display in the pulpit, all will be “as sounding brass or a tinkling symbol,” unless you conduct yourselves properly in your intercourse with society. You are ambassadors from the Court of Heaven, sent to entreat men to be reconciled to God. Your position is one of the highest dignity and requires of you a dignified deportment. There is much meaning in these words of the Apostle Paul: “That the ministry be not blamed.” I do not say it is possible for the ministry to escape censure altogether, but I do say that, if censured, the censure should be undeserved. If undeserved and gratuitous, it will, in the end, prove advantageous to the ministry. Bad as human nature is, there is something in it which condemns injustice and takes the side of the injured. Hence a reaction in favor of the persecuted is almost as inevitable as destiny. This, however, by the way.

The influence of many a good sermon has been comparatively destroyed by improprieties in ministerial deportment. Of more than one preacher of distinction has it been said, “When in the pulpit he ought never to come out of it, and when out of it he ought never to go into it.” Do you ask what has ever called forth so singular a remark? The answer is this: Some ministers preach so well that they ought to do nothing but preach—they should be kept exclusively in pulpit communication with the people; for in social

intercourse they lower the standard of ministerial dignity from its proper height, and create a prejudice against the religion they so eloquently recommend and so imperfectly exemplify.

Not long since I heard it said of a young preacher: "He has lost all his influence with the young people at -----, in consequence of his levity." This is distressing. It must be remembered that all people know or think they know how a minister ought to behave himself. I think the general, if not the universal impression is, that lightness and frivolity are entirely out of place in the heralds of salvation. The most light-minded among the impenitent feel that their domain is encroached upon when ministers of the gospel indulge in levity. They consider that the sacredness of the ministerial calling should be inseparable from seriousness and gravity.

It will not do for young preachers to say that they engage in light and trifling conversation that they may gain access to, and influence over, those with whom they mingle in social intercourse. This is not the way to secure influence, especially religious influence. Dignity of deportment is indispensable to its attainment.

I am not to be understood as saying a word against Christian cheerfulness. Far from it. I deem it a religious duty for Christians to be cheerful, and happy. They are the only people in the world who have the legitimate right to be happy and cheerful. Ministers possess this right as well as their fellow Christians. They are at peace with God. Looking up to heaven they recognize the smiling of a Father's face. Contemplating the sunshine and storm, the prosperous and the adverse scenes through which they will probably pass during their earthly pilgrimage, they can say, "Come what may! All things work together for good to those who love God." Looking forward to the dying hour they see the end of all their toils and trials, while Jesus, as when the first martyr was murdered, is waiting to initiate them into all the felicities of heavenly glory. Ministers with these prospects before them must be cheerful. How can it be otherwise? But cheerfulness is not levity. Religious joy is the poles apart from thoughtless frivolity.

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While some young preachers are full of levity, others are of so gloomy a temperament as to be almost morose. Their presence operates as a chill. It freezes all the genial sensibilities of the soul. Their approach is dreaded as a calamity. Such ministers are constantly putting into operation trains of repellant influences to drive people, and particularly young people and children, away from them. Their melancholy and apparent sourness greatly impair their influence and interfere with their usefulness. There surely is a golden mean between levity and melancholy. That mean is dignified and serious cheerfulness. Let such cheerfulness be illustrated in ministers of the gospel, and they are supplied with a key of entrance into many hearts that would be barred against the approach of the light-minded and the morose. When my young brethren have been engaged in the ministerial work for more than a quarter of a century, as I have been, they will attach more importance to propriety of deportment than they now do.



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NUMBER 11: TRIFLING WORDS

DEAR BRETHREN: Since writing my last number, I have clipped the following from a paper, and here insert for your solemn consideration:

A TRIFLING PREACHER—A clergyman once preached a very awakening sermon. A young man in the congregation was much impressed, and finding that the clergyman was to walk some distance home, joined him, in the hope of having some conversation as to how to be saved.

The clergyman was walking with several others, and instead of the conversation turning on religious matters, it was light, and even indecorous. Some years afterwards, the clergyman was called to see a dying man at an inn. As he entered the room the dying man started.

“Sir,” said he, “I have heard you preach.”

“Thank God for that!” said the clergyman.

“But, sir,” continued the man. “I have heard you talk, and your talking has ruined my soul. Yes, sir, do you remember the day I heard you preach? That sermon brought conviction to my heart. But I sought a conversation with you, and I walked home with you, hoping to hear something about my soul’s peace; but you trifled—*trifled*—TRIFLED! Yes, you did; and I went home, believing that you knew all the solemn things you said in the morning were lies. For years I was an infidel; but now—now I am dying—I am one no longer. But I

am not saved! I will meet and accuse you before the bar of God!" And so the man died.

The ministry of reconciliation was established with reference to the salvation of men. When sinners are saved by the preaching of the word we instinctively feel that a legitimate result follows the proclamation of the gospel. But when ministers, who are required so to conduct themselves as "to save those who hear them," are accessory to the damnation of any of their hearers, the thought fills us with horror. When the "clergyman" referred to in the preceding narrative, stands before the judgment seat, what will be his feelings if the "young man" charges him with the ruin of his soul? Alas, the Day of Judgment will be a solemn day to ministers as well as to others.

It is painfully true that the good impressions made by the exhibition of divine truth from the pulpit are sometimes impaired, and even effaced by the frivolous conversation of those who have preached. Do you ask how this can be? It is easy of explanation. When ministers preach they dwell on infinitely important topics. They refer to the momentous interests of eternity—the transcendent value of the soul—the rapid flight of time—the certainty of death—the impartial adjudications of the judgment—the rapturous bliss of heaven—the appalling torments of hell—and they urge their impenitent hearers "to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call on him while he is near." They admonish, they invite, they expostulate, and they say the matters of which they speak are of infinite moment. And this is true. Suppose sinners in their congregations are so impressed that they are almost ready to adopt the language of the prodigal in the parable. "I will arise and go to my father." When the sanctuary services are over, imagine those sinners to be thrown into the company of the ministers to whom they have listened, expecting to hear from them such remarks as will deepen the impressions of the pulpit, and suppose, instead of this, those ministers are undignified in their deportment, and take the lead in trifling conversation;—who does not know that Satan will avail himself of the circumstance? Will he not suggest to those serious sinners that after all said in

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the pulpit, religion is not very important, and will he not make the ministerial levity the means of giving weight and emphasis to the suggestion?

This is surely credible: for Jesus says, "When any one hears the word and understands it not, then comes Satan and takes away that which was sown in the heart, so that it brings forth no fruit." If Satan is thus busy when the word is not understood, he is equally busy in dissipating serious impressions. The same malevolence will prompt him to employ his agency in the one case as well as in the other. The enemy of souls is never asleep, but is constantly exemplifying the most mischievous industry. Alas, that ministers inadvertently render Satan assistance in the work of ruining souls!

My brethren, let not the good effects of your sermons be spoiled by any thing in your social intercourse inconsistent with the dignity of the ministerial profession. Be on your guard in the presence of sinners whether they are serious or thoughtless. They observe you; they listen to what you say. They wish to know whether you are the same men in the pulpit and out of it. They are tolerably good judges of the course of conduct becoming a minister of the gospel. They could, if they would, tell you what subjects a preacher might with propriety converse about on week days that ought not to be named on the Lord's day.

Dear brethren, think of the day when you must give account to God. Amid the transactions of that day, you will feel a solemn and holy delight in remembering that your talents were consecrated to the accomplishment of the great objects of the gospel, and you perhaps will not feel less pleasure in remembering that your social influence was exerted in favor of truth and righteousness. It will electrify your souls with joy to meet at the judgment those who have been saved by your ministry. They will be your crown of rejoicing. But O, if on that great day of the Lord you see that your talents were sometimes desecrated, your influence injuriously exerted and should you meet trembling sinners who will charge you with their damnation, I pretend not to be able to describe your

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feelings. Why should I make the attempt? Language was invented for no such purpose.

Well did Paul, in referring to the responsibilities of ministers, say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" And well may this be the stereotyped question of ministers of all generations.



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NUMBER 12: OF PREACHERS AND SCHOLARS

DEAR BRETHREN: I would be pleased to see you thorough scholars—men of learning—but I am far more anxious for you to be good preachers. You are not to understand me as intimating that profound learning is incompatible with good preaching. There is no necessary incompatibility. Still it is notoriously true that great scholars are sometimes very poor preachers, and very good preachers are often indifferent scholars. Some would account for this fact in one way, and some in another. Perhaps the general explanation would be that the spirit of earnest devotion, glowing in the hearts of good, though unlearned preachers, more than compensates for the want of scholarship. I question whether this explanation is entirely adequate. A good elocution should probably be taken into consideration. Some learned men have nothing attractive or persuasive in their manner of speaking. They are dry, dull, and almost sure to emphasize the wrong words. There is good sense in what they say, if any one will take time to consider it, but the misfortune is their inanimate delivery fails to excite attention, and truths, weighty and powerful in themselves, fall without effect on listless auditors. I do not know exactly where among ministerial qualifications, to place effective elocution, but I am certain it ought not to have an obscure place. Moderate education, with an impressive elocution, is more to be desired than thorough scholarship with a repulsive elocution. Next to a proper state of heart, involving, of course, zeal for the glory of God and love for the souls of men, I know of nothing more important to young preachers

than to be placed, for a time, under the instruction of a good elocutionist. Not one in twenty of them (and the same may be said of old preachers) can read a chapter in the Bible as it ought to be read, nor in giving out a hymn place the emphasis on the words requiring it. I will be allowed to write plainly to my young brethren in view of the fact that I deplore and will deplore through life, my defective elocution. Were I young again, my vocal organs not having assumed their present rigid inflexibility, I would travel a thousand miles to take lessons of a good teacher of elocution. I hope the day will come when there will be an elocutionist in every college in our country. These thoughts, or some of them at least, have been suggested by the following remarks copied from a late editorial in the *New York Chronicle*.

In one of the old Greek fables we find the story of a wrestler who was invincible only so long as he touched the earth, but whose strength vanished the moment he was lifted above it. The preacher is a moral Antaeus wrestling with the Hercules of sin. He is strong only in contact. Isolate him, lift him from the great world of humanity, and he is weak. It is only when a minister of Christ is within the electric circuit of human sympathy, when he can feel the palpable induction of a common heart beat, that his soul becomes magnetic—that he rises to the full dignity and amplitude of moral power.

In a country like ours, where perhaps, more than any other, the public mind is swayed by popular addresses, it appears to us peculiarly desirable that the first and foremost aim of our Theological Seminaries should be, not so much to make scholars and learned men, as to train efficient, practical preachers. Every other consideration should be made subservient to this. A man may be a Grotius in learning, and a Calvin in theology, but if he have not the superadded attainment of a persuasive and agreeable manner in the pulpit—if he cannot tell what he knows, and tell it so impressively as to arrest the careless ear and touch the careless heart, he will be a Samson shorn of his strength. We have all known preachers who could read Hebrew and Greek with ease, who were learned and pious, and whose discourses delivered by other men of not a tithe of their real ability, but

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who possessed the one gift of a persuasive oratory, would have attracted crowds of eager listeners, but who were themselves such prozers in the pulpit, and who marred the symmetry and obscured the light of truth with so unimpressive a delivery, that they had but few hearers, and put those few to sleep. The most brilliant lamp is feebler than a wax taper, if its glass chimney is begrimed with soot and smoke. So with the minister of Christ. His mind may be a lamp of truth. But if his style is not clear and transparent, if the rays of thought are broken and dispersed by a manner awkward and opaque, his intellect will shine only with a dim and clouded radiance; he will find himself eclipsed by a hundred inferior minds and "lesser lights."

It is true that education cannot supply the place of original gifts, but it may do much to correct faults when they exist, and to secure ease and impressiveness of style in the conduct of public services. The number is rapidly increasing, of those who desire to see good taste as well as learning and piety in the pulpit, and it is far wiser to meet and suitably direct this growing preference than to despise or quarrel with it. The theological seminary that, without neglecting sound evangelical learning, is foremost in its recognition will receive from our churches, as it will deserve to secure their largest patronage and support. How these desirable ends are to be attained can be best determined by those whose large experience in ministerial training has enabled them to consider wisely and well, not only see the practical difficulties which must be encountered, but also the various avenues of hopefulness and promise, in which success, if reached at all, must finally be sought.

Young men in Theological Seminaries naturally inherit the spirit of their professors. If those whom they most admire are themselves model preachers, and habitually place the career of the successful minister above that of the profound scholar or the theologian, they will excite in the minds of their students a desire to make everything subservient to this one all absorbing aim. Moreover, it is our firm conviction that students for the university should be encouraged to preach frequently. There is nothing so calculated to keep the heart

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warm in the work as actual labor. The Sunday School, the Prayer Meeting, Bible and Tract distribution, Colportage during vacation, and the various avenues for usefulness which stand open to the really earnest Christian, will furnish life lessons which will be of incalculable benefit to the student of the university in his future work.

These are matters worthy of consideration.



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NUMBER 13: THE PREPARATIONS OF SERMONS

DEAR BRETHREN: You must ever consider it a sacred duty to bestow diligent care on the preparation of your sermons. You are not at liberty to go into the pulpit without having something to say to the people. The days of inspiration are past. I am aware the fact is sometimes referred to that the Savior commanded the Apostles not to think beforehand what they should say when brought before kings and governors. It may be safely assumed that this language is inapplicable to ministers of the gospel now. You will probably ask what I mean by preparation for the pulpit. I mean that you must understand the subjects you intend to discuss and that the method of discussion must be distinctly arranged in your own minds. If this is not the case, though you may say a great many good things, you will say them in a disjointed miscellaneous manner, and will not in fact deliver *sermons*. What you say will not be suggested by your texts. Nothing deserves to be called a sermon which does not grow out of the text. One of the chief excellences of sermonizing consists in an exhibition of the natural connections between the subject and the discourse founded thereon. If such a connection is not shown, why have a subject at all? The reproof once administered by an old minister to a young one was very severe: He said, "If your text had had the smallpox the sermon would not have taken the infection." This was a strong method of saying that the text and the sermon had no connection with each other. Who has not heard discourses of this kind? And they may be

considered very good by the unthinking, but they can never satisfy intelligent hearers.

Andrew Fuller, when he had selected a text, was accustomed to ask, "What? Why? What then?" His first inquiry was, what is the doctrine of the text, or what does it teach? Secondly, what considerations show this to be its import? Thirdly, what follows, or what concern have my hearers in these things? This plan of preparing for the pulpit is very suggestive. There is a vast amount of common sense in it. I do not say, however, that it can be properly adopted in every instance. Sometimes the "why" may be omitted as it will be virtually obvious to the hearer once the text is exhibited, the preacher may at once make his transition to the "what then."

It is far too common for young ministers to make points in their discourses unauthorized by their texts. Allow me to illustrate: A young man once preached from this text: "God commands all men everywhere to repent." The first point made was, there is a God, and he adduced very conclusive proofs of the divine existence. This division was gratuitous and unjustifiable. Paul did not employ the language of the text to prove the existence of God. He assumes that there is a God and says this God commands all men everywhere to repent. The young man might have made a subject-sermon deducing from the words a theme like this, "Repentance, a universal duty," and by adding a second division, such as this, "God requires the performance of this duty," he might have made a text-sermon. But no good sermonizer would ever select such a text to prove that there is a God.

Having given an example of objectionable sermonizing from a young minister, I now present one from an old herald of the cross, among the best preachers I ever heard. It was said, "Homer sometimes nods." The sermon had this text as its basis; "If any man serve me him will my Father honor." The divisions were the four following: 1) Jesus Christ has a rightful claim to the services of men, 2) the services he requires, 3) men are so depraved that without a divine influence they never will serve Christ, and 4) the honor the Father confers on those who serve his Son.

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Now I submit to all the preachers in Christendom that the text does not justify the third division. There is not the shadow of authority for it. Still the proposition it contains is an unquestionable truth—a truth so important and fundamental that without its recognition there cannot be an adequate understanding of the gospel. But it is not a truth taught in that text. Young ministers, in forming their habits of sermonizing, must be careful not to deduce from a text that which does not belong to it. This is more important than many suppose.



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NUMBER 14: TEXT OR SUBJECT SERMONS

DEAR BRETHREN: I believe I have referred incidentally to subject-sermons and text-sermons. In a subject-sermon a proposition, or a theme is announced. If a proposition, all arguments employed are designed to establish it; if a theme, whatever considerations are presented are intended to illustrate it. Every thing is brought to bear on one point, for more points than one are inconsistent with the nature of a subject-sermon.

On the other hand a text-sermon admits more points than one. There may be two or three—may be half a dozen—though it is rarely the case that so many as six can be judiciously presented. In most instances two or three are sufficient. Many texts naturally divide themselves into two parts. For example, the following: “Be you faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.” Here we have, first, a command, and, secondly, a promise, claiming consideration. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.” In this passage the two prominent ideas to be presented are faith in Christ, and salvation resulting from faith. It might be better, however, in preaching from this latter text to include the question, “What must I do to be saved?” Then there would be a question, a command, and a promise. This three-fold division exhausts the matter of the subject.

It should be remembered that the same passage often furnishes an appropriate basis for either a text-sermon or a subject-sermon. Suppose, for example, you wish to preach on

the sacrifice of Christ, you may dwell exclusively on its value, adducing various arguments in proof of its worth, and thus you will make a subject-sermon; for whatever you say will be conducive to the accomplishment of the one object before you. The attention of your hearers will be concentrated throughout the discourse on the value of sacrifice. You may, however, make a text-sermon by dwelling on the necessity, the value, and the results of the sacrifice. So you may preach on the nature, the necessity, and the evidences of regeneration, and include if you please, the agency and the means by which the change is effected. This would be most certainly a text-sermon, but you may confine your remarks to any one of the points named, and make a subject-sermon. Indeed, instead of dwelling on the *evidences* of regeneration you may take this text: "Every one that loves is born of God," and expatiate on *love* as emphatically *the evidence* of being born of God.

If you ask to which of these classes of sermons that preference should be given, I do not know that I am able to say. I think neither mode of sermonizing should be adopted to the exclusion of the other. Both may be advantageously practiced. Two facts should be taken into account. It is easier for most preachers to construct text-sermons, and subject sermons demand closer thought, for they require greater concentration of mind. Judging from published and unpublished sermons, I think the textual method of preaching may be regarded the method. Whether this is the case because less thought is required it may not be proper for me to express an opinion. My former friend, now asleep in Jesus, Dr. Jonathan Going, once said in my presence. "Every man is by nature as lazy as he can be." This is too true. I have this to say for the consideration of my young brethren in the ministry, and I hope they will remember it: So far as sermonizing may be regarded as a means of *mental discipline*, subject-sermons are far more valuable than those which are textual. They cannot be made without thought, close, intense thought. They necessarily involve unity of aim, to secure which there must be concentration of mind. The construction of subject-sermons is promotive of this

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concentration. There is compactness of thought; for all the trains of thoughts originated lead to one central point.

The minister who does not, with suitable frequency, make subject-sermons does his own intellectual powers great injury. He fails to employ one important means for their invigoration. I know it will be said it is difficult to keep the mind fixed on one topic. This is true. It cannot be done at first without effort, strenuous effort, but resolute perseverance will overcome the difficulty. He who has the power of fixing his mind on a subject and keeping it there, banishing all irrelevant considerations, is no ordinary man.



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NUMBER 15: THE MINISTER'S THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY

DEAR BRETHREN: I deviate from the course I had mentally marked out, that I may in compliance with the request of several valued friends, give a list of Theological Works suitable for a young minister's library. I must be permitted to say in the outset that there is but one Book to which no objections can be made. That Book you will say, is the Bible. Most certainly. It is the Book of books. Unlike human productions it has, as John Locke expressed it, "God for its author, salvation for its end, and Truth without mixture of error, for its matter." Wherever it goes it carries the credentials of its superhuman origin, claiming a reverential reception of its teachings and a cordial compliance with its commands. This precious volume is the source of theological knowledge and happy is he whose soul is imbued with its spirit.

There is danger lest other books partially divert the attention of the young minister from the inspired volume. This must be guarded against by a constant remembrance of the fact that other books must be read with a view of the better understanding of the Bible. It would be a poor compliment to those whose lives have been devoted to the production of Theological works to say they have written nothing promotive of the elucidation of scriptural truth. It is not so. There are many books of which the young preacher may advantageously avail himself.

As to Commentaries they are numerous already and rapidly becoming more numerous. They all contain many good

things, while none of them are worthy of unreserved commendation. Gill's is valuable on account of the vast amount of information it contains. Perhaps no man of his day explored more thoroughly the realms of Rabbinical learning. His religious views were deeply tinged with what may be called *hyper-Calvinism* and are, as I think, quite objectionable. He was too much of a *spiritualizer*. He would find every thing connected with man's fall and recovery in the parable of the good Samaritan.

Henry, Scott, Benson, Clarke, Burkitt, &c, all have their excellences and imperfections as Commentators. The Comprehensive Commentary is, perhaps, the best work on the whole Bible. It purports to be an eclectic Commentary, containing the best things in all the Commentaries extant, at the time of its publication. Still, it is not perfect. On the New Testament Olshausen is valuable, and so are the "Notes" of Barnes, and also those of Sherwood. Olshausen though a professed scholar and critic, must be read with great care. He is heretical on some points. Barnes is a vivacious writer. His "Notes" are excellent in the manners and customs of ancient nations. When he touches baptism and some other matters he is unfair and fallacious. Sherwood is generally good in exposition, but does not possess Barnes' vivacity. In this connection I must say that Hackett's "Scripture Illustrations" are admirable. Doddridge's "Family Expositor" is worthy of a place in any library. Macknight and the Epistles cannot well be dispensed with, though on some points he is very heretical. Geo. Campbell's "Gospels" and "Notes" deserve careful study, and his "Preliminary Dissertations" are replete with valuable criticisms.

I would put into a ministerial library, The works of Andrew Fuller, Robert Hall's works (protesting earnestly against his view of Communion) Edward's works, Dagg's Dick's and Dwight's Theology, Chalmer's works, Jay's do., Payson's do., Leland on the necessity and Advantages of Revelation, McCosh on the Divine Government, Buchanan on Modern Atheism, Crawford's Christian Paradoxes, &c.

On Atonement such works as Magee Syminton, and Jenkyn may be profitably studied. Barnes has recently published a

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volume on this subject, but I think it falls below the expectations of his most partial friends. The grandest view of atonement I have seen is Jenkyn. Many of his conceptions are magnificent.

Of Sermons the most valuable I know of, in addition to those contained in the works already referred to, are Griffin's, Davies', J.A. & J.W. Alexander's, Melville's, R. Fuller's, Wayland's, Mellvaine's, Brantly's, Bradley's &c.

There is no Church History which is what it ought to be. Neander, Mosheim, Giesler, Schaff, Kurtz, Robinson, Orchard, &c., all have something to recommend in them, and something to detract from their value. Neander for example is too voluminous, and Orchard is too concise. I am expecting from J. Newton Brown of Philadelphia, a Church History which I hope will come nearer perfection than any now extant.

Of works on baptism, there is scarcely an end. The most valuable on the Baptist side of the question are Robinson, Carson, R. Fuller, Mell, Ripley, Judd, and, for meaning of *baptizo*, among the Greeks, Conant's Appendix to his Revision of Matthew above any work extant.

On the Pedobaptist side of the question, and which Baptists may use to advantage, Wall's History of Infant Baptism, Stuart on the Mode of Baptism, Beecher on his Purification Theory, Hibbard on Christian Baptism, &c.

Wall's History is indispensable to a thorough knowledge of the baptismal controversy. He concedes much on infant baptism, and very nearly surrenders the mode of baptism. Stuart is obliged to admit the meaning of *baptizo* to be immersed, and then tries unfairly to escape the conclusion inevitably resulting. Beecher concedes that *baptizo* in Classic Greek means immerse, but insists that in the New Testament it is used as a generic, not a specific term. Hibbard displays a candor and magnanimity truly refreshing in a Methodist author.

Of Miscellaneous books valuable to a young minister, I can mention only a few: Good's Book of Nature is full of

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interesting matter. "The attraction of the Cross," by Spring is a capital work, and his "Bible not of Man" is the best popular presentation I have seen of the "Internal Evidences of the truth of the Bible." His "Glory of Christ" and his "First Things" are good as well as his "Obligations of the world to the Bible." "The Powers of the Pulpit" &c. Wm. R. Williams' "Lectures on the Lord's Prayer," his "Christian Progress" and his "Miscellanies" are full of valuable thoughts, expressed too frequently, however, in an artificial style. Wayland's "Principles and Practices of the Baptists" is full of the "seeds of things." Dagg's "Moral Science" is a lucid volume and deserves to be studied. "Pilgrim's Progress," "Baxter's Saint's Rest," "Pike's Guide for Young Disciples," "Law's Call to a Holy Life." Mallery's "Soul Prosperity." Tyng's "Christian Titles" &c, are happily adapted to excite and maintain a devotional spirit.

I commend among biographies, "Memoir of Samuel Pearce," *Life of Dr. Cone*, *Life of Payson*, *Life of Judson*, *Lives of the three Mrs. Judsons*, *Life of Harlan Page*, &c.

But enough unless I had more time to write. My young brethren will please think of me as writing this letter at 9 o'clock Saturday night, worn down with the toils of the week and needing rest. I find that I have failed to mention many books I intended to name, such as Hackett *On Acts*, Ripley's *Sacred Rhetoric*, Porter's *Homiletica*, Howell's *Way of Salvation*, and *Evils of Infant Baptism*, *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Dovling's *History of Romanism*, Jeter and Williams *On Campbellism*, *Great Iron Wheel*, *Theodosia*, *Intdel's Daughter*, Grace Truman, *Mary Bunyan*, Ford's *History of Baptists*, Wayland and Fuller *On Slavery* &c &c.

Having made my letter long and unsatisfactory to myself, I lay down my pen.

EXTEMPORANEOUS PREACHING



BY

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The ministers of Christ are entrusted with the most important message ever committed to mortal man. It is a message from the God of heaven to the apostate sons of men—a message full of mercy, and containing a statement of the terms of salvation. On a reception of this message depends the best interest of the immortal soul; on its rejection is suspended the damnation of the finally impenitent. There is but one plan of salvation. Those who acquiesce in it are saved, and those who withhold their acquiescence are lost. The herald of the cross may well rejoice and tremble at the thought that the truths they proclaim will, if believed, prove instrumental in the salvation of those that hear; and, if rejected, aggravate the condemnation of the disobedient.

The *matter* of preaching is of superlative importance—it is the gospel—Christ crucified, that wisdom and the power of God—but it does not follow, on this account, that the *manner* of preaching is to be disregarded. While it is indispensable that a minister of God should know *what* to preach, it is highly necessary that he should adopt the best method of communicating the “glad tidings.” If reading sermons is the most effective way of declaring the counsel of God, then let sermons, by all means, be read. But if extemporaneous discourses are most profitable, this mode of preaching is not only preferable, but obligatory. This will not be disputed, for it will be admitted by all, that it is the duty of preachers to do as much good as possible.

The writer of this article is decidedly in favor of extemporaneous preaching. He believes that the custom of

reading sermons—generally prevalent in the North and partially so in the South—has greatly diminished the power and efficiency of the pulpit. From this opinion many good brethren will, no doubt, dissent. This, however, will give no offense. Liberty of thought and liberty of speech are privileges guaranteed to all who tread American soil.

In expressing our views of extemporaneous preaching, we will avail ourselves of "Hints of Extemporaneous Preaching, by Henry War, Jr., D. D., Professor of Pulpit Eloquence in Harvard University." These "Hints" were published some years ago in a small volume, and have recently been very judiciously appended by Prof. Ripley to his valuable work on "Sacred Rhetoric."

Dr. Ware in his "Preface" well observes: "There is at least one consequence likely to result from the study of this art, and the attempt to practice it, which would alone be sufficient reason for urging it earnestly. I mean, its probable effect in breaking up the constrained, formal, scholastic mode of address, which follows the student from his college duties, and keeps him from immediate contact with the hearts of his fellow man. This would be affected by his learning to speak from his feelings, rather than from the critical rules of a book. His address would be more natural, and consequently better adapted to effective preaching."

We hesitate not to say that it is the duty of every minister of the gospel, to study the art of extemporaneous preaching, and never resort to his manuscript unless he finds it indispensable. This would not often be the case. We are fully persuaded that ninety-nine out of every hundred ministers, may, by suitable effort, acquire the habit of preaching extemporaneously. They may express themselves as fluently as in the colloquial intercourse of the social circle. Why not? When sufficient practice (and there is no substitute for practice,) relieves them of pulpit embarrassment, it can be done. Indeed the excitement of the pulpit often secures greater fluency than is exemplified in social converse. Who has not seen ministers comparatively dull in conversation, really animated and eloquent in the delivery of their

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sermons? The reason is the enlistment of the feelings has a natural tendency to quicken the power of speech.

That the advantages of extemporaneous preaching "are real and substantial," says Dr. Ware, "may be safely inferred from the habit of public orators in other professions, and from the effects which they are known to produce. There is more natural warmth in the declamation, more earnestness in the address, greater animation in the manner, more of the lighting up of the soul in the countenance and whole mien, more freedom and meaning in the gesture; the eye speaks, and the fingers speak, and when the orator is so excited as to forget everything but the matter on which his mind and feelings are acting, the whole body is affected, and helps to propagate his emotions to the hearer. Amidst all the exaggerated coloring of Patrick Henry's biographer, there is doubtless enough that is true, to prove a power in the spontaneous energy of an excited speaker, superior in its effect to anything that can be produced by writing. Something of the same sort has been witnessed by every one who is in the habit of attending in the courts of justice, or the chambers of legislation. And this, not only in the instances of the most highly eloquent, but inferior men are found thus to excite attention and produce effects which they never could have done by their pens. In deliberative assemblies, in Senates and Parliaments, the larger portion of the speaking is necessarily unpremeditated; perhaps the most eloquent is always so, for it is elicited by the growing heat of debate; it is the spontaneous combustion of the mind in the conflict of opinion. Chatham's speeches were not written, nor those of Fox, nor that of Ames on the British treaty. They were, so far as regards their language and ornaments, the effusions of the moment, and derived from their freshness a power, which no study could impart. Among the orations of Cicero, which are said to have made the greatest impression, and to have best accomplished the orator's design, are those delivered on unexpected emergencies, which preclude the possibility of previous preparation. Such were his first invective against Cataline and the speech which stilled the disturbances at the theater."

Reading is seldom tolerated except in the pulpit. A lawyer who would read his speech to a jury might calculate certainly on producing one effect—the excitement of the risible faculties of every jury-man and every bystander. This would be the case on ordinary occasions. If, however, an advocate in pleading for the life of his client, were to read a speech, it would excite disgust, because it would indicate an absence of the interest and feeling appropriate to the occasion. The impression made on every one would be—the advocate cares not for the life of his client—if he did he would not confine himself to his manuscript. And is not reading a sermon to impenitent sinners more out of place than reading a speech to a jury on whom rests the responsibility of deciding whether a fellow-creature will live or die? The impenitent are on their way to hell—the wrath of God abides on them—deliverance from this wrath will soon be a terrible impossibility—their immortal souls are in danger of eternal damnation—the probabilities of their salvation are daily becoming less—and will a minister stand, like a statue, and *read* a discourse to them? Could he do it if he felt an adequate anxiety for the salvation of his hearers? We think he could not. The feelings of his heart would so agitate his body as to destroy effectually its resemblance to a statue, and his gushing tears would render his manuscript useless on account of its illegibility. O that manuscripts were, in this way, more frequently rendered valueless! The Lord hastens the day!

The most eloquent and effective speeches ever made in the British Parliament or the American Congress were extemporaneous. They were made on exciting secular topics, and they brilliantly illustrate the annals of oratory. They may not have been perfect specimens of rhetorical beauty and excellence, but the impassioned emotion of the orators amply atoned for every blemish, and to this day the critic can find but little fault.

Will it be said that the preacher cannot dwell on subjects which have called forth Parliamentary and Congressional eloquence? Very true, but he can expatiate on topics far more congenial to the highest style of eloquence. The gospel

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furnishes for discussion subjects the most exalted and sublime, and for declamation themes the most glorious and awful. There is, in true eloquence, nothing which is not nurtured by religion. The Bible furnishes the finest specimens of eloquence. Where in the records of secular oratory is there so powerful an appeal as Judah's in behalf of Benjamin? Where such thrilling, transporting eloquence as in the book of Job, the Psalms, Isaiah, &c? Where such magnificent conceptions as in the visions of Ezekiel, Daniel, and John? Where rhetoric and logic so admirable combined as in the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians?

Secular orators have acknowledged their obligations to the Bible. They have deemed it more favorable to the production of eloquence to drink at the fountain of inspiration, than at the "Pierian spring" or "Castalian fount." We write thus to show that if preachers are not eloquent, the reason is not to be traced to any barrenness in the subjects which professedly employ their thoughts, but to a want of proper interest in those subjects. Nor are we to be understood as intimating that the pulpit eloquence of this age is inferior to other styles of eloquence. This we do not believe. There are ministers comparatively unknown to fame, from whom we have heard as eloquent appeals as Wirt attributes to Patrick Henry or Webster to John Adams. They have dwelt on the tragedy of Calvary till their souls have been melted into tenderness—their eyes suffused with tears—and their tongues have spoken wondrous things. Such men with little education have electrified their hearers, while the "graduates of colleges" have looked on in mysterious amazement. While we insist that the eloquence of the pulpit is not inferior to that displayed at the bar and in the halls of legislation, we also insist that the ministry would be more eloquent if the custom of reading sermons were entirely abolished.

We quote again from Dr. Ware. "It must be remembered also, that occasions will sometimes occur, when the want of this power [the ability to speak extemporaneously] may expose him [the preacher] to mortification, and deprive him of an opportunity of usefulness. For such emergencies one would

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choose to be prepared. It may be of consequence that he should express his opinion in an ecclesiastical council, and give reasons for the adoption or rejection of important measures. Possibly he may be only required to state facts, which have come to his knowledge. It is very desirable to be able to do this readily, fluently, without embarrassment to himself, and pleasantly to those who hear; and in order to this, a habit of speaking is necessary. In the course of his ministrations amongst his own people occasions will arise when an exhortation or address would be seasonable and useful, but when there is not time for written preparation. If then he has cultivated the art of extemporaneous speaking, and attained to any degree of facility and confidence in it, he may avail himself of the opportunity to do good which he must otherwise have passed by unimproved.”

This extract we earnestly commend to the attention of our readers. It is perfectly evident that the minister who confines himself to his manuscript lessens his opportunities of usefulness. There are many situations in which the man who cannot extemporize, is of necessity inefficient. What is he to do in a deliberative body when a discussion unexpectedly occurs? Or if a discussion is expected how is he to reply to an opponent? He knows not what he is to reply to until his opponent expresses himself. Suppose a preacher is, on the spur of the moment, called on to officiate at a burial: what is he to do? If he is a reader and not a speaker he must surrender the opportunity of doing good. Or if a company of inquirers after salvation should, at the close of a sermon, as instruction, must the minister keep them waiting till he can go to his study and write down his views of the plan of redemption? This would be insufferable. It may be said, we suppose extreme cases at the occurrence of which any man could speak extemporaneously. If this be so any minister can learn to speak extemporaneously in the pulpit, in his ordinate ministrations; and if he can acquire this art, it is his duty to do so. No man is free from blame in reading his sermons till thoroughly convinced by repeated experiments that he cannot extemporize.

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In recommending "Extemporaneous Preaching," Dr. Ware also says: "It is a further advantage, not to be forgotten here, that the excitement of speaking in public, strikes out new views of a subject, new illustrations, and unthought-of figures and arguments, which perhaps never would have presented themselves to the mind in retirement. 'The warmth which animates him,' says Fenelon, 'gives birth to expressions and figures, which he never could have prepared in his study.' He who feels himself safe in flying off from the path he has presented to himself, without any fear lest he should fail to find his way back, will readily seize upon these, and be astonished at the new light which breaks in upon him as he goes on, and flashes all around him. This is according to the experience of all extemporaneous speakers."

Here Dr. Ware presents indirectly, what we consider an unanswerable objection to the practice of reading sermons. It precludes the extemporaneous excitement of which every speaker should avail himself. The man of God who addresses his fellow-men on the subject of salvation occupies a most responsible position. He sees before him an assembly of dying, yet immortal beings. He knows that, of his hearers, all that is mortal will soon become food for worms, and that their deathless spirits will soon be initiated into the solemn mysteries of an eternal state. He knows that the very persons who hear *his* voice will hear the sound of the last trumpet—that the eyes fixed on him will ere long see the throne of judgment—that the gospel he preaches will be "the power of God to salvation" to his believing auditors, and the means of aggravating the condemnation of those who believe it not. Considerations like these will excite any heart that can be excited. New ideas will present themselves to the mind and words to express those ideas will not be wanting. Trains of thought will suggest which probably a dozen year's study would not originate. Of all this it is the preacher's duty to avail himself. Let him levy a contribution on every idea and every thought which may subvert his purpose. Let him allow his sanctified imagination to spread its wings for flight, and soar backward and forward and downward and upward. He will rarely lose sight of his subject, and when he does his hearers may have reason to thank God for it.

There is another consideration: the object of preaching is to make an impression on those that hear. When an impression is made—and is indicated by the fixed attention, the interest countenance, and the tearful eye—the preacher should know it. The feeling in his congregation increases the feeling of the minister. His interest is deepened by the interest of his hearers. His eye observes what is taking place in his audience, and his knowledge of human nature enables him to decide with some certainty, how his message is received. This is highly important to a speaker. It is an advantage which a preacher should not surrender. But every preacher who reads his sermons does surrender it. He cannot avail himself of any favorable impression he may make. If as he proceeds there should be some extemporaneous emotion in his own heart or in the hearts of his auditors, he can turn it to no good account. He must read what he has written. He must follow his manuscript. His eye must trace every line as intently as if his object was to extinguish feeling where it exists, and prevent it where it does not. It may be said in opposition to all this, that some congregations prefer the reading of sermons to extemporaneous preaching. This may possibly be so in some places. It is, however, owing to the corruption of an unsophisticated taste. In every such instance some violence must have been done to the emotional elements of human nature. This is our opinion and we cheerfully allow others to think as they please.

Dr. Ware mentions other advantages of extemporaneous preaching, to which, for want of space, we cannot refer. It is proper to notice the satisfactory manner in which he meets objections. He says, "The objection most urged is that which relates to style." It is said the expression will be poor, inelegant, inaccurate, and offensive to hearers of taste.

To those who urge this it may be replied, that the reason why style is an important consideration in the pulpit, is, not that the taste of the hearers may be gratified—for but a small part of any congregation is capable of taking cognizance of this matter—but solely for the purpose of presenting the speaker's thoughts, reasonings, and expostulations distinctly and forcibly to the minds of his hearers. If this be affected, it

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is all which can reasonably be demanded. And I ask if it be not notorious, that an earnest and appropriate elocution will give this effect to a poor style, and that poor speaking will take it away from the most exact and emphatic style.

It is a small matter that the style is poor, so long as it answers the great purpose of instructing and affecting men. So that, as I have more fully shown in a former place, the objection lies on an erroneous foundation.

Besides, if it were not so, it will be found quite as strong against the *writing* of sermons. For how large a proportion of sermon writers have these same faults of style! What a great want of force, neatness, compactness, is there in the composition of most preachers! What weakness, inelegance and inconclusiveness; and how small improvement do they make, even after the practice of years! How happens this? It is because they do not make this an object of attention and study; and some might be unable to attain it if they did. But that watchfulness and care which secure a correct and neat style in writing, would also secure it in speaking. It does not naturally belong to the one, more than to the other, and may be as certainly attained in each by proper pains. Indeed so far as my observation has extended, I am not certain that there is not as large a proportion of extempore speakers, whose diction is exact and unexceptionable, as of writers—always taking into view their education, which equally affects the one and the other. And it is a consideration of great weight, that the faults in question are far less offensive in speakers than in writers.”

Extemporaneous preaching is by some considered almost synonymous with a careless, slovenly style. Such a style, however, does not of necessity belong to the extemporaneous speaker. It is as practicable to speak correctly as to write correctly. And the two exercises exert a reciprocal influence on each other. Hence the advice of Dr. Beecher to a young preacher was eminently judicious, “Write much that you may extemporize well; extemporize much that you may write well.” Writing is highly important to the formation of a correct style. Any sort of writing, however, will not do. Writing sermons is perhaps in most cases, much less

favorable to the attainment of a good style than the writings of essays.

Another thing is to be remembered: he who would speak correctly in the pulpit must speak correctly on all occasions. In common conversation he must select the best words to convey his ideas. He may, if he chooses, express himself with elegance; but, be this as it may, he must express himself perspicuously and forcible. He must possess the art of making himself understood. There must be in his language none of the ambiguity of an ancient oracle. Let a preacher learn to express himself in conversation and writing in phraseology correct and definite, and he will find no difficulty in doing so in preaching. Those who object to extemporaneous speaking will say that a preacher's excitement in the delivery of an unwritten discourse must injure his style. To this we demur. Excitement promotes fluency, and fluency promotes accuracy of expression, because it implies a flow of words out of which selections may be made. We have often listened to speakers whose style was greatly improved whenever they became excited. We may not have suggested the proper explanation of this matter, but of one thing we are sure; this improvement of style is not owing to remembrance of the rules of grammar and rhetoric. A speaker may be as absorbed in his subject as to forget that there is in the wide world a treatise on grammar or rhetoric.

It is objected to extemporaneous preaching that it leads to barrenness of thought and "the everlasting repetition of the same sentiments and topics." To this objection Dr. Ware replies as follows: "If a man makes his facility of speech an excuse for the neglect of study, then doubtless this will be the result. He who cannot resist his indolent propensities had best avoid this occasion of temptation. He must be able to command himself to think, and industriously prepare himself by meditation, if he would be safe in this hazardous experiment. He who does this, and continues to learn and reflect while he preaches, will be no more empty and monotonous than if he carefully wrote every word."

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This is well said, and it ought to remind every one that the advocates of *extemporaneous* preaching are by no means the advocates of *unpremeditated* sermons. They recommend thorough premeditation, and apply the epithet extemporaneous to the language in which the results of that premeditation are expressed. They deem it better for words to present themselves extemporaneously. The preacher in going into the pulpit should certainly know the leading ideas he intends to communicate; but it is neither necessary nor desirable that he should know the words he is to use.

It is objected also to extemporaneous preaching, that it promotes indolence, leads to a neglect of study, &c. "To this it may be replied," says Dr. Ware, "that they who have not principle and self-government enough to keep them industrious, will not be kept so by being compelled to write sermons. I think we have abundant proof that a man may write with as little pains and thinking, as he can speak. It by no means follows, that because it is on paper, it is, therefore, the result of study. And if it be not, it will be greatly inferior in point of effect to an unpremeditated declamation; for, in the latter case, there will probably be, at least, a temporary excitement of feeling, and consequent vivacity of manner, while, in the former, the indolence of the writer will be made doubly intolerable, by his heaviness in reading." In the same connection, Dr. W. observes: "As for those, whose indolence habitually prevails over principle, and who make no preparation for duty, excepting the mechanical one, of covering over a certain number of pages—they have no concern in the ministry, and should be driven to seek some other employment where their mechanical labor may provide them a livelihood without injuring their own souls or those of other men."

All this proceeds on the undeniable fact, that a preacher should be a man of principle, with the fear of God and the love of souls in his heart. This will stimulate him to prepare as thoroughly as he can for the pulpit. Such a man will not offer to God a sacrifice that costs him nothing. He will carry "beaten oil" into the sanctuary. We know it will be said, that many extemporaneous sermons are very poor things. This,

we do not deny. The reason, however, is not that they are unwritten, but unpremeditated. Though the art of extemporaneous speaking is sometimes unfortunately exemplified, yet this, as Dr. W. remarks, "is likewise true of every other art in which men engage, and not least so of writing sermons; concerning which, no one will say, that as poor are not written, as it would be possible for any one to speak. In truth, men of small talents and great sluggishness, of a feeble sense of duty, and no zeal, will, of course, make poor sermons, by whatever process they may do it, let them write or let them speak. It is doubtful concerning some, whether they would even steal good ones."

This is very plain language and somewhat amusing. But who will question its truth? Such men as are described would make "poor sermons" whatever might be their method of sermonizing. As to those (we hope they are few) who "steal sermons," it is doubtless true, that some of them display bad judgment in their theological thefts. Pulpit plagiarisms are abominable on all occasions; but when they indicate an imperfect taste, and a defective judgment, they become intolerable. The stealing, however, is of itself in bad taste, and shows bad judgment, to say nothing of the hypocrisy and falsehood virtually involved in it.

Dr. Ware, in advocating extemporaneous preaching, insists on "the necessity of severe discipline and training." "This," says he, "should be the more earnestly insisted upon, because it is from our loose and lazy notions on the subject, that eloquence in every department is suffering so much, and that the pulpit especially has become so powerless; when the most important things that receive utterance upon earth, are sometimes read like school boys' tasks, without even the poor pains to lay emphasis on the right words, and to pause in the right places. And this, because we fancy that, if nature has not designed us for orators, it is vain to make effort, and if she has, we will be such without effort. True, that the noble gifts of mind are from nature; but not language or knowledge, or accent, or tone, or gesture; these are to be learned, and it is with these that the speaker is concerned. These are all matters of acquisition, and of difficult

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acquisition; possible to be attained, and well worth the exertion that must be made.”

We have already intimated that the *manner*, though far less important than the *matter* of preaching, is by no means regarded with indifference. He who can acquire a good manner sins against God if he does not. It is his duty to avail himself of whatever may enable him, innocently, to arrest and retain the attention of his hearers. The manner of presenting divine truth often secures for that truth a consideration which would not otherwise be given it.¹ Surely, if a preacher can, by an attractive manner, win his way to the hearts of his hearers he is under obligation to do so. In such a case his manner enters as an important element into his capabilities of usefulness.

Dr. Ware, having devoted the second part of his treatise to the consideration of objections to extemporaneous preaching, gives, in the third part, some rules for acquiring the art he so highly recommends. To a few of these rules, and but a few, our space allows us to refer.

“The first thing to be observed is, that the student who would acquire facility in this art, should bear it constantly in mind, and have regard to it in all his studies, and in his whole mode of study. The reason is very obvious. He that would become eminent in any pursuit must make it the primary and almost exclusive object of his attention. . . . Let it, therefore, be a part of his daily care to analyze the subjects which come before him, and to frame sketches of sermons. This will aid him to acquire a facility in laying open, dividing, and arranging topics, and preparing those outlines

¹ The writer of this article not only feels at liberty, but considers it his duty to call the attention of young minister to the importance of *manner* in preaching. The reason is, he was made to believe at the commencement of his ministry, that his *manner* was so hopelessly faulty that it would be useless to attempt its improvement. He was advised to bestow exclusive attention on the *matter* of his sermons. This advice has been injurious thus far, and doubtless will be to the end of life. Young preachers! Believe it not, if it is said your manner cannot be improved.

which is to take with him into the pulpit. Let him, also investigate carefully the method of every author he reads, marking the divisions of his arrangement, and the connection and train of his reasoning. Butler's preface to his Sermons will afford him some fine hints on this way of study. Let this be his habitual mode of reading, so that he will as much do this, as receive the meaning of the separate sentences, and will be always able to give a better account of the progress of the argument and the relation of every part to the others and to the whole, than of merely individual passages and separate illustration. This will infallibly beget a readiness in finding the divisions and boundaries of a subject, which is one important requisite to an easy and successful speaker."

To acquire the art of extemporaneous preaching, Dr. Ware advises that, for "first efforts, expository subjects" be selected. He remarks: "To say nothing of the importance and utility of this mode of preaching, which render it desirable that every minister should devote a considerable proportion of his labors to it, it contains great facilities and relief for the inexperienced speaker. The close study of a passage of scripture which is necessary to expounding it, renders it familiar. The exposition is inseparably connected with the text, and necessarily suggested by it. The inferences and practical reflections are, in like manner, naturally and indissolubly associated with the passage. The train of remark is easily preserved, and embarrassment in a great measure guarded against, by the circumstance that the order of discourse is spread out in the open Bible, upon which the eyes may rest, and by which the thoughts may rally." What is here said of expository preaching deserves special attention. It is in many places falling into disuse. This is to be regretted. There is in the minds of some a prejudice against this kind of preaching, growing, perhaps, out of the fact that expository discourses are often superficial. This is an objection to them, and some preachers have adopted this method of preaching supposing it to require less laborious preparation. To expound a connection of scripture demands much thought, and no one should adopt the expository mode of discourse as a substitute for profound and patient

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investigation. While it is, in some respects, easier to deliver an expository than a textual or topical discourse, it ought not to be easier to prepare it. If this fact had its practical influence on the minds of preachers, they might, with great propriety, make more of their sermons expository. A surface-skimming exposition, however, is a very poor thing.

“In regard to language,” says Dr. Ware, “the best rule is that no preparation be made. There is no convenient and profitable medium between speaking from memory and from immediate suggestion. To mix the two is no aid, but a great hindrance; because it perplexes the mind between the very different operations of memory and invention. . . . The best language flashes upon the speaker as unexpectedly as upon the hearer. It is the spontaneous gift of the mind, not the extorted boon of a special search. No man who has thoughts and is interested in them, is at a loss for words—not the most uneducated man—and the words he uses will be according to his education and general habits, not according to the labor of the moment. If he truly feels, and wishes to communicate his feelings to those around him, the last thing that will fail will be language; the less he thinks of it and cares for it, the more copiously and richly will it flow from him; and when he has forgotten every thing but his desire to give vent to his emotions and do good, then will the unconscious torrent pour as it does at no other season. This entire surrender to the spirit which stirs within is indeed the real secret of all eloquence.”

Having expressed our views of language in another part of this article, we have nothing to say of this extract, but that it meets our hearty approbation. It, unquestionably, contains the truth to which the annals of secular and sacred oratory bear ample testimony.

Another rule given by Dr. Ware to the extemporaneous speaker is, to select “those subjects in which he feels an intense interest at the time, and in regard to which he desires to engage the interest of others.” “In order,” says he, “to the best success, extemporaneous efforts should be made in an excited state of mind, when the thoughts are burning and glowing and long to find vent. There are some topics

which do not admit of this excitement. Such should be treated with the pen. . . . If a man would do his best, it must be upon subjects which are at the moment interesting to him. We see it in conversation, where every one is eloquent upon his favorite topics. We see it in deliberative assemblies, where it is those grand questions, which excite an intense interest, and absorb and agitate the mind, that call forth those bursts of eloquence by which men are remembered as powerful orators, and that give a voice to men who can speak on no other occasions. Cicero tells us of himself, that the instances, in which he was most successful, were those in which he most entirely abandoned himself to the impulses of feeling. Every speaker's experience will bear testimony to the same thing; and thus the saying of Goldsmith proves true, that to 'feel one's subject thoroughly, and to speak without fear, are the only rules of eloquence.' Let him who would preach successfully remember this."

There are other 'rules' given by Dr. Ware, for the guidance of extemporaneous speakers, which we would be glad to copy, but this article is already long enough. We must, however, make one more extract, which tells us of something far more important to a preacher than all the rules that can be given. We quote the following, "After all, therefore, which can be said, the great essential requisite to effective preaching in this method (or, indeed, in any method) is a devoted heart. A strong religious sentiment, leading to a fervent zeal for the good of other men, is better than all rules of art; it will give him courage, which no science or practice could impart, and open his lips boldly, when the fear of man would keep them closed. Art may fail him, and all his treasures of knowledge desert him; but if his heart be warm with love, he will 'speak right on,' aiming at the heart, and reaching the heart, and satisfied to accomplish the great purpose, whether he be thought to do it tastefully or not."

To this we give our emphatic sanction. In a minister of the gospel there is no substitute for a devoted heart. The most brilliant intellect cannot compensate for the sluggishness of the heart, nor does the profoundest learning atone for its

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coldness. Piety, earnest, ardent piety is the preacher's superlative qualification.

We heartily commend to our readers Dr. Ware's "Hints on Extemporaneous Preaching," and if, to obtain the little treatise, they find it necessary to purchase Ripley's "Sacred Rhetoric," to which it is appended, they will buy a very good book, to which we may call special attention at some period in the uncertain future.

J.M.P.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MINISTERIAL PIETY



BY

JAMES MADISON PENDLETON



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It is a source of joy to every enlightened Christian, that the importance of ministerial education is more deeply and extensively felt at the present time than any previous period. It is cheering, too, that academies and colleges are so multiplied as to afford, in every part of the country, the means of intellectual improvement. Nor are these institutions of learning accessible to the rich alone—they invite the poor to share their blessings. The two classes meet on a perfect equality in our Halls of science, understanding full well that the extent and thoroughness of their mental attainments will determine to what literary distinction they are to be elevated. It is a benevolent and judicious arrangement of some of our colleges and universities—perhaps most of them—to remit the tuition fees of such young men as are “licensed by the Churches to preach the gospel.” This is as it should be. It is an emphatic invitation to indigent young men to enter upon a literary career, and it throws off a burden which would otherwise greatly impede their progress. We should remember, also, that most of those who engage in the ministry belong to the humbler walks of life. “Not many of the mighty or of the noble” are called to this work.

But while ministerial education is highly appreciated, is there not danger that a disproportionate importance be attached to it? Is there not danger lest *piety*, *ardent piety*, be undervalued? Woe to the Churches when an appreciation of learning will be conjoined with a depreciation of piety. Should this ever come to pass—which may Heaven in mercy

forbid—Ichabod will be written on the Zion of God, and he will be blind indeed who does not see that “the glory is departed.” We would not be misunderstood: We affirm—and no earthly power can make us retract the affirmation—that the more learning a minister possesses, the better for him—the better for the Church—the better for the world—*provided* that learning be kept under the constant dominion of true piety. All kinds of knowledge may be made subservient to ministerial efficiency and usefulness. Even an acquaintance with the absurdities of heathen mythology will aid in the elucidation of some passages of the Divine word. These concessions—if they are considered concessions—are cheerfully made, nor do they militate in the least against the proposition we wish to establish and illustrate—namely, THE IMPORTANCE OF MINISTERIAL PIETY.

1. An argument in favor of this proposition may be derived from the fact *that Christianity is emphatically the religion of the heart.*

It is not a religion of rites and ceremonies and external performance, only so far as these things are formal expressions of a proper state of heart. God always looks at the heart, and the rectitude of its purposes is an indispensable element of all acceptable outward obedience. Depravity has its seat in the heart—in the moral affections. It is the heart that cherishes alienation from God and hostility to his government. “Out of the heart proceeds every evil thing.” It is “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” This being the state of the natural heart, it is manifest it must be changed before God will dwell in it. No religion would be adapted to man’s moral necessities that did not make provision for rectifying the obliquities of his heart. Christianity first makes the tree good—then the fruit is good. Now, if the heart is the theater on which Christianity proposes to perform its transforming operations—and if ministerial instrumentality is ordinarily employed in effecting the great work—then how important that the *hearts of ministers* be right with God—and this is the essence of piety. How can it be rationally expected that the truths which ministers announce from the pulpit will affect the

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hearts of their hearers, if their hearts are unaffected, unmoved? And we argue that nothing but piety can adequately affect and move the hearts of the heralds of salvation. Nothing else can stir up the deep emotions of the soul and give exercise to its noblest sensibilities. Piety is the only guarantee of purity of motive in the pulpit. Other considerations may prompt man to preach. The compatibility of the ministerial vocation with the pursuits of literature may have its influence on some; and there are those, no doubt, who are intoxicated with the love of popular applause, and think the pulpit a suitable place to secure the gratification of the "ruling passion;" while others, still, regard the clerical profession as the easiest way of making what is called "a living." These motives, whoever may be prompted by them to preach the gospel, are infinitely unworthy and contemptible. But men without piety, if they preach at all, are influenced by these, or similar inducements. What are proper motives, inducing a consecration to the work of the ministry? Evidently a desire to glorify God—an ardent zeal to advance his cause—an affectionate solicitude for the edification of saints—and a deep concern for the salvation of sinners. These motives have an existence in the heart of no wicked man. Piety alone can originate them. There are no materials in the un-renewed soul on which they can operate. If, then, piety is essential to the purity of ministerial motive, how great must be its importance! The argument reduced to a point is this: Christianity proposes through the ministry to do a great work in the hearts of men. It is, therefore, supremely pertinent and important that the hearts of ministers be right with God, and constantly under the consecrating influences of his grace. This is involved in piety.

2. Piety is indispensable in ministers of the gospel *because theirs is a sacred work—they "minister in holy things."*

Theirs is no ordinary vocation. No ordinary responsibilities are theirs. They serve a holy God—a God who regards sin with infinite detestation, and who is ever jealous of his glory. They enforce the requisitions of a law which lays claim to perfection, for it is the transcript of the divine holiness. They announce a Savior whose death exhibits all worlds the

odiousness of iniquity, and the attractive loveliness of moral purity. They proclaim a gospel whose principles oppose every vice, and cherish every virtue. They offer heaven with all its glories to the saint, and say to the sinner, "the wicked will be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God." They "watch for souls as those that must give account." These souls are of infinite value. By no means of calculation known among men can their worth be computed. When the science of numbers has been bankrupted, the great problem remains unsolved as ever: "What is a man profited if he gains the whole world and lose his own soul?" Into what inferiority do other vocations sink when compared with the ministerial calling! How unimportant appears the legal profession, contemplating, as it does, interests circumscribed by the narrow limits of time! How childish seem the contests between "plaintiffs" and "defendants," and how ridiculous the technicalities of law! It is the province of the medical profession to eradicate the maladies of the body. What pains are taken to restore to its accustomed health the diseased physical frame! Medical ingenuity is taxed to the utmost, and "*materia medica*" is exhausted in search of remedies. All this is done with knowledge of the fact that if a disease is treated ever so skillfully and successfully, the body can only be kept for a short time from putrefaction and worms. The physician operates on the body, but the minister of Christ has to do with the spirit. His vocation contemplates the recovery from a moral disease infinitely more dreadful than all physical maladies. It looks to his spiritual convalescence, and to his ultimate removal to the salubrious realms of glory. The minister's work has to do with men in their eternal interests. It affects their temporal welfare only incidentally. Its chief business is with eternity. In view of this consideration, who does not see that piety is the minister's pre-eminent qualification? What a moral absurdity for an ungodly man to engage in so sacred a work! It is an impious attempt to establish concord between Christ and Belial. God anciently said to the wicked man, "What have you to do, to declare my statutes, or that you should take my covenant in your mouth? Seeing that you hate instruction, and cast my words behind you?" Let a man without piety intrude into the

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ministry, and what follows? While he urges the claims of God's law, the curse of that law is upon him. While he insists that others will comply with the terms of the gospel, he has never complied himself. When he speaks of the value of the soul it aggravates his own guilt in neglecting its salvation. When he points out the way to heaven, he walks not therein, and can entertain no rational hope of reaching the celestial mansions. When he declares that the wicked "will go away into everlasting punishment," he pronounces his own doom. When he speaks of the cross of Christ, in which alone ministers should glory, he virtually re-constructs another cross—nails the Savior to it—"crucifies him afresh, and puts him to open shame." A wicked minister! This ought to be a contradiction in terms. Surely piety is the most important qualification for the ministry.

3. Piety in ministers of Christ is absolutely essential, *that their own experience may furnish testimony to the truth of the doctrines they preach.*

Peter and John said to the Jewish Council, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." These things so deeply affected their hearts; they were so fully convinced of their truth, that it was morally impossible for them to be silent. Paul said, "We believe, and therefore speak." He had such an experimental sense of the efficacy and preciousness of the truths he believed, he could not forbear declaring them—declared them because he believed them. The language of the Savior himself embraced in substance what we wish to say on this point: "If any man will do his will, he will know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Here is an experimental criterion established, by which to determine whether the doctrine of Jesus is divine. He that brings the matter to this test will know. This knowledge if not identical with experience, is inseparably connected with it. But *piety* is productive of *experience*, and experience furnishes testimony to the truth of the doctrines of the gospel. A minister must know and feel in his own soul that what he preaches is true. In describing the lost and guilty condition of sinners, he must describe what he has seen and realized in his own case. In warning the ungodly of their

danger, he must do it as “knowing the terror of the Lord.” In speaking of the vain refuges to which awakened sinners often fly, he must know that they are vain. In pointing inquiring souls to the Lamb of God, he must point to a sacrifice, the efficacy of which he feels. In affirming that peace with God results from justification by faith, he must affirm what he has experienced. In expatiating on the sufficiency of divine grace to sustain the followers of Christ, he must have personal knowledge of its sufficiency. In comforting the saints, he must be able to do it “with the comfort wherewith he himself is comforted of God.” Taking all these into account, how transcendent the importance of ministerial piety! An ungodly man in the ministry is almost as much out of place as would be an ungodly man in heaven. He has no experimental acquaintance with the truths of the gospel. And whatever may be his intellectual qualifications, he is destitute of every spiritual qualification to declare the counsel of God. Piety alone can lead to the adoption of the sentiment, “We believe, and therefore speak.” Hence the indispensable necessity of piety in those “who labor in word and doctrine,” that, holding sweet and high communion with God, they may come forth among the people and proclaim with a holy unction the unsearchable riches of Christ; and preach as dying men to dying men.”

4. Piety is the pre-eminent qualification of ministers, *because they are required to be examples to believers.*

How can they be examples worthy of imitation unless they are men of God? Christians are under the influence of the imitative propensity as well as others; and whom will they be so likely to copy as the leaders of the hosts of Zion? These leaders, too, occupy so conspicuous a station that their defects, if they have defects, like the spots in the sun, will be visible to every eye. All deviations from the path of rectitude will be instantly observed, and most probably followed. Often have the spiritual interests of Christians sustained injury by means of the evil example of ministers. Let an influential preacher, for instance, practically lower the standard of morality from its proper height, and how many will exemplify the same laxity in morals! Let him be found at

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places of fashionable amusement, and what numbers will resort thither! Let him show a love of the world, and all classes will feel the contagion of his example. Let him manifest a penurious spirit, and others will cling more closely to their gold and silver. Ministerial example when evil is remarkable for its power. It puts into operation trains of influences which often work disastrously.

It is a fact worthy of notice, that heresies have been usually originated by ministers. The espousal of very few false doctrines can be traced first to laymen. Almost every heresiarch has belonged to the ministry. And what multiplied evils have resulted from theological heresies! How have the Churches been cursed! What damage has the world sustained!

It is certain that ardent piety is the best preservative against doctrinal heresies and practical immoralities. The most pious men are those who most devoutly love the truth as it is in Jesus, and most earnestly aim to obey the truth. None but a pious minister can be what Paul commanded Timothy to be: "An example of believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." If, then, examples, as we have seen, is so powerful in its influence—if ministers are examples of believers—and if piety alone can make them examples fit to be copied, how evident does the necessity of piety appear.

5. Ministers should be men of piety, *because on them devolves the duty of feeding the flock of God.*

Jesus said to Peter, "Feed my sheep—feed my lambs." Paul to the Elders of Ephesus said, "Take heed, therefore, to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which he has purchased with his own blood." Unless a minister is a man of piety, he cannot have the *spiritual discernment* requisite in feeding the flock of God. And if destitute of this discernment, how can he know when to give "strong meat," and when to give "the sincere milk of the word?" How did Paul know that the Corinthians could not bear "meat," owing to a kind of

spiritual dyspepsia they were suffering, but must be “fed with milk?” Was it not because he was a man of God? Did not his piety create the spiritual discernment to which we have alluded? Nothing so effectually as piety will enable a Pastor to acquaint himself with the religious circumstances of his flock, so that he may know when to expound doctrines, apply promises, enforce exhortations, and employ admonitions. How clearly do pastoral responsibilities indicate that ministers should possess ardent piety! How can they, unless they are men of God, train the hosts of the Lord for efficient usefulness in his cause? How can they lead the saints in the way to heaven, unless they themselves walk therein? The union between pastor and Church is a very important one, and for a Pastor to be an ungodly man outrages the sacredness of that union. If piety is transcendently important any where in this wide world, it is in the Pastor’s heart. There its sanctifying power should be felt, purifying the motives, elevating the desires, spiritualizing the emotions, and consecrating the affections. The influence of a Pastor’s piety should pervade his sermons, his prayers, his exhortations, his rebukes, his conversations, and spread a savor of godliness over his department. Of every Pastor when he had died it ought to be said of truth:

And as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt her new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov’d each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

6. Ministers should be men of fervent piety, *that they may patiently bear the trials peculiar to the ministry.*

God has decreed that his people will “enter into his kingdom through much tribulation.” “In the world,” said Jesus to his disciples, “you will have tribulation.” But may we not say that a large share of the tribulation of the Churches has fallen upon the ministry? Their conspicuity has attracted the notice of their enemies, and the arrows of persecution have been hurled at them with most malicious aim. Their names have been “cast out as evil,” and they have been considered the “off-scouring of all things.” For them, fetters have been

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forged—the block and the axe have been made ready—for them martyr-fires have been kindled. Noble-hearted men! The world owes them a debt of gratitude which it will never be able to pay; but they will be recompensed for their sufferings at the resurrection of the just.

Nor let it be supposed that the work of persecution was confined to past ages. We may consider “stakes and faggots and fires” as terms that express *obsolete* ideas, but persecution is not an obsolete thing. How often is there a malicious ascription of false motives to ministers—a malicious interpretation of their language—a malicious misconstruction of their act. We see in these things the elements of the bitterest persecution industriously at work. Let the strong arm of the civil power cease to protect, and who can predict the consequences?

But the minister’s heaviest trials originate perhaps in the pastoral relation. Faithful Pastors can say to their Churches as Paul said to the Thessalonians: “We live, if you stand fast in the Lord.” It imparts a sacred animation; a new life to the pastor’s should, when his flock stands fast in the Lord. But when a Church walks unworthily of her high vocation, it inflicts on the Pastor’s heart pangs analogous to the pangs of death. Many a broken-hearted minister has said in the anguish of his soul, “O that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people and from them!” He sees, it may be, “a root of bitterness springing up, whereby many are to be defiled.” He sees those redeemed with the same blood alienated from one another. He sees the cause of God dishonored and the divine glory trampled in the dust. He hears the exultant shout of the enemies of Jesus saying, “Aha, aha, so we would have it!” Amid circumstances like these, who but a Pastor knows the feelings of a Pastor’s heart? With what “strong crying and tears” does he call upon God to interpose and save his heritage from reproach! He suffers a living death when he remembers Zion. God pities his servant, hears his prayers, and graciously revives his work. How the scene is changed! What joy fills the Pastor’s heart! Saints are edified, sinners are awakened, inquirers find Christ, and converts make the

baptismal profession of their faith. These converts, so considered in the judgment of charity, are the joy of the pastor, and he hopes they will be his crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. Weeks and months pass away, and some of those hopeful converts go back to the world. They desert the sanctuary—they avoid the people of God—they make the wicked their companions. In short the proverb is fulfilled in them, “The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

And what pastoral agony does this produce! He sees those with whom he had hoped to tread the starry plain excluded from the faithful and “delivered over to Satan.” And now he can adopt Paul’s language, “My little children of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed within you,” &c. The pains of parturition are the only pains which can symbolize the agony of that Pastor’s heart. His spirit is overwhelmed within him, and he is almost ready to exclaim, “Surely I have labored in vain, and spent my strength for naught.” Amid trials like these, where but in the resources of piety can the man of God find relief? He hears the voice of his Redeemer saying, “Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world.” He listens to the gracious declarations, “As the days will their strength be.”—“My grace is sufficient for you.” Trusting in God, the burdened spirit acquires new elasticity and throws off the load that oppresses it. The divine promises cheer the heart, and the faithful Pastor resolves to labor and toil, and die in the work of the Lord. He anticipates “the rest which remains to the people of God,” and consoles himself with the belief that rest will amply compensate for all the trial of his ministerial life. Without the hope of heaven he would be “of all men most miserable;” but animated with this hope, he smiles through his tears, and sees the darkest cloud spanned with the bow of promise. In view of a Pastor’s difficulties and trials, we may with confidence affirm the great importance of ministerial piety.

7. Piety in ministers is highly essential, *that the world may be impressed with the importance of Christianity.*

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Though men should form their views of the value and excellence of religion from the Bible, it is a notorious fact that what they see in professed Christians has much to do in the opinions they adopt. Especially does the deportment of ministers make an impression on them. This is no doubt one important reason why a preacher of the gospel should have “a good report of them that are without.” If the truth even is preached *officially*, and not “in the love of it,” the impenitent will not be affected with its importance. And if levity, or vanity, or pride, or worldly-mindedness, or covetousness, is suffered to lower the dignity of the pulpit, men of the world will at once draw the inference that Christianity is an unimportant thing. It is a sad thought that the defects of ministerial character have often suggested this inference to the minds of the ungodly. Alas that those whose special business it is to recommend Christianity, should disparage and weaken its claims! What we contend for is that ardent piety in ministers will effectually secure such *earnestness and affectionateness of manner* in the pulpit, and such *consistency and gravity of deportment* in their intercourse with society, and will make a salutary impression on the world in reference to the importance of Christianity. If we are right in this position, how intimately is ministerial piety connected with the welfare of immortal souls! How deeply may its presence or absence affect for wealth or woe the thousands who listen to the teachings of the pulpit and scrutinize with eagle eyes the conduct of its occupants! Ministers have a narrow path to tread. They are strictly watched. Their indiscretions are magnified into crimes. Sometimes there is even an attempt to make their Christian *virtues* appear contemptible *vices*. Their prudence is represented as unprincipled expediency—their firmness, obstinacy—their humility, meanness of spirit—their meekness under injurious treatment, cowardice, &c. The best ministers have their imperfections, which perhaps would not be observed but for their conjunction with great excellences, even as the spots of the sun are seen only through the light beaming from his bright face. Ministerial piety is the best preservative against those ministerial inconsistencies which are so injurious to the interests of Christianity. It has much

to do with the prosperity of the cause of God in the world—it has much to do with the conversion of sinners—and is therefore indispensable in the heralds of salvation.

8. God has been pleased to teach us the superlative importance of piety in his ministers, *by crowning the labors of his most devoted servants with the most abundant success.*

The complaint has been often made—and particularly in reference to New England—that the pulpit is losing its power. This is probably true. But what is the chief element of the power of the pulpit? We answer, MINISTERIAL PIETY. There are other elements of power, we admit, but this is incomparably the most important. And we suppose that where there is a diminution of the power of the pulpit, there is a previous declension in ministerial piety. There may be talent of the most exalted type—there may be learning extensive and profound—but what of all this, if the heart is not full of the Holy Spirit? What is talent worth, if piety does not place upon it its consecrating impress? Of what value is learning, unless “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” is written on its treasures? The strength of the pulpit is emphatically in its piety. The ministers who would not rather have more piety than more talent or more learning, has either mistaken his calling, or is involved in the guilt of a backslidden state.

Of Barnabas it is said, “He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and much people was added to the Lord.” To be “a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith,” comprehends what we mean by piety. And when this piety is exemplified in ministers, as in Barnabas, the result is generally the same—souls are converted to God. We might refer to men of the past generation in illustration of the truth of what we say—men who never saw a college—men who could not write six consecutive sentences grammatically—for if they ever saw a grammar it was not to study it—men whose hands ministered to their necessities by day, and who read the Bible by fire light at night—men who, not finding in their cabin homes, suitable places for secret prayer, went into contiguous forests and held high communion with God—

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men who came before the people on the Lord's day in a garb that would now make an audience smile—men whose souls were full of love to Jesus Christ, and whose eyes streamed with tears as they told of his death on Calvary—men who, Sampson-like, did more execution with the jaw-bone of an ass than the theological giants of Germany have ever done with their two-edged swords. Venerable men of whom the world was not worthy! We go not back to the historic page to find characters to admire. Our powers of admiration find ample exercise in contemplating the servants of God, who, amid the hardships to which they were exposed, performed almost an incredible amount of uncompensated labor. But they are now reaping their reward on high. Of some of them it may perhaps be said, "No man knows their sepulchers." Be this as it may, "He that sits in the heavens" watches their dust, and will ere long fashion it into bodies spiritual and incorruptible. Our feelings carry us away. . .

We close this article by urging the ministers of Christ to strive after greater attainments in piety. Other ministerial qualifications are not to be undervalued, but ardent, elevated piety is transcendently important. For such piety may "those who labor in word and doctrine" be distinguished, and may God show that he delights to bless the labors of his devoted servants.

AN ABLE MINISTRY



BY

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AN ABLE MINISTRY

Ministers of Jesus Christ occupy stations of great dignity and responsibility. They act under a commission received from the “King of kings and the Lord of lords.” It is their sublime vocation to entreat men “in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God.” How important, how exalted their work! How highly are they honored in being made heaven’s messengers of good tidings to an apostate world!

Closely allied to the dignity of the ministerial office is its responsibility. The heralds of salvation are accountable to God for the manner in which they deliver their message. Their ministrations are to undergo the inspection and scrutiny of the last day. “They watch for souls!” The lawyer watches the legal interests of his clients—the physician watches the state of his patients’ health—the educator of youth watches the progress of his pupils—the farmer watches his crops and learns the agricultural capabilities of his soils—the merchant watches the commercial markets of the world—but the minister of Christ watches for souls! Souls of incalculable worth—immortal as the God that made them—and destined to enjoy everlasting life in heaven or suffer eternal death in hell. Well did Paul, in contemplating the solemn responsibilities of the ministry, inquire, “Who is sufficient for these things?” And well may this become the stereotyped question of ministers of every generation.

If these views of the dignity and responsibility of the ministerial vocation are correct, is it not highly important that “those who labor in word and doctrine” should be “able ministers of the New Testament?” Does not the magnitude of

the work in which they are engaged furnish ample scope for the consecration of their powers? Ought not every herald of the cross, under the impulses of a sanctified ambition, strive to become an able minister of Christ? Does not the state of the Churches and of the world call loudly for an able ministry?

An "able ministry" is the theme of this article. We notice,

I. THE REQUISITE TO AN ABLE MINISTRY

1. *Mental capacity.* The absence of native strength of intellect peremptorily precludes the idea of ability. Power comes not out of weakness. Constitutional mental deficiencies are irremediable. They may be deplored, but to supply them would be equivalent to a creative operation. What is called *talent* is fundamentally essential to ability. It may be said that much depends on mental improvement. This is true, as we expect to show, but it should be remembered there must be something to improve. Before there can be culture there must be soil in which to perform the operation. Before there can be a superstructure there must be a foundation on which to rear it. Marble, in the roughness of its native quarry, is susceptible of polish; brickbats possess no such susceptibility.

The minister, whose native mental characteristic is weakness, cannot (unless there is a miraculous interposal in his favor) become a man of strength. There are men of unquestionable piety who, as all know, ought not to preach, and could not preach were they to make the attempt. Piety is often found in connection with inferior intellectual powers—a fact which should excite unfeigned gratitude to God. Still piety, disconnected from mental ability, should never be regarded as a passport to the ministerial office. There are men also, who, in addition to piety, are possessed of respectable literary attainments, and yet, owing to some misfortune of mental organization, they are feeble men. Their intellectual faculties seem resolved to have no concert of action, and it may well be questioned whether those

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faculties can be symmetrically developed. It would perhaps be improper to say that men of this class ought not to engage in the work of the ministry, but it may be safely said that they can never become *able* ministers of the New Testament. No one needs more than a minister of Christ a strong, sound mind. As much mental capacity is requisite to make an able preacher as to make an able physician, or an able lawyer, or an able judge. He who has not talent enough, with suitable application, to do honor to the medical or legal profession, can never, with any amount of application, become an able man in the ministerial profession. It would be strange, indeed, if talent of an inferior type were competent to the performance of the duties of the most responsible office known among men. In the requisites to an able ministry, we insist that a prominent place should be assigned to *mental capacity*.

2. *Learning*, we mention as a second requisite to an able ministry. We have seen the importance of native, original talent. Natural abilities are indispensable, nor are acquired abilities to be lightly esteemed. Talent is susceptible of cultivation, and God in bestowing it lays its possessor under obligation to improve it. "The minister who does not by study invigorate and expand his mental capacity, so far as circumstances enable him thus to do, is a slothful servant—a loiterer in the vineyard of his Lord. The day of inspiration is past, and men know nothing but what they learn. There have been professed ministers of Christ who seemed to consider themselves specially commissioned to decry learning, and by consequence exalt ignorance. If there are advantages in ignorance, men of this class certainly exemplify them. They suppose God does not need the learning of ministers in the advancement of his cause. What a pity it is that they are not sufficiently intelligent to know that a distinguished theologian has said with caustic and eloquent severity, "If God does not need our learning, much less does he need our ignorance." This class of preachers would have no texts from which to preach, if *learned* men had not translated the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into

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English. From such antinomian, anti-missionary, anti-education ministers may the Churches everywhere be delivered.

From Such apostles, O, you mitred heads,
Preserve the Church and lay not careless hands
On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn.

The idea that God sanctifies ignorance and makes it subservient to the accomplishment of the objects of the ministry, cannot be found in any “canonical book,” and it will be a happy day when it becomes an “obsolete idea.”

Learning is important for several reasons. The study requisite in acquiring it disciplines the intellectual powers. We have seen that a minister must possess mental capacity—natural talent. One object of education is to render this talent as effective as possible. By proper cultivation it can be greatly improved. Indeed, with suitable discipline the increase of mental power is so marvelous as to give some plausibility to the sentiment that all minds are originally equal. Without endorsing this sentiment—a thing we cannot do—we may be permitted to say it would indicate transcendent folly to attempt to fix limits to the expansion of the human mind. The probability is that there are involved in its wondrous organization unimagined possibilities of improvement. Nothing, so far as the world yet knows, is so well adapted to strengthen the mind as the judicious exercise of its faculties. This exercise is induced by a habit of mental application, and the application is indispensable to the acquisition of learning. If, then, it is desirable that there be a supply of able ministers of the New Testament, and if native mental power is susceptible of vast increase, and if the most effectual way of increasing it is to accustom the mind to habits of study, and if the formation of these habits is secured by educational discipline, it follows that learning is important on account of its causal connection with the development of intellectual strength.

Another consideration shows the value of learning. It is the means of acquiring knowledge. Were we to use the term in its

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most enlarged sense, we would say it is the only means of acquiring knowledge. And can a minister of Jesus Christ know too much? Is there any kind of knowledge which may not subserve his usefulness? If his mind is ever so richly stored, may he not make all his resources available in the elucidation of divine truth? This is the object of ministerial learning. It is not to enable the minister to display himself—this would be too contemptible—but to present more attractively the glorious truths growing out of, and vital to the system of redemption through Jesus Christ. How numerous, how sublime these truths! How delightful to trace them in their divergence from the cross—following them in their wondrous ramifications—finding them interwoven into each other—mutually dependant on each other—and, after the mind is wearied with joy, to retrace them to their central source—the cross—the grand exponent of universal truth! How appropriate the saying of a minister of the Church of England: “My brethren, how much learning does it take to make these things plain!” To be a competent expositor of the divine Word is a distinction of no ordinary kind. Extensive knowledge must precede the attainment of the distinction. And to show that all sorts of knowledge may be laid under contribution in expounding the Word of God, we need only say that several passages in the Bible cannot be understood without an acquaintance with the absurd system of Grecian and Roman mythology, and there is one passage which defies interpretation, unless the expositor invokes the aid of the Pythagorean dogma relative to the transmigration of souls.

It may be inferred from the foregoing remarks that we consider a collegiate course of study indispensable to a minister of the gospel. We protest against and repudiate such an inference. Colleges furnish many facilities for the acquisition of learning, and whenever circumstances permit, those who have the ministry in view should avail themselves of these facilities, but it is the greatest folly to say that education is attainable only within college walls. Many a learned man never saw a college, and many a “graduated dunce” has gone forth from this *alma mater* scarcely able to read his diploma. The acquisition of learning is the

important thing: How and where the acquisition is made are matters of little consequence. Who will say Andrew Fuller was not an able minister—a learned man, in the best acceptance of the phrase—and yet his name is found on no “college roll.” He was a self-made, self-educated man; but if England ever sent forth from the classic halls of Oxford or Cambridge a man who could measure strength with him in the Deistical and Socinian controversies? We think not, nor does our partiality for the name of Fuller pervert our judgment.

3. *Ardent, elevated piety* is a third requisite to an able ministry. No ministerial qualification is comparable in importance to this. An intellect such as angels have, would, without piety, make its possessor as “sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.” The most profound knowledge, the most extensive literary attainments, in connection with an unsanctified heart, would prove a curse. The possession of talent and learning gives power to do good or evil. The amount of good or evil done will depend on the capacity to do the one or the other. Talent and learning may be considered the minister’s intellectual qualifications, while piety is his moral qualification, and must ever control and consecrate his intellectual qualifications.

We have referred to *ardent, elevated piety*. Meager attainments in the divine life will not suffice for the heralds of salvation. Spiritual mediocrity, barely sufferable in any, is, in them intolerable. They stand, like the angel in the sun, in a conspicuous place, and should be “burning and shining lights.” The flame of divine love must burn with unceasing constancy on the altar of their hearts. Theirs must be an intimate “fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.” They must not only be “good men,” but “full of the Holy Ghost and faith.” The phrase “full of the Holy Ghost,” is an admirable definition of ardent elevated piety. “Full of the Holy Ghost!” All the powers of the soul imbued with his influence, and so inter-penetrated by his presence as to leave no moral vacuum to be otherwise occupied—this is piety to which the epithets ardent and elevated may be applied.

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Would that all the ministers of God were the subjects of this exalted piety! Then might we expect a revival of apostolic zeal and a day as bright as that which would speedily dawn upon us, earth has never seen.

The piety which we recommend as the superlative requisite to an able ministry was strikingly exemplified in the Apostle Paul. From his conversion from Judaism to the day of his death, he was unreservedly consecrated to God. The first impulses of divine life in his soul prompted him to inquire, "Lord, what wilt you have me to do?" and this was with him the question of questions, till his heart beat its last throb. His zeal for the divine glory was inextinguishable—his love to the cause of Christ knew no abatement—his solicitude for the salvation of immortal souls was all-absorbing. His friends contemplated the moral sublimity of his career with unqualified admiration, while his enemies brought their unreasonable charges against him—charges impeaching both his intellect and his heart. In explanation of his conduct he condensed what might have been expanded into a volume into this comprehensive declaration, "The love of Christ constrains us." He was under resistless moral necessity of pursuing the course he did pursue, because the love of Christ bore him along with a kind of sacred violence. He could truly say, "For me to live is Christ." The promotion of the divine glory was, in his estimation, an object of such exalted importance that he earnestly enjoined on his brethren, this rule of action: "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." So ardent was his attachment to the doctrines of the cross—so bright a display of the divine perfections did he see in Christ crucified—that when his mind reverted to the fact that some, professing discipleship to the Redeemer, were enemies of his cross, his heart was burdened with grief—grief of which bitter, copious tears were the sad exponents. There is eloquence in these tears. There is no intimation that the apostle shed a tear when, at five different times, he "received forty stripes save one," or when he was "thrice beaten with rods," or when he was "stoned." In all his perils of which there was a sad variety, it is not said that he wept. He stood un-appalled before tyrants, and was unmoved by

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the threats of those who thirsted for his blood; for he counted not his life dear to himself—but when he thought of that distressing collocation of terms—“*enemies of the cross*”—his firm manliness was transmuted into the most effeminate tenderness—he exhibited all the softness of the gentler sex, and the great Apostle wept like a tender-hearted child.

How great, too, was Paul’s anxiety for the salvation of souls. He could say, “My heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.” He speaks of travailing in birth for the Galatians till Christ was formed within them. Language could not express more agonizing solicitude. Earnestly was his heart fixed on the accomplishment of the objects of his ministry, and all his rich intellectual resources received the sanctifying impress of his piety. He was a man of vigorous native talent, and that talent had been sedulously cultivated by all the educational appliances of the age in which he lived. He was able to measure arms with the philosophers of Greece and Rome, in their combats of intellectual gladiatorship. He was a great man, and it has been well said, “The world has seen but one Paul.” All his mighty powers were consecrated to the work of the ministry, and his vast learning, thoroughly imbued with his deep spirituality, was made conducive to this greater usefulness in the cause of Christ. Paul was a model preacher. In him we see, in felicitous union, the three requisites to an able ministry to which reference has been made. In him we have an emphatic refutation of the assumption that there is something incompatible between a strong, well-disciplined intellect and a devout heart. There is no such incompatibility.

Piety has found friends in the friends of science,
And true prayer has flowed from lips
Wet with Castalian dews.

The minister who goes forth called of God to his work, possessed of *mental capacity*, *learning* and *ardent piety*, may be an able minister of the New Testament. He may become “a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the

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Word of Truth.” Such a man may “make full proof of his ministry,” and God will crown his labors with success.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF AN ABLE MINISTRY. WHY SHOULD MINISTERS OF CHRIST BE ABLE MEN?

1. That they may be men of *extensive* and *effective influence*. It has been said that educated minds rule the world. We will neither affirm nor deny the proposition, but we may say that while mental capacity, learning and piety conjointly create ministerial ability, from that ability great influence necessarily results. A man of talent, learning and piety cannot be un-influential. He puts into operation trains of influence which extend, not only to the day of his death, but through all time. It is self-evident that an able ministry must exert a more powerful influence than a feeble one. Ministerial ability creates ministerial influence, and that this influence is an important element of a minister's usefulness is manifest from Paul's language to Titus: “Let no man despise you.” As if he had said, “Establish such a reputation that every man will feel a profound respect for you.” The Apostle also says that a “bishop must have a good report of them that are without”—that is, must be held in favorable estimation by men of the world. Why? Evidently that the influence resulting from an unblemished reputation may be made subservient to usefulness in the cause of God. Ministers are required to be examples to believers. What is the philosophy of ministerial example? And how are Christians benefited by it? All the efficacy of example arises from the general fact of man's susceptibility to influence. If, then, Christians are influenced by the example of ministers, and if ministerial influence is graduated by the degree of talent, learning and piety constitution a minister's ability, how important is an able ministry! But ministers are likewise required to exert a salutary influence on the world. They must command the respect of men of the world if they would do them good. There is great diversity in the operations of men's minds. Some respect ministerial talent—others ministerial

learning—and others still ministerial piety. It is evident, therefore, that those ministers who combine these three requisites to an able ministry, will be more influential than those who possess only two, or perchance but one of them. The probabilities of ministerial success are regulated by ministerial influence, and as a powerful ministry is vastly more influential than a weak one, the importance of an able ministry cannot be denied. It may be said that the minister's success depends on the agency of the Holy Spirit. We concede it, but it is to be remembered that the Holy Spirit is not accustomed to nullify the laws of influence, but to render them subservient to the accomplishment of his purposes. God said of the ancient Israelites, "I drew them with the cords of a man"—that is, did not deal with them as machines or brutes but as rational beings.

2. *The rapid increase of knowledge among the people* suggests a second argument in proof of an able ministry.

The masses, the bone and sinew of the nations, cannot be much longer held in the shackles of ignorance. Popular intellect is throwing off its torpidity, while its activities are stimulated by the genial rays of knowledge. Kingcraft and priestcraft will be placed ere long in odious association with witchcraft. The European masses occasionally shows a disposition to call in question the divine right of kings—while crowns are losing their sacredness—thrones tottering—and scepters held less securely by the hands of royalty. The most intelligent observers of European affairs will admit that although there are sometimes popular demonstrations apparently in favor of monarchy, there is an undercurrent of republicanism at work among the people. The democratic element is gaining strength. Under the promptings of its influences millions are coming to our shores invoking citizenship.

Among our own people knowledge is extensively diffused. The means of obtaining it are multiplying. The number of schools, academies, colleges, and universities is increasing. The issues of the press are almost incredible, including the

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ponderous volume and the tiny sheet, with all intermediate grades of publications. The people must become intelligent. Popular ignorance contains not the elements of perpetuity. But what if virtue, correct moral principle, does not keep pace with intelligence? Then our people will be wise to do evil, and to do good will have no inclination. Then will be demonstrated the fact that there is no necessary connection between intellectual improvement and moral rectitude. Then will passion reign, and principle, if sought, will not be found. Then will the contaminating maxim, "all is fair in politics," be so shamelessly acted out that the great Temple of Liberty, erected by our fathers and committed to our custody, will be undermined and fall, scattering its illustrious ruins on every side, as so many proofs of the fact that intelligence alone cannot perpetuate a republican government. We say without hesitation that virtue must be allied to intelligence in indissoluble wedlock, or the sun of our country's glory will set in darkness, if not in blood—a catastrophe which would create anguish coextensive with the broad area of civilized humanity.

But how are our people to become possessed of the virtue to which we refer? The pulpit must have the most prominent agency in its production,

Must stand acknowledged while the world will stand,
The most important and effective guard,
Support and ornament of Virtue's cause.

If this be true, how important is an able ministry! Ministers are the religious teachers of the people, and must keep in advance of them, to secure their respect and be instrumental in molding their moral sentiments. The formation of correct moral principle is in all cases traceable, directly or indirectly, to the influence of Bible truth. Now it is the province of ministers to proclaim this truth—to present it in all its varied combinations—and to enforce its authority upon the conscience. They preach the gospel which is emphatically the truth, and which supplies the only substantial basis of true morality. The gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believes it, and even over those who do not believe it

so as to be saved by it, it exerts no little influence. The propriety of these views being admitted; the importance of an able ministry will also be admitted.

3. It is important to have an able ministry *to refute infidel objections to the Bible.*

These objections are numerous, and some of them can be met by none but able men. The wickedness of the human heart has done its utmost to invalidate the truth of revelation. Some of the most powerful intellects of the world, controlled by diabolical depravity, have expended all their strength to discredit the inspired volume. They have employed argument, and failing in it have resorted to ridicule. They have invoked the aid of learning, and have dealt largely in criticism. They have attempted to show the incredibility of miracles, and have pronounced prophecy fortunate guessing. They have said that belief is involuntary, and that no man is responsible for his faith. They have misrepresented the teachings of mental philosophy, in search of something to abet skepticism. They have boldly arrayed nature against the God of nature, and have represented her as speaking a language which has never been heard in any of her ten thousand utterances. They have gone back to the origin of the world, impugning the divine Record because it teaches that there was light before the sun was fixed in the heavens. Availing themselves of the telescope, they have explored the fields of space, and have found, as they supposed, in the magnitude of creation a valid objection to the fact that Christ dies for that salvation of this diminutive planet. Returning from their tours of celestial exploration, they have opened the bosom of mother earth, and, applying the ear; have listened to hear her say that the biblical account of the creation is not true. Earth has not said so, but they dispute the Mosaic narrative because they do not understand it. This is a specimen of infidel objections to the Bible, and every one sees that they have great amplitude of range. Let a weak minister attack an expert infidel, and does he take him captive by refuting such objections as these?

“Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed.”

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Who does not perceive the necessity of an able ministry? Who does not feel grateful to God that thus far he has raised up men who have discomfited all the infidel phalanxes that have been marshaled against the truth? Let the Churches have an able ministry and they have nothing to fear from the most violent and rancorous assaults of infidelity. Every argument against the divine origin of the Bible can then be conclusively refuted, every objection triumphantly met, and the foundation of the Christian system shown to be as immovable as the pillars of the Eternal Throne.

4. *The inevitable collision between Romanism and Protestantism in the United States* is suggestive of the importance of an able ministry.

We do not suppose a large number of Native Americans are adherents of the Romish faith; but multitudes of Europeans under papal influence have come and are coming to this godly land. Nor do they leave their superstitions behind them. They come with "Ave Maria" on their lips and but little gospel truth in their hearts. They are generally ignorant of the Bible, and are blindly led by their priests and bishops. But these priests and bishops! A feeble ministry would assail them in vain. There are few men so familiar with ecclesiastical history—so perfectly at home in the theological labyrinths of the dark ages—so profoundly versed in the affairs of nations, and so richly embellished with the accomplishments of elegant literature. There are probably Jesuits among them—another name for prevarication and duplicity. So temporizing are the principles of this order—so fluctuating their morality—so hypocritical their weaknesses, that Pascal, himself a Romanist, once felt called on to expose the followers of Loyola. There was a most exciting controversy. Europe beheld the contest with the deepest interest. Pascal triumphed in his "Provincial Letters," and furnished the world with unrivaled specimens of satire.

But to the matter before us, it requires an able ministry to expose, in a proper manner, the absurdities of Romanism. There must be an acquaintance with the conflicting decisions of popes and the irreconcilable decrees of councils. This will

require patient investigation, and an able ministry alone can engage in it. Some think there is no danger to our country from Romanism. This opinion may be correct, and yet we fear it is not. Many entertain the sentiment that tremendous collision between Romanism and Protestantism will occur before the millennial age, and that North America will be the theater of the conflict. Much might be said in favor of this view of the subject—enough, at least, to show the necessity of having an able ministry to defend the bulwarks of Zion.

5. *As the sublime enterprise of evangelizing the world has been committed to the Churches of Christ, it is important that they have an able ministry.*

The commission given by the Messiah just before he ascended to heaven is un-repealed. It is still obligatory on his disciples to execute it. That commission reads, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The Churches of the saints must see that their Lord's last command is obeyed. Ministers, the servants of the Churches, must carry it into execution. And will a weak ministry do it? Unless God works a miracle it cannot be done without strong men. We have seen that talent is power—that learning is power—that piety is power. Little can be done for the world's evangelization without these requisites to an able ministry. "Dialects unheard at Babel or at Jewish Pentecost" must be acquired before there can be a world-wide diffusion of the gospel. This cannot be done without mental capacity. The Scriptures must be translated into the various languages of the earth. This cannot be done without learning. Thousands should go to the East, the West, the North, the South, proclaiming salvation in the name of Jesus. And what but piety will prompt the requisite effort to do all this? What but unreserved consecration to God will induce the Churches to offer their sons for this great work? And what but zeal for the Master's glory will elicit from those sons the declaration, "Here are we; send us?"

The more we contemplate the moral grandeur of the missionary enterprise, the more deeply will we feel our dependence on God for its success, and the more evident will

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appear the importance of an able ministry. Let us think for a moment what the evangelization of the world pre-supposes. It implies the demolition of the strongholds of infidelity—the extirpation of the inveterate prejudices of the Jews against Jesus of Nazareth—the downfall of Mohammedism—the overthrow of the multiform systems of pagan superstition—the abolition of idolatrous customs observed with immemorial tenacity and veneration, while Babylon the great is to fall, like a mill-stone into the sea, to rise no more. In view of these things let no one talk of a feeble ministry. Strong men are needed who can wield any sword, and stand un-appalled in the presence of any foe. In short, exigencies will inevitably occur in the prosecution of the missionary enterprise, which will loudly call for an able ministry—a ministry distinguished for talent and learning—“mighty in the Scriptures—strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.”

These are a few of the considerations which show the importance of an able ministry. Others might be named, not, however, without causing this article to transcend its destined limits. May the Lord of the harvest send forth laborers into his harvest.

A GOOD MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST



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Some one has said that ministers of the gospel occupy an exalted eminence on which it is very difficult to stand, and from which it is unspeakably dreadful to fall. Who that knows the responsibilities of the ministerial vocation will question the correctness of this statement? Of all the men in this wide world, the heralds of salvation fill the most important station. On them devolves the solemn duty of proclaiming the truth of God. It is their business to declare the “unsearchable riches of Christ.” They deal with souls. The physician labors to eradicate diseases of the body—the minister of the gospel to eradicate the maladies of the spirit. The office of the latter is as much more important than that of the former, as the soul is more valuable than the body. Eternity invests the work of the gospel ministry with a moral grandeur before which all earthly glory fades away. How desirable that those engaged in this work so perform it as to secure the Divine approbation! Full of the sweetest music on the great day, will be the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Lord.”

WHAT CONSTITUTES A GOOD MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST? is the question to which attention is invited in this article. In answer to this question it may be said:

1. *That a good minister of Jesus Christ must be a good man.*

This is absolutely indispensable. If any class of men preeminently needs piety, ministers of the gospel compose that class. They must know what is meant by conviction of sin, repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and all kindred

topics. If they do not, they can never appreciate the gospel system of salvation. They can never preach as they ought to preach. They must of necessity "deal in the meager traffic of unfelt truth." How can a minister of the gospel unfold the turpitude of sin if he has not felt in his own soul that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God? How can he conduct others to the cross if he has never gone thither himself? How can he discourse on the preciousness of the blood of atonement, unless he has ascertained its preciousness from its application to his own conscience? How can he dwell on the love of God, if that love has not been shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit? Nothing more obviously outrages moral propriety than for an unconverted man to be a preacher of the gospel. Such a character shocks even the sensibilities of wicked men. If there be in perdition a class of sinners clothed with a deeper disgrace, and tortured with a more intense shame than any other, ungodly ministers are surely found in that class. A lost minister! What a dreadful thought! What an awful conspicuity in misery belongs to him! With what appalling prominence will he be compelled to stand forth on the plains of hell to receive heaven's first and heaviest thunders! How fearful will be the wrath of God to that man who *officially* warned others to flee from that wrath, but fled not from it himself! Who does not tremble at the thought of being an ungodly minister? When Jesus had risen from the dead, he said to Peter three times: "Do you love me?" And he obtained an affirmative answer before he said: "Feed my sheep; feed my lambs." The irresistible inference is the Great Shepherd loves his spiritual flock so well that he is unwilling to commit it to the charge of any under-shepherd who does not love him. And this shows that a good minister of Jesus Christ must be a good man. Evangelical goodness is involved in love to Christ. There is no goodness in the absence of love to Christ. It is said of Barnabas that "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and much people was added to the Lord." He was a good minister of Jesus Christ; but his goodness as a minister grew out of his goodness as a man. There is no ministerial qualification equal in importance to piety. Nothing can supply its place. Without it talent

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becomes a curse—learning the means of doing harm. With all its splendid intellectual ability—with all its profound scholarship—the absence of piety has almost proved the ruin of Germany. The evil influences of German philosophy and theology are now at work both in Great Britain and in the United States of America. Ministers should be on their guard, and churches should raise their voice against the semi-infidelity of much of the German teaching. Piety, ardent piety, must be regarded as strictly and sacredly indispensable to the ministerial office. Its primary importance must be recognized, and other things must be considered secondary. It will be a sad day for the interests of Christianity when piety in the ministry is superseded by anything. It will be a day of adversity when disparaging views of its necessity are entertained. May such a period never come! But may the sentiment universally prevail that a good minister of Jesus Christ must be a good man—a man of piety—fully consecrated to the work of the Lord.

2. *A good minister of Jesus Christ is divinely called to the work of the ministry, and influenced by proper motives to engage in it.*

Many absurd things have been said and written in reference to a call to the ministry. It has been considered by some a miraculous thing. It has been thought to involve the hearing of unearthly voices, and the seeing of unearthly sights. This view of the matter, it is to be hoped, is now nearly obsolete.

That there is such a thing as a call to the ministry may be argued from the Savior's language in Matt 9:38, "Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send laborers into his harvest." Here the fact is recognized that it is God's prerogative to "send laborers." It also appears that it is not the duty of all Christians to labor as ministers to gather in this harvest. For then there would be more than enough laborers, and the redundancy would supersede the necessity of praying to the Lord of the harvest for more. There is another portion of Scripture, Acts 20:28, which may be appropriately referred to here: "Take heed, therefore, to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has

made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he has purchased with his own blood." The Holy Spirit is here represented as having made the Ephesian elders overseers of the flock of God. There was a Divine agency in their call and consecration to the eldership. The Holy Spirit did what would not and could not have been done without his influence. Nor was this agency of the Spirit confined to apostolic times. It is still exercised. Men who are now called to the ministry of the word are moved by the Holy Spirit to engage in the work. He, having access to their hearts, excites a desire for it. "If any man desires the office of a bishop he desires a good work." The Holy Spirit not only creates in those whom he calls a desire for the work of the ministry, but makes upon them the impression that they cannot remain guiltless and refuses to engage in it. Conscience is aroused and sanctions the impulses of the Spirit, or rather the Spirit avails himself of the operation of conscience. He who is the subject of these exercises considers the gospel ministry a work of transcendent importance, and often finds himself recoiling from it. Its stupendous greatness makes him fear and tremble. Sometimes, perhaps, he concludes not to engage in it, and then darkness comes over his soul. He doubts his piety; and the reason is, (though it may not be fully understood,) he does not see how genuine piety would suffer him to resist impression so sacred, so obviously superhuman. The distressed man, amid his fears and struggles, is almost ready to say with Paul: "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."

The proof of a call to the ministry, so far as the called are concerned, consists, chiefly at least, in the impressions and desires created by the Holy Spirit. The proof, so far as others are concerned, consists in qualifications for the work, among which qualifications *aptness to teach* occupies a prominent place. God does not call men to do what they cannot do. It is the duty of all who are called by him to prepare themselves as fully as they can for their work. They are not called without regard to qualifications. Their call invariably recognizes the existence of moral qualifications, and if it does not presuppose the actual possession of the requisite mental

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attainments, it implies the practicability of making these attainments. The opposite view would represent the righteous God of heaven as reaping where he does not sow, and gathering where he does not strew.

The motives inducing an entrance on the work of the ministry have been alluded to. These motives must be pure. They must have their origin in zeal for the glory of God—love to the Savior—attachment to his cause—Christian affection for his followers—and ardent solicitude for the salvation of souls. Woe to the man who ascends Zion's sacred heights influenced by a love of fame, a desire of ease, or the prospect of pecuniary emolument. The very impurity of his motives will surround him with an atmosphere which will attract the fearful lightning of heaven. The minister is the judge of his motives. The church of which he is a member cannot know his heart. He alone can tell whether he desires the glory of God in the salvation of men. Pure motives are highly important. The moral quality of every act of a man's ministry is determined by the motive which prompts it. No one can be a good minister of Jesus Christ who is not influenced by proper motives in preaching the gospel.

3. *A good minister makes "Christ crucified" the theme of his ministry.*

This is by no means a contracted theme. Those who appreciate it will never complain of its narrowness. It is sublimely copious—gloriously comprehensive. In proof of this it is sufficient to say, that the great Apostle of the Gentiles resolved to "know nothing," or rather to make known nothing "but Christ and him crucified;" and yet he said, "I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God." Whose ministry, more fully than Paul's, ever exemplified variety of topic, amplitude of range, elevation of thought, grandeur of conception, and depth of penetration? He gloried in saying: "We preach Christ crucified." It is not to be supposed, however, that preaching "Christ crucified" implies that the fact of his crucifixion is to be perpetually dwelt upon. To preach "Christ crucified" is to preach the truths of the gospel in their relation to his death. All gospel

truths bear a relation to the cross of Christ, similar to that between the center of a circle and its radii. There is much meaning in the expression: "The truth as it is in Jesus." The truth as it is in philosophers, ancient or modern, is a different thing. The truth as it is in Moses and the prophets is distinguishable from the truth as it is in Jesus. He who understands the import of the phrase, "*the truth as it is in Jesus,*" will make the cross of Christ the central point in the system of theology.

The best way to preach repentance is to preach it in its relation to the cross. Indeed, the cross alone brings to view repentance available on account of its connection with the remission of sins. The death of Christ not only implies the ruin of the human race by means of sin, but it gives an awful exhibition of the evil of sin. Neither the miseries of earth nor the torments of hell, teach such a lesson in regard to the turpitude of sin as does the cross. What is better adapted to lead sinners to repentance than for ministers to expatiate on its nature and demerit, as seen on Calvary? What heart ever breaks with penitential sorrow away from the cross? Transgressors must look on Him whom they have pierced—then they will mourn. No man can preach "Christ crucified," according to the gospel, without preaching repentance.

This doctrine of repentance sustains a highly important relation to the cross of Christ. And the faith of the gospel can be preached only in its connection with the death of Christ. He is the object of faith, and the faith which justifies is termed, "faith in his blood"—that is, it embraces the atonement made by his blood. It leads those who exercise it to rely on Christ's expiatory sacrifice for salvation. How can this faith be called into existence unless Jesus is preached as a sacrifice for sin? God, in the death of his Son, virtually says to lost sinners, "I offer you my Son as a Savior." Every believer says, "I accept the offer." This is the essence of faith—TO RECEIVE CHRIST. But how can he be received as an atoning Savior unless he is preached as a crucified Savior? Faith has much to do with Christ as crucified. All the inhabitants of our world ought to love God. How is the duty of love to God most effectually preached? Evidently in

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its relation to the cross. In the death of Christ we see so much of the benevolence of God that we are compelled to exclaim: "Herein is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "We love him because he first loved us." The proof of his love is furnished in the death of Christ. Is not such love well adapted to excite ours? Is it not better to appeal to God's love as seen in the cross than to his goodness as seen in providence? The important duty of love to God cannot be preached as it ought to be preached, except in connection with the fact that the Divine character is displayed in Christ crucified.

The ordinances of the gospel should be preached in their relation to Christ crucified. We are said to be baptized into the death of Christ. We commemorate his burial and resurrection, which imply his death. In our death to sin and resurrection to newness of life, we feel the power of Christ's resurrection. And why is there power in his resurrection? It is derived from the atoning virtue of his death. There is power in his resurrection, because it is a demonstration of the value of his sacrifice. But for the value of his sacrifice he would not have risen at all. Baptism, if preached aright, is preached in its relation to faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior.

The Lord's Supper, all know, refers to Christ crucified. "This do," said Jesus, "in remembrance of me." The language of an apostle is: "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you show the Lord's death till he come." Divest this ordinance of its reference to the death of Christ, and all its significance is lost. Observe it as the gospel requires, and it is a most impressive memento of the scene of crucifixion on Calvary.

It is worthy of remark, too, that the cross is referred to in the Scriptures, as supplying the most powerful motives to practical godliness. Paul argues, that as Christ has died, "they who live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to Him who died for them, and rose again." The truth here taught is that the influences emanating from the death of

Christ should expel the principle of selfishness from the hearts of those for whom He died, and induce, on their part, an unreserved consecration to the service of the Redeemer. As Jesus died for us, we ought to live for him, is an appeal to ransomed sinners which they must feel. No consideration more certainly reaches the heart. No fact makes so deep an impression on the soul. No motive so infallibly prompts to action. No guarantee for practical obedience is so safe. Paul understood the philosophy of the subject. Hence, to excite a spirit of pecuniary liberality among the Corinthians, he said, "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes, he became poor, that you, through his poverty, might be rich." The argument he employs to induce husbands to love their wives is this: "Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it." And when he speaks of certain characters that were destitute of feeling—living in sin and working out their own destruction, he says to the Ephesians: "But you have not so learned Christ." In view of these considerations, we insist that a good minister makes Christ crucified the theme of his ministry.

4. *A good minister of Jesus Christ presents the Doctrinal, the Experimental, and the Practical Topics of the Gospel, in harmonious proportion.*

It is said, that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works." The idea prevails, to a considerable extent, that the same preacher cannot, in his sermons, combine doctrine, experience, and practice. Hence it is often said, Mr. A. is an able *doctrinal* minister—Mr. B. dwells with great power on *experimental* religion—while Mr. C. is unrivaled as a *practical* preacher. Now, it is possible for the excellence of the three to be united; and in a good minister of Jesus Christ, they are united. Without this union the ministerial character does not make a respectable approach to perfection.

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The doctrines of the gospel are all-important. They lie at the basis of the system of Christianity. They are the foundation-stones of the system; and "if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" None of the doctrines of the Bible have been revealed to gratify the vain curiosity of men, but to produce experimental and practical results. They ought, therefore, to be preached in connection with experience and practice; and to divorce them therefrom is a great ministerial blunder. The doctrines of the gospel, when received, lead to experimental results. They reach and affect the heart. They stir up the deep foundations of feeling in the soul. Piety has much to do with the feelings and affections. Experimental religion has been often referred to, in terms of disparagement. It has been considered by some identical with enthusiasm, and the weakness of those believing in it has been eloquently deplored. None of these things move us. So far from it, we state in the face of them all that no man can rationally decide he is a Christian, without appealing to his experience. Can he be a Christian without repentance, faith, and love? Certainly not. But he cannot tell whether he repents, believes, and loves, without referring to his experience. Making a public profession of Christianity, does not of itself, settle the question. It is no proof at all, unless the proper *motives* induce the profession; and there can be no knowledge of the motives without an appeal to experience. This is too plain to need elaboration. The doctrines of the gospel when received, as already intimated, are productive of experimental effects. What these effects are, a minister must know, if he would delineate Christian character with accuracy. He must necessarily dwell on the experimental topics of the gospel. Experience is midway between doctrine and practice. The object of doctrinal preaching is to produce practical results. Perhaps we should say this is the ulterior object. Before, however, practical effects can be hoped for, experimental results must be secured. The tree must first be made good, and then the fruit will be good. Experience, therefore, may be considered the ligament binding together doctrine and practice. Doctrine received first regulates the heart, and then proceeds to the regulation of the life. Having produced experimental, it next produces practical effects.

That the doctrinal inculcations of the gospel are designed to be practical in their tendency and influence, is manifest from the following quotations: "He that hears these sayings of mine and *does* them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house upon a rock;" "If you know these things, happy are you if you *do* them;" "Why call you me, Lord, Lord, and *do not* the things which I say?" "The grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live *soberly, righteously, and godly*, in this present world;" "But be *doers* of the word, and not hearers only, deciding your own souls." In view of these passages it may be emphatically said, that the gospel is practical.

Now, a man to be a good minister of Jesus Christ, must not exhibit doctrinal truth alone—nor experimental truth exclusively—nor practical truth by itself. The three classes of truths are all "in Jesus;" and they must all be presented in symmetrical and harmonious proportion. The good minister of Jesus Christ does this.

5. *A good minister considers preaching the gospel the great business of his life, and, so far as circumstances allow, consecrates himself unreservedly to it.*

It is not optional with him to engage in the ministry for a time, and then abandon it for some other pursuit. This is utterly incompatible with his ordination vows. Every Christian is under sacred obligations to serve God during life in that department of labor in which he can be most useful. The minister has selected a particular sphere of labor and he is solemnly bound to continue in it. The command to him from heaven is, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season." With this command sounding in their ears, it is strange, indeed, that so many ministers make preaching the gospel a secondary matter. They are presidents of colleges, professors in literary institutions, secretaries of various benevolent societies, teachers of schools, merchants, farmers, editors, etc., etc. We will not say that it is necessarily wrong for ministers to act in these various capacities, but we do say that many of them have gone too far, and others are in

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danger of going too far. A salutary caution is required on the part of those who preach the gospel. It is to be hoped the day will come when laymen will occupy many of the positions now occupied by ministers. Why may it not be so? Laymen may become, if they are not already, as competent to superintend the educational interests of the country as ministers. Ordination is not to be considered a passport to the presidency of a college. Secretaryships could be efficiently executed by men on whose heads hands were never laid. Languages and mathematics can be taught by those who never went into a pulpit. Young ladies can be instructed in all the branches of female education by preceptors who cannot preach. It will be said that many ministers are compelled to engage in secular or *semi*-secular pursuits, because the churches do not sustain them. There is much truth in this, but it is not all truth. There are ministers who would be adequately supported if the churches saw in them a disposition to give themselves wholly to the ministry of the word. There are others who would not, in any circumstances, be sustained, because they *cannot* preach though they attempt it, and the churches are not liberal enough to pay men for attempting to do what they cannot do. In a vast number of cases, however, the churches are highly culpable. They force ministers of piety and talent to engage in worldly pursuits to support themselves and their families. Many of the best preachers have been compelled to do this. They have partially withdrawn themselves from the pulpit and they have shed bitter tears over the sad necessity laid upon them. Godly men! Whose sympathies are not excited for them? Their course is justified by the example of Paul, who, when circumstances called for it, resorted to "tent-making," and was able to say: "These hands have ministered to my necessities."

With, we trust, a brotherly appreciation of ministerial embarrassments and difficulties, we still insist that a man, to be a good minister of Christ, must, so far as circumstances render it practicable, consecrate himself unreservedly to the work of the ministry. Preaching the gospel must be regarded as paramount to everything else. Humbly as he may think of

himself, he must “magnify his office.” He must have such views of the moral grandeur and dignity of his vocation to abandon it for a monarch’s throne and a monarch’s crown. Such a man will be constrained by the love of Christ to live not to himself, but “to him who died and rose again.” He will say: “I am not my own—I am bought with a price—precious blood has been shed for me—and, therefore, I will write on my talents and attainments, *holiness to the Lord.*” Such a minister does not contemplate a voluntary relinquishment of his work as a possible thing. Whether his days are many or few, it is his purpose to spend them in proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ. He expects, when he falls a victim to death, to fall from Zion’s consecrated heights.

6. *A good minister of Jesus Christ preaches with affectionate earnestness.*

God is love—Jesus Christ is the gift of his love—the gospel proclaims his love—the Christian economy is invested with the richest glories of his love—and, therefore, the hearts of ministers should be deeply imbued with love. There should be a cordial love for souls, and out of this love will arise earnest anxiety for their salvation. The manner of preaching should indicate affection for souls. Some ministers have an unfortunate manner. There is a harshness about it. They seem to preach as if they felt no sympathy for their hearers. They denounce sin with terrible severity, and this is right; but where is their affectionate compassion for the sinner? They speak of the fearful consequences of sin, but their hearts are not broken with sympathetic sorrow, lest those consequences be exemplified in their auditors. The apparent want of interest in the spiritual welfare of their congregations causes the sermons of many ministers to fall powerless from the pulpit. Their preaching is a kind of perfunctory, official exercise in which their hearts feel no special concern. Truth is preached, it may be, but not fully in the love of it. Souls are comparatively uncared for, and the question: “Lord, who hath believed our report?” is seldom asked when the sermon is over. In opposition to his style of preaching we insist that a good minister of Jesus Christ preaches with affectionate earnestness. Paul was an

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illustration of what we mean. He said to the Thessalonians: "So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted to you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because you were dear to us." To the Corinthians he said: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God." In giving an account of his ministry at Ephesus, he said: "I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears." All this shows affectionate earnestness. Paul was "debtor to the Greek and the barbarian, to the wise and the unwise." He was; therefore, ready to preach the gospel anywhere and everywhere. His mighty heart throbbed with benevolence for all men. There was not a sin he did not hate; there was not a sinner he did not love. His abhorrence of sin was mingled with compassion for the sinner. That this was not impossible, no one doubts who has learned the lessons of Calvary. In the cross God appears as the sinner's friend, and the uncompromising, eternal enemy of sin. Paul loved the souls of those to whom he preached, and ardently desired their salvation. He warned his hearers "night and day, with tears." He was a weeping preacher. He had "Great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart." He travailed in birth for souls. He felt in his spirit agonies analogous to the pains of parturition. He was profoundly in earnest about the salvation of souls. He preached with the terrors of judgment before him. He preached for eternity. He preached as a sinner saved by grace, and told other sinners that they might be saved by the same grace. O, that ministers of this age were more like Paul! How can they avoid being like him in his agonizing earnestness? They know the soul is of inestimable value. They know blood of infinite worth has been shed for its salvation. They know there is an eternal heaven and an eternal hell. They know their hearers will go to hell unless they can be persuaded to go to heaven. They know the work of persuasion is confined to this short life. How then can they be otherwise than earnest in their ministry? Is it possible for them to speak with indifference of salvation, death, judgment, heaven, hell, and eternity? A good minister of Jesus Christ is one who preaches with affectionate earnestness.

7. *A good minister trusts in God alone for success.*

His encouragement is that Christ says: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." The heralds of salvation go forth delivering their message to the enemies of God. Every one of their hearers is, in his natural state, a rebel against the Divine government. The un-renewed heart, inflated with pride, rises up in opposition to all the principles of the Divine administration. The terms of salvation through Christ are humiliating and repulsive to the un-humbled soul. There is no disposition to be saved by grace; for to be saved in this way involves the justice of the sentence of condemnation pronounced by the law. Whatever men may think or say it is unquestionably true that sinners feel a special aversion to the way of salvation through Christ. There is but *one* way of salvation, and to this they object. How then are they to be saved? Their aversion must surely be overcome—their pride must be subdued—their enmity to God must be slain—in short, they must become new creatures in Christ Jesus, old things passing away and all things becoming new. How is this to be done? Is it by ministerial excellence of speech? Is it by the sonorous periods of a fascinating rhetoric? Is it by the power of logical demonstration? Alas!

"Leviathan is not so tamed."

Depravity has over the unregenerate heart, a dominion which no earthly agency can disturb. Talent, learning, and eloquence may expend their strength, but they will expend it in vain. We know the opinion is entertained in some that the enmity of sinners against God arises from a misconception of his character—so that, the misconception being rectified, the enmity will cease. We demur to this view. Sinners' hatred of God does not originate in mistake as to his character. They do not hate him because they ascribe to him attributes he does not possess. They hate him on account of attributes he does possess. This being the fact, the more they know of him, the more they will hate him till their hearts are changed. Thorough knowledge of an object, hated on account of what it is, can only intensify the hatred. What then is a minister to do? He preaches to unregenerate souls, and he cannot

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regenerate them. He preaches to God's enemies, and he cannot make them his friends. He preaches to sinners dead in sin, and he cannot give them life. He preaches to those on their way to hell, and he cannot turn them heavenward. The good minister of Jesus Christ feels his incompetence—feels that he is powerless. He would sink into utter despair did he not hear the voice of God saying: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts." He remembers that in apostolic times, Paul with all his mighty argumentative powers, and Apollos with all his captivating oratory, were nothing of themselves. They planted and watered, but God gave the increase. The gospel as preached by them was effectual, not at all times, not in all circumstances, but when it reached the people, "not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance." The apostles anticipated success in their labors only so far as God's blessing accompanied those labors. And it is characteristic of all good ministers of Christ that they trust in God for success. They recognize in themselves feeble instruments, and acknowledge the regenerating, the life giving, and soul-saving agency to be divine. They know it is the province of the Holy Spirit to change the perverse disposition of the heart. They know that, to impart life to a soul dead in sin, a power is requisite equivalent to that employed in the creation of the world. They know that wherever there is "a new creature in Christ Jesus," there are as real, if not as signal manifestations of a divine operation as will be seen on the last day when Omnipotence will revive and raise the dust of mortality from the cold embraces of the grave. We say again, that the good minister's only hope of success is in God. In his brightest, as well as in his gloomiest hour, he says: "My soul waits only upon God; for my expectation is from him."

We have referred to the inadequacy of all ministerial appliances to regenerate a soul. And when souls are born of God, he alone can guide them in the way they should go. The perseverance of saints in the divine life is owing to the fact that they obtain help of God, and are kept by his power through faith unto salvation. It is the chief shepherd who

leads his flock into green pastures, beside the still waters. Under-shepherds can do nothing, only so far as He is pleased to make use of them. This is as it ought to be. "The treasure of the gospel is in earthen vessels that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of me." "Neither is he that plants anything, neither he that waters, but God that gives the increase."

We think too, it may be said, other things being equal, that those ministers are most successful in their labors of love that cherish most deeply a sense of dependence upon God. This feeling of dependence promotes the spirit of prayer, and prayer in the closet brings down blessings on the ministrations of the pulpit. There is too little prayer among ministers, and the reason is they are not as deeply and as constantly sensible of their dependence upon God as they ought to be. Alas! The imperfection of the messengers of salvation. Alas! How much is wanting to give symmetry of ministerial character. He, who would aspire to be a good minister of Jesus Christ, must feel his dependence on God for success.

8. *Finally, a Good Minister bears with patience the trials of the Ministry.*

Some will say, it may be, "Do ministers have trials? We thought they trod a flowery path to the skies." Yes, ministers have trials. There are as many thorns as flowers, in the path they tread. Said the seraphic Samuel Pearce, "Small as my trials are, I would rather work at the anvil than bear them for any master but Christ." As a general thing, those who engage in the ministry, sacrifice their worldly interests. They make up their minds to live and die poor. If they are supported while able to perform active labor, they know the day of affliction may come, and find them comparatively destitute of the comforts, and even the necessaries of life. They look forward to death, and the thought of leaving their families to struggle with the ills of poverty breaks their hearts. The pious minister just referred, expressed himself thus:—"The only thing that lay heavy on my heart, when in the nearest prospect of eternity, was the future situation of

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my family. I had but a comparatively small portion to leave behind me, and that little was the *all* that an amiable woman—delicately brought up, and, through mercy, for the most part comfortably provided for since she entered on domestic life—with five babes to feed, clothe, and educate, had to subsist on. Ah, what prospect! Hard and long I strove to realize the promises made to the widow and the fatherless.” Many a godly minister has gone to the very gates of death with a heart sad and dreary, not on account of his prospect in the world of spirits, but on account of the future condition of his family. But the good minister patiently bears the trials connected with poverty. He remembers that his Master when on earth had not where to lay his head. This thought represses every murmur, and he says: “Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and will I repine?” A good minister of Jesus Christ is a persecuted man. Such a minister tries to please God by declaring his whole counsel. A man who preaches the whole truth will be the victim of persecution. His name will be cast out as evil. The reason is obvious. Wicked men do not love the truth of God, and do not, of course, love its advocates. In this day, however, faithful ministers are more persecuted by the professed friends of Christ than by his reputed enemies. This can be easily accounted for. The most of Christ’s professed friends hold to some human *traditions*. They “teach for doctrines the commandments of men.” A good minister of Jesus Christ condemns this, and exalts to its proper place, the word of God, as the “only rule of faith and practice.” And then the patrons of tradition calumniate him and attempt to destroy his reputation. He is charged with saying what he never said, and with doing what he never did. Insinuations are made against him. Almost every breeze bears some unfavorable rumor. His popularity declines and it is well if his own brethren do not wish to dismiss him, although he has incurred his unpopularity by preaching truths dear to them, and which they probably urged him to preach. But none of these things move the good minister of Jesus Christ. He bears them with patience, not because he is possessed of a stoical insensibility, but because the grace of God sustains him. Many are the trials of a minister in the bosom of the

church of which he is a pastor. It may be that he sees church members engrossed with the things of the world—suffering their zeal and spirituality to decline—their own once fervent “love to wax cold;” considering it his duty to “reprove and rebuke,” he does so, and gives offense. It may be that those who are surrounded by the influences of wealth and position, think they are treated with too little consideration—and the poor, probably too sensitive, imagine they are admonished with greater severity because of their poverty—when possible the pastor never thought of the rich and poor *as such*. It is now whispered, that the minister does not suit that church—evil influences begin to work—and unless there are a few firm, judicious brethren, who defend the pastor, it is soon announced in the newspapers that he has resigned his charge. When the minister learns what is going on, he is astonished. He looks abroad on the wide world, and very probably sees no spot he can call his own. His countenance is sad—his wife, like an angel, smiles through her tears—and his children know not what awaits them. The man of God hears of the injury he has sustained; and when he remembers, it may be, that those who have brought it upon him were led to Christ under his ministry—received baptism at his hands—were delighted to recognize him as their spiritual father—and that now his fidelity to his Lord and to their souls has caused this alienation—all the fountains of his sorrow are stirred within him, and copious bitter tears roll down his cheeks. He wonders that a faithful performance of his duty has been followed by such results, and the whole matter is enveloped in mystery until he remembers what was said to the apostle of the Gentiles: “I will show him how great things he will suffer for my sake.” The distressed heart, like a faithful echo, repeats, “*for my sake*.” “And is it for your sake, my gracious Lord,” exclaims the weeping minister, “that I bear this?” “Then I will bear it without a murmur.” He wipes away his tears—the sad countenance wears an unearthly smile—and the cheerful voice is heard singing,

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Jesus I my cross have taken
All to leave and follow thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence, my all shalt be:
And whilst thou shalt smile upon me,
God of wisdom, love, and might.
Foes may hate, and friends disown me –
Show thy face, and all is bright.

Man may trouble and distress me,
Twill but drive me to thy breast;
Life with trials hard may press me,
Heaven will bring me sweeter rest:
O, tis not in grief to harm me,
While thy love is left to me:
O, were not in joy to charm me
Were that joy unmixed with thee.

I might refer to other ministerial trials, but let them remain unmentioned. Greater trials have been borne, than ministers are called to bear now. How “fiery” the trials of apostolic times! And among the apostles themselves, there was one man to whom was assigned a sad pre-eminence in tribulation. Let him speak: “Are they ministers of Christ? I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, 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 watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting so often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.” What an appalling recapitulation of sufferings and persecutions is this! And yet the illustrious sufferer adds: “If I must need glory, I will glory of the things which concern my infirmities.” Other words uttered by Paul, every minister should bind to his heart, and extract from them the richest

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consolation. As a specimen of these precious words, we may mention the following: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which will be revealed in us." "Our light affliction that is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Under the influence of such sentiments as these, it will be comparatively easy for the laborer "in word and doctrine" to bear trials with patience, and thus show himself to be a GOOD MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST.

**SELECTED SERMONS
FROM SHORT SERMONS ON
IMPORTANT SUBJECTS**



BY

JAMES MADISON PENDLETON



ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN
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PREFACE

My Prefatory words will be few. This volume is sent forth with the hope that its perusal will do good. Nothing else is worth writing for—nothing else is worth living for.

The reader will perceive that the “Sermons” are short. To have made them longer would have been comparatively easy. A dozen of them might be made to occupy as much space as is occupied by them all. It was thought better, however, to have a large number of “short sermons.” In their preparation I have indulged the hope that they will be especially useful to one class of readers—YOUNG PREACHERS. I have aimed to discuss important subjects, and to treat the texts I have chosen in an easy and a natural way. If the sermons have not grown out of the texts, I have unfortunately failed to carry my intention into effect. Out of the chief excellences of sermonizing consists in developing and maintaining the proper relationship between the text and the discourse. When this relation is shown, it originates trains of thought which may be followed out by the hearer or reader. And it is very questionable whether those sermons do much good which produce only transient emotion, and are not so constructed as to supply materials for reflection when the hour of delivery is past.

Some of these “Short Sermons” were prepared as early as the year 1855, and others as recently as the present year; but the most of them were written during the three intervening years. Their preparation having extended through a period so long, it will not be strange if the reader sometimes finds

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the same forms of expression used more than once. Still it is believed no offensive sameness will be found.

I send the volume forth, commending it to the blessing of God who can give it favor with the people, and make it the means of doing some good.


J.M.P.

Union University,
Murfreesboro, Tenn. July, 1859



SERMON 1

NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

or I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth.
Rom. 1:16

Paul was an admirable specimen of a gospel preacher. His heart was in his work. He felt his responsibility. He was untiring in his efforts to do good. The supreme desire of his heart was to glorify God and promote the interests of his cause. His love of souls was most intense—most affectionate. He loved the gospel, and proclaimed it everywhere. In obscure and in inconspicuous places, among the wise and the ignorant, in the presence of philosophers and peasants, he was ready to tell the story of Calvary. Hence he says, in the verses preceding the text: “I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and the unwise; so much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.”

It is probable that Paul’s enemies insinuated that though he preached the gospel in other places, and professed to glory in it, he would be ashamed of it in the seven-hilled city. There Virgil sung, and Cicero electrified the crowds that hung on his lips. There philosophers taught, and military heroes were extolled. There science had made progress, and art displayed her stories. The wisdom of the world was there. Would Paul not blush to preach salvation through the “crucified Nazarene” in the great city—the metropolis of the greatest empire on earth? His enemies perhaps thought he would, but he said: “I am ready to preach the gospel to you

that are at Rome also, for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.” He was not ashamed of the gospel—not ashamed of it *in Rome*. My object at present is to vindicate the avowal of the sentiment of the text, and show that there is nothing in the gospel to be ashamed of.

1. *I am not ashamed of the Author of the gospel.* Who is the author? Jesus Christ—God manifest in the flesh. He is the true God, possessor of every divine perfection. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. He upholds all things by the word of his power. He is the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person. Everything august and glorious in divinity belongs to him. Nor is this all: the eternal Word was made flesh—became incarnate. He, however, assumed human nature in a miraculous manner, and thereby escaped its contamination. He is considered as a man, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Spotless purity and immaculate excellence were never exemplified on earth except in the person of Jesus Christ. Everything lovely in sinless humanity may be found in the character of Christ. His mediatorial person exhibits a bright assemblage of divine and human excellences. There is in the wide universe but one Jesus Christ. His character is gloriously unique.

All human beauties, all divine,
In our beloved meet and shine.

Infidels, with idiotic folly, deride the miracles of the New Testament, and endorse the proverb of the Greeks—“*miracles for fools.*” Those infidels, however, say that the writings of the evangelists and apostles are the productions of uninspired men. If this be so, it may well be said that the *uninspired* delineation of such a character as that given to Jesus Christ is a greater miracle than any recorded by the evangelists. NO pen, unguided by inspiration, could ever have delineated such a character. The Christian’s Redeemer is “the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.” Deservedly has he “a name above every name, that at the

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name of Jesus every knee should bow, of beings in Heaven, and beings on earth, and beings under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that he is Lord.”

The author of the gospel is adored by all the hosts of Heaven. Every harp of glory is tuned to his praise, and “worthy the Lamb” resounds throughout the celestial mansions. Well, then, may the Christian say, “I am not ashamed of the author of the gospel.”

2. And, secondly, he may say, *I am not ashamed of the immortality the gospel discloses*. Many great men and distinguished theologians have, to some extent, discredited the Bible, and inflicted serious injury on the world by insisting that the light of nature teaches what the Scriptures alone teach. Who has not been disgusted at many things that have been written of “natural religion?” Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as “natural religion;” yet men write and preach as if there were. And how many attempts have been made to prove, independently of the Bible, the immortality of the soul? Men, to do this, have employed all their ingenuity, and put logic to the rack; and suppose they had accomplished their purpose, what then? Why they would have diminished greatly the value and utility of the inspired writings; they would have disparaged the Word of the living God. The immortality of the soul can not be proved independently of the Bible; and it is time for everybody to know it. Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel. The idea here is not that immortal life was an object of which there was no conception under the Old Testament economy. This is not true. But it is true that the gospel brings immortality to light—clearly, fully. It divests the doctrine of all obscurity, and clothes it with the richest splendor. “The law and the prophets” shed their twilight on the subject, but the gospel pours upon it noontide effulgence. This glorious gospel teaches man that he is his Maker’s equal in immortality of existence. What an idea! How it ennobles man! It divests him of all the insignificance that might attach to him on account of his short sojourn on earth, and exalts him to unspeakable

dignity. Who can be ashamed of the gospel because immortality is disclosed by its teachings? Is not this a reason why it should be gloried in?

3. The Christian may say, "*I am not ashamed of the salvation the gospel reveals.*" This is a great, a precious salvation. It originated in the infinitely benevolent heart of the God of Heaven. His love to our apostate race prompted him to employ his wisdom in projecting the plan of this salvation. Created wisdom was altogether incompetent to its projection. In this plan the omniscient God himself has "abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." In pursuance of the plan of salvation, Jesus submitted to the death of the cross, and made an atonement for sin. The Holy Spirit has come into the world to apply the benefits of redemption to the soul. The salvation of the gospel does everything for man which he needs. Is he guilty?—it brings him pardon. Is he condemned?—it offers him justification. Is he polluted with sin?—it provides for his sanctification. Is he a dying creature?—it guarantees his resurrection from the grave. In the language of the Scripture, the author of this gospel is made to us "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

The salvation which the gospel reveals is honorable to God. It secures the concurring harmony of all the divine perfections in the redemption of the saved. It illustrates the divine character, and invests the divine administration with superlative glory. The dignity of the law is maintained; its majesty is vindicated; justice is satisfied; the honor of the divine government is sustained, and the Eternal Throne is radiant with a light that would never have encircled it if the Cross had not been erected on Calvary.

The salvation of the gospel does great things for man. It finds him the slave of Satan—in the deep miseries of the fall—in the suburbs of hell—without hope and without God. It commences its operations with him in these gloomy circumstances, and completes its work in his elevation to the throne of glory. Is this a salvation to be ashamed of? Is a

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poor sinner to be ashamed of it? As well might the darkness of midnight be ashamed of the light of the noonday sun—as well might death be ashamed of life—as well might a worm be ashamed to live in the same universe with an archangel.

4. The Christian may say, “*I am not ashamed of the requirements of the Gospel.*” It requires nothing which ought not to be required; it prohibits nothing which ought not to be prohibited. Were its precepts universally compiled with, earth would resemble heaven.

The gospel requires men to detach their affections from sin and the world; to place them supremely on God, and seek happiness in him. It is disgraceful to love sin—it is the most odious thing in the universe. It argues a miserably perverted moral taste to love sin. The gospel, in requiring the detachment of the affections of the heart from sin, consults the dignity as well as the safety of the sinner. To place the affections on God, and seek happiness in Him, is man’s most reasonable service, to the performance of which he should be prompted by a desire to please God and promote his own best interests.

The gospel requires sinners to repent. There is nothing in repentance to be ashamed of. Sin is the thing to be ashamed of. So far as a depraved creature can be magnanimous, there is magnanimity in being sorry for what is wrong.

The gospel requires faith in Christ. Faith embraces the atoning mediator, and relies on His blood; it appropriates the benefits of redemption; it is the spiritual ligament that binds the soul to Christ; it makes the blessings of the new Covenant secure to the believer.

There is nothing in faith to be ashamed of. Indeed, we may thankfully regard it as the instrument of uniting us to the Redeemer.

The gospel requires the baptism of the penitent believer. This is a solemn ordinance—the divinely appointed method of making a public profession of Christianity. It commemorates the burial and resurrection of Christ, and symbolically proclaims the believer’s death to sin. There is

surely nothing in baptism to be ashamed of—there is much in its symbolic import to glory in.

The gospel requires an observance of the Lord's Supper. This ordinance is a memorial of the Savior's death. It commemorates the most important event that ever occurred in the universe—the creation of the world is as nothing compared to it—angels study the glorious mysteries connected with the death of Christ. How solemn and delightful the scene, when a company of baptized believers commemorate the sufferings of Him who died for their redemption! They ought not to be ashamed to remember their best Friend—they should glory in remembering him.

The gospel requires prayer, perusal of the Scriptures, holy living, etc. On these points I cannot enlarge—I may say there is nothing here to be ashamed of. And this is true of all gospel requirements—they are all right. There is a manifest propriety in them. Who would be ashamed of them?

5. The Christian may say, "*I am not ashamed of the effects the Gospel produces.*" Here, if space allowed, I might refer to the influence of the Gospel on national character. The gospel is the great instrument of civilization. The best way to civilize, is to evangelize a nation. But I must not dwell on the national influences of the gospel.

What are its effects on individual moral character? It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It is the instrument through which God exerts His saving power. Wherever believed it saves the soul. "To every one that believeth." No one is unsaved by the gospel who believes it. What an effect! Salvation—the salvation of the soul from sin, and the eventual salvation of the body from the grave. We have seen that the gospel provides for the sinner's justification—it provides also for his regeneration and through his justification and regeneration for the obedience of his life. The gospel, therefore, affects man's state in law—affects his heart—affects his life.

The gospel produces patience and resignation under the trials and afflictions of life. It is not a system of stoicism

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which deprives man of sensibility, and makes him resigned because he has no feeling; it makes the sensibilities more exquisite, more acute, and yet produces quiet resignation. It causes the submissive sufferer to smile through his tears and say, "Not my will, O! Lord, but Your will be done." It sanctifies sorrow; and, in its vocabulary, affliction means "blessing in disguise."

The gospel extracts the sting of death, and dissipates the darkness of the grave. It lights up the valley of the shadow of death. Through the sacred influence how many a dying chamber has been illuminated with light from Heaven! How many a final hour has been more joyful than any preceding one!

The gospel inspires the soul with the hope of Heaven. Eternal glory is the grand object of the Christian's hope. This hope is "an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering to that within the vale." It is a hope that "makes not ashamed," and, therefore, there is nothing in the gospel which inspires this hope to be ashamed of. Nothing to be ashamed of, but everything to glory in. The effects the gospel produces will never cause its friends to blush with shame.

REMARKS

1. How many who read this Short Sermon will be able to say in truth, we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ? Nominal professor, you are ashamed of it. Impenitent sinner, you are ashamed of it.
2. If there is so much in the gospel to glory in, how actively should Christians be engaged in conveying it to every land, that it may be published to every creature? Remember, Christian, as a motive to do this, that the gospel is the power of God to salvation to every believer.



SERMON 2

THE INSPIRATION AND UTILITY OF THE SCRIPTURE

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness—2 Tim 3:16

The Scriptures have been highly valued by the saints in all ages of the world. They have been perused and re-perused with devout interest by the people of God. Job, who lived many centuries before the coming of Christ, said, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." And David said of the statutes of the Lord, "More to be desired are they than gold—yea, than much fine gold; sweeter, also, than honey and the honeycomb." Are the declaration of Job and the encomium of David extravagant? By no means. And why? Because all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. The Bible is not of human origin. If it was, it could not have escaped human imperfection, nor could it with propriety be adopted as the standard of faith and practice. It is God's book, and is, therefore, the book of books.

The text affirms the inspiration and utility of the Scriptures. We consider,

I. THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

By the inspiration of the Bible, I mean that the writers of the Old and New Testament were so directly and immediately under the influence of the Holy Spirit, that God himself spoke through them to the world. The truths which they committed to record were as certainly true as if Jehovah had uttered them in an audible voice from the heaven of heavens.

“Holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”
“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has, in these last days, spoken to us by His Son.”

If my view of inspiration is correct, it follows that the sacred writers were infallibly preserved from error. But, perhaps, you are ready to inquire for the evidences of inspiration. These are of two kinds, namely, internal and external. To these I will briefly refer—for the limits of a short discourse demand brevity.

One internal proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures may be derived from the fact that it was *naturally* impossible for men to write them without divine assistance. There are facts contained in the Bible of which the unaided mind of man could have formed no conception. There was among the old philosophers a proverb of this kind: “Out of nothing, nothing comes.” And it is true so far as the exertions of finite power are concerned—in its application to the operations of Omnipotence it is not true. The proper idea of creation is the production of something out of nothing. It is evident, therefore, that those who indorsed the old proverb had no conception of the work of creation. “The world by wisdom knew not God.” Even if it were conceded that men would infer from the works of nature the existence of God, they could learn from those works nothing about his moral character. And this is the very point on which accountable creatures emphatically need information. Of the sublime doctrines of redemption, men, left to themselves, would have no idea. Those doctrines are above and beyond the range of created intellect. Man’s intellectual incompetence to produce such a book as the Bible, shows that it is not his work. He did not make the Bible, because he could not.

But it was *morally* impossible for men to write the Bible without divine assistance. Had they been *naturally*, *mentally* competent, they would have been *morally* incompetent. There are no good men who are not made so by almighty grace. If, however, we waive this point, and admit, for argument’s sake, that men may be good independently of

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divine influence, still it follows that good men did not write the Bible without divine aid—for those who wrote it inform us that they were inspired of the Holy Spirit. If they were good men this is true, because good men will not make a false statement. The fact is, therefore, established, that good men did not make the Bible without divine assistance. Did bad men make it? This supposition is absurd; for it implies that wicked men would write a book which commends every virtue and condemns every vice. And more—it implies that these wicked men pronounced sentence of condemnation on themselves, and had nothing to expect in the world to come but endless perdition. This would have been at war with the powerful principle of self love, and also a violation of the analogies of the moral world. But, on the hypothesis that bad men composed the Bible, how happens it that bad men now do not love a book made by their predecessors in wickedness? Why should wicked men write a book that all the wicked living subsequently have condemned? The worldly philosopher can not rationally say that philosophy conceived the doctrines of the Bible, for worldly philosophy derides them as revealed. It would surely be unphilosophical for philosophy to scorn what philosophy originated. We are irresistibly led to the conclusion that it is impossible for men (whether good or bad men,) to write the Bible. The moral impossibility in the case, conjoined with the intellectual impossibility, furnishes a demonstration of the superhuman origin of the Scriptures. The argument, in a few words, is this: *Man, of himself, could not have made the Bible if he would, and would not have made it if he could.* It is God's book for the best of reasons. It tells us what no being in the universe but God could tell us. Its own contents are credentials of its divine origin. But the external evidences of the inspiration of the Bible supply other credentials. The most prominent of these evidences are miracles and prophecy." A miracle is an occurrence at variance with the laws of nature—it is a suspension of some natural law. It is to be remembered, however, that the laws of nature are the laws of God. This being the fact, it is manifest that the Author of these laws can suspend them at pleasure; for their suspension requires no greater exertion of

power than their original establishment. It may be said, too, that the introduction of a new dispensation of religion furnishes a suitable opportunity for the display of miraculous power; hence, Moses, in initiating the Jewish economy, being divinely empowered to do so, wrought many wonderful works—hence, Jesus, at the beginning of the Christian dispensation, performed many miracles in attestation of his divine mission, and the Apostles, receiving power from Him, astonished the people with signs, wonders and mighty deeds. These miracles were wrought in the presence of thousands of competent witnesses, and are as fully proved as testimony can prove anything. And the miracles of the Bible having occurred, it follows that the Bible is from God. “These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ,” and in believing in Him we recognize the inspiration of the Bible. But I cannot enlarge.

Prophecy may be considered the declaration of an event enveloped in futurity—an event which man, by the utmost exercise of his sagacity, can not discern. It has been called a “miracle of knowledge.” The New Testament abounds with prophecies. Indeed the history of the world may almost be regarded as an evolution of the intimations of prophecy. Moses prophesied that in a certain contingency, the Jews would be dispersed among all nations. The contingency predicted the utter destruction of Babylon, and what *was* prophecy is now history. Tyre and Sidon were overthrown according to the prophecy. Sometimes two prophets predicted things, and it seemed if the predictions of one were accomplished, those of the other could not be. For example—Jeremiah prophesied that Zedekiah, king of Judah, should fall into the hands of the king of Babylon, *see him*, and be carried to Babylon. Ezekiel prophesied that Zedekiah would go to Babylon, yet, he adds, “*will he not see it*, though he will die there.” How could Zedekiah see the king of Babylon and not see Babylon itself, though he was to die there? The king of Babylon invaded Judea, took Zedekiah captive, then put out his eyes, and afterward carried him to Babylon. So Zedekiah saw the king, but not the city of Babylon. This was not fortunate guessing, it was divinely inspired prophecy; for

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God alone knew what would come to pass. The various predictions relative to the birth, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, were accomplished in a wonderful manner, so that the Apostles proved out of the Scriptures that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. The Savior's predictions in reference to the Apostles, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews were fulfilled. And the predictions of Daniel, Paul, and John concerning the Romish apostasy have been partially fulfilled, and are now fulfilling, as fast the periods of accomplishment arrive. Now, all these things prove that the prophetic spirit is the Omniscient Spirit. God alone, who knows all things, could enable men to foretell what would come to pass. And if holy men prophesied and spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, the Bible is true, for it was given by inspiration of God. This is a cursory and imperfect reference to some of the internal and external evidences of the divine origin of the Bible.

II. THE UTILITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

They are said in the text to be profitable. For what are they profitable?

1. *For doctrine*—Doctrine means what is taught. The doctrine of the Bible is what the Bible teaches. How important the teachings of the Word of God! From that Word we learn whence we came, what we are, and whither we go. We learn our guilt and condemnation as sinners—the mediatorial scheme of mercy through Jesus Christ—justification by faith in his blood—regeneration by the Holy Spirit—the soul's immortality—the body's resurrection—the ultimate salvation of all the righteous—the damnation of the wicked, etc. Where, except from the Bible, can these important truths be learned? Interrogate nature in all her spacious realms and she utters not one of these truths. Human philosophy does not teach them; for human reason cannot discover them. The Bible is profitable for doctrine:

Tis here we learn that Jesus died,
To save our souls from hell;

Not all the books on earth beside
Such heavenly wonders tell.

2. *For reproof*—The Scriptures are profitable for reproof. They reprove errors in faith and practice. They condemn everything at variance with themselves, for they are the standard to which we must come. They reprove the thoughtless sinner and the unfaithful Christian. The term translated “reproof,” sometimes means conviction. This expresses more than reproof. Many a man is reprovèd who is not convicted, here, probably is, that the Bible is not only the means of reprovèing men for their sins, but of convincing them of their sins. And it is true that the Word of God is the prominent instrument of fastening conviction on the hearts of those who have sinned. This Word, wielded by the divine Spirit, is “living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit,” etc.
3. *For correction*—The Bible is not only profitable because it convinces of what is wrong, but because it is the means of rectifying that wrong. “Wherewith will a young man,” says the Psalmist, “cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to your word.” The Scriptures are the divinely-appointed instrument of reforming men in heart and in life. No reformation is worth any thing that does not rest on the Word of God as its basis. There can be no permanency in it. All human organizations for improving and elevating the morality of the people will ever put forth intellectual efforts, unless they recognize the Bible as supplying the only motives adequate to the production of a pure morality. The Scriptures are profitable for correction—for the rectification of what is wrong.
4. *For instruction in righteousness*—Righteousness is conformity to a right rule. The Bible instructs us how to attain conformity to this rule. It teaches us to act righteously before God and men. We need to be taught our duty. We must learn from the Scriptures not only what to believe, but what to do. The Bible presents Jesus Christ as the incarnation of righteousness, and requires

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us to be like him. “He that says he abides in him ought himself so to walk, even as he walked.” “He that does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.” Let any man take the Bible for his guide, and he will learn that it is profitable for instruction in righteousness.

REMARKS

1. How great are our obligations to God for the Scriptures!
2. How satisfactory are the proofs of the inspiration of the Scriptures!
3. How profitable are these sacred writings!
4. Are they profitable to us?
5. Let us appreciate the sacred volume more highly.
6. Let us show our estimate of it by sending it to all the nations under heaven.



SERMON 12

CHRIST, THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to Father, but by me. —John 14:6

There is a rich variety in the metaphors the Savior employed to designate himself. On one occasion he said, “I am the bread of life.” As if he said, poor sinners are perishing of spiritual starvation—let them come to me, and eat and live forever. Representing sinful mortals as tormented with thirst, he exclaimed, “If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.” Referring to the world as involved in moral darkness, he announced, “I am the light of the world!” He also said of himself, “I am the true vine—I am the door—I am the good shepherd.”

In the text, we have a representation of Christ differing somewhat from every one to which I have referred.

“I am the way,” etc.

I. LET US CONTEMPLATE CHRIST AS THE WAY.

We know for what purpose a way is made—that it may lead those who travel therein to some place. As a way leads to a place, so Jesus considered as the way, conducts his followers into the enjoyment of the rich blessings of his grace on earth, and the richer blessings of his glory in heaven.

1. *Christ is the way to justification*—We are guilty and condemned. The law of God violated by us pronounces its awful curse. And can we be justified by the law? Is it the

province of the law to perform the two contradictory operations of condemning and justifying? Surely not. How is justification to be obtained? Through Christ—only through him. “By his knowledge—that is by a knowledge of him—will my righteous servant justify many.” “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” “Much more being now justified by his blood, we will be saved from wrath through him.” “By him all that believe are justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.” “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

It is manifest from these passages that justification is through Christ alone. A condemned sinner can approach the Lawgiver only through the mediator. The mediator is emphatically *the* way. There is no other mediator. There are neither co-mediators, nor sub-mediators. It would be a ruinous dislocation of the gospel system for man or angel to come between God and the sinner. The zealous martyr going to the stake, said, “None but Christ—none but Christ.” And so the pardoned sinner, pursued by the law and the justice of God, flees to the cross, and learning how pardon comes through the blood of its adorable victim, he says out of the fullness of his heart, “None but Christ—none but Christ.”

Truly Christ is the way to acceptance with God. No man comes to the Father, but by him. No merits but his avail in justification. No righteousness but his can enwrap the naked sinner in its ample folds. There is only one Savior.

2. *Christ is the way to sanctification*—The necessity of justification originates in man’s condemnation—the necessity of sanctification arises from his depravity. He is sinful as well as guilty. He is polluted as well as obnoxious to the curse of the law.

Salvation would be manifestly imperfect if it did not involve both justification and sanctification. The beginning of sanctification is coeval with regeneration. When holy principles are implanted in the soul in the new birth, the

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sanctifying process commences. These principles receive their full development in perfect sanctification. And there are some portions of Scripture in which the term sanctification seems to be used in an enlarged sense, as including both the principles of holiness and their development.

But how can it be made to appear that Jesus is the way to sanctification? I answer that through his mediation is secured the agency of the Holy Spirit, who is the sanctifier. Peter connects the sanctification of the Spirit and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The blood of Christ is said to cleanse from all sin. The redeemed in heaven are represented as having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. In them the object of the Savior's death has been accomplished—they have been redeemed from all iniquity, and made a peculiar people. The Holy Spirit, in sanctifying applies the cleansing blood of Christ. There are some scriptural expressions which indicate that the blood of atonement possesses justifying virtue; and there are others which teach its sanctifying efficacy. Jesus is, therefore, made to his followers' sanctification as well as righteousness. He is the way to sanctification, as well as to justification.

3. *It follows that Christ is the way to heaven*—Justification furnishes a title to heavenly glory. Those justified through the merits of Christ, are not only pardoned, but they have the promise of eternal life. A state of blessedness awaits them far preferable to that enjoyed by our first parents in the Garden of Eden.

Sanctification creates a relish for heavenly bliss. It capacitates for the enjoyment of celestial glory. It induces a suitable appreciation of "those things which are at the right hand of God." Wherever justification and sanctification exist, there is preparation for heaven. The justified and the sanctified, gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness to Christ. Those who go to heaven, make their way thither through the merits of Immanuel's blood. This fact will be devoutly recognized in their songs before the throne. Turning their eyes to their great Deliverer, they will say,

with deepest emotion, "You were slain and have redeemed us to God by your blood." Those who reach the bright mansions on high will unanimously testify that Christ is the way to heaven.

II. CHRIST IS THE TRUTH.

Truth is a correct representation of things. Such a representation Jesus Christ is infinitely well qualified to make; for,

1. *He is the source of truth*—In him, are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He knows all things, and whatsoever he reveals is in perfect accordance with truth. His words are the words of truth. He is the great Prophet who has made known the truth to the world. All the truth we have in relation to divine things, has been given through him. Paul refers to the "truth as it is in Jesus." Truth as it is in Jesus differs from truth as it is in philosophers, or even in Moses and the prophets. It appears in new relations. It is invested with new glories. Truth, always a precious jewel, is much more precious since the great Teacher came down from heaven. "Never man spoke like this man." The reason was that God spoke through the man, and truth as it proceeded from him, emanated from its source. Christ is the truth.
2. *The cause of Christ is the cause of truth*—It scorns the use of all means for its promotion which are not sanctioned by truth. With energy of indignation it repudiates the Jesuit maxim: "The end sanctifies the means." All Christ's disciples are the friends and allies of truth. When standing at Pilate's bar, he said, "To this end was I born, and for this purpose came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." Pilate's jealousy for Caesar seems to have been excited when he heard Jesus spoken of as a King. The Savior at once relieved his apprehensions by saying, "Every one who is of truth hears my voice." As if he had said, Caesar's subjects are altogether different from mine. Loyalty to truth is not required in the friends

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of Caesar, but I am recognized as King by those only who love and obey the truth.

3. *Christ is the truth, the substance, in contradistinction from the shadows of the Mosaic law*—"The law was given by Moses, but grace and *truth* came by Jesus Christ." The legal economy was an economy of types and shadows; Christ was the antitype in whom the types received their accomplishment. All shadows were lost in him as the substance, the reality. The law had only a shadow of good things to come. Its sacrifices were destitute of substantial value, and destined to be superseded in the "fullness of time," by the one great sacrifice. When Jesus bowed his head in death, the whole sacrificial system was abolished. His sacrifice, being the substance of all patriarchal and Mosaic sacrifices, forever obviates the necessity of their farther observances.

The predictions of the prophets in reference to the Messiah, have been fulfilled in Christ. No one can look on those predictions as conjectures; for in their accomplishment in Jesus of Nazareth they assume a substantial form. In Christ we have the reality pointed to by the shadows of the law; and in him we have the substance of the predictions of the prophets. "To him give all the prophets witness." Christ is the truth, the substance, etc.

III. CHRIST IS THE LIFE.

"In him was life and the life was the light of men."

1. *Christ is the source of spiritual life to those that believe in him*—When man sinned, the principle of spiritual life was extinguished in him. It is now characteristic of the sons of men, that they are dead in sin—dead to divine things. That this was their condition, the death of Christ irresistibly implies; for, says Paul, "We thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead." What an awful idea! All dead! A race composed of millions added to millions, and all dead! No indication of moral vitality! No spiritual pulsation! All dead! No, before any of our lost race can be restored to spiritual life, they must be

brought into union with Christ. He is the source of this life, and faith is the ligaments binding the soul to him. Christ is the Head, and from him flows life to all the members of his mystic body. His disciples derive life from him, as the branch derives life from the vine. The "lively stones," in the spiritual temple, receive their life from the "living stone," which is the foundation of that temple. "Christ is our life," "Christ lives in me," is the language of an apostle; "and the life which I now live in the flesh; I live by the faith of the Son of God." It is not more evident that the Sun is the source of natural light, than that Christ is the source of spiritual life.

2. *Christ will, in the last day, give life to the dead bodies of his followers.*—He is the resurrection and the life. As in Adam all die, so in Christ will all be made alive. He will change our vile body and fashion it like his own glorious body. According to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. How cheering to the saints is the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead! How delightful the thought, that our bodies after undergoing a pulverizing process in the grave, will be reanimated and made suitable companions for our immortal spirits! Who can describe the glories of a resurrection body! How refined will be the matter of which it is formed! Wrought so exquisitely as to resemble the pure spirit and to receive the designation, "spiritual body!" With the promise of a glorious resurrection, the believer can fearlessly meet death and say, "Rejoice not, O my enemy; for though I fall I will rise again." He can look forward to the day, when, emerging from the darkness of the tomb, he will exultingly inquire, "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?"
3. *Christ gives to his followers eternal life in heaven*—He says, "my sheep hear my voice: and I give unto them eternal life, and they will never perish." According to the gospel, "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." The great promise is eternal life. Hence, John says, "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." Eternal life does

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not mean merely an eternal existence, but eternal well-being. It includes all that can render existence desirable. It embraces all that is meant by the bliss and the glory of heaven. Life! Eternal life! Advanced to a state in which there is no death, and no apprehension of death!

Jesus gives eternal life to his disciples. He says to them, "Because I live, you will live also." How satisfactory the reason assigned! Who could wish any other reason? The demands of celestial logic require no other, and no other will ever be given. Ten thousand ages hence it will be delightfully true that because Jesus lives those redeemed by his blood will live also.

REMARKS

1. Out of Christ as the WAY poor sinners wander. They stumble on the dark mountains. They go, they know not whither. Alas, for them! Come, you wanderers, to Christ, who is the way.
2. Out of Christ as the TRUTH men must err. There is no preservation from error unless Christ be received as truth. Nor can the *substance* of religion be received without a reception of Christ.
3. Out of Christ as the LIFE men are spiritually dead, and must die eternally. The pulse of divine life will never throb in their dead souls until they are in Christ. Alas, there is present spiritual death, and this is the precursor of death eternal.



SERMON 20

JUSTIFICATION

For Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth—Rom 10:4

Among the various subjects of which theology treats, there is no topic of greater importance than justification. It has to do with the rectitude of the divine throne and the dignity of the divine law, and the salvation of the guilty. “How will men be just with God?” is not a new question. Its agitation is traceable to the remote antiquity of patriarchal times. It has been a question of profound interest in all ages, and will continue to be while time endures. We are personally concerned in the settlement of this question. If justification is attainable, we may indulge hope of eternal life; if it is not, eternal death will be our portion.

Let us inquire,

I. WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

Were this inquiry addressed to a Romanist, he, availing himself of the decision of the Council of Trent, would say, “Justification is not only the remission of sin, but also sanctification, and the renovation of the inward man.” This definition is certainly inaccurate; for it does not identify justification with regeneration and sanctification, it makes it comprehend both. These three acts, though connected together, are clearly distinguishable, and, therefore, should never be confounded. I might safely defy the production of a passage of Scripture which teaches that justification consists,

either in whole or in part, in renewing the heart and making it holy. So far as I know, it never has this signification in the Bible or out of it. It never means to renovate—it never signifies to make holy. It does not even mean to *make just*, though the etymology of the word might suggest such a definition.

I will illustrate. There was among the ancients, as Ovid and others inform us, a custom of this kind: When persons were charged with a violation of the laws of the land, they were arraigned before the judges, who, after availing themselves of the evidence that could be adduced, proceeded to pronounce judgment by depositing stones in an urn. If, in their opinion, the accused person were guilty of the charge alleged against him, they put black stones into the urn; but if they considered the charge unfounded, they deposited white stones. Thus the black stones were symbols of condemnation, and the white ones symbols of justification or innocence. Now it is evident that the ceremony of putting white pebbles into an urn did not *make* the accused person just and innocent, but it *formally declared* him just and innocent. It was a judicial announcement on acquittal. If, then, justification be, as is admitted, a forensic term, it is the act of *declaring* or accounting a person just or righteous. In the evangelical application of the word, therefore, it is the act of God in which he *declares* us just or righteous. This act involves a change of state, not of heart. The justified stand in a new relation to the divine law. They are treated as if they had not broken it. Its thunders, so far as they are concerned, are hushed into silence. This is evidently the case, for the remission of their sins is a release from the allegations of the law. They are consequently absolved from liability to its penalty. In the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, the terms justify and condemn, are used as opposite to each other in meaning. Thus Solomon says, “He that *justifies* the wicked, and he that *condemns* the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord.” Paul says, “It is God that *justifies*, who is he that *condemns*!” When God *declares* and *accounts* a man justified, who will condemn that

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man? Vain would be all attempts to condemn him, for he is justified by the Lawgiver.

II. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS.

This impossibility is virtually asserted in the text. If Christ is the end of the law for righteousness or justification, then it follows that justification can not be secured by works. It is also said by the apostle Paul, in another epistle, "If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain." Justification by works would make the sacrifice of Calvary a splendid superfluity. It would proclaim to all worlds that there was, when Jesus died, an effusion of blood equally needless and unaccountable. Let it be conceded that men are sinners, and the impossibility of justification by works follows irresistibly. It results from two facts: no creature can perform an act of supererogation, and no act can have a retrospective bearing. The moral law requires man to love God with all his strength. If, then, he should now begin to love God with all his strength, and to serve him to the utmost extent of his ability, he would do no more than his duty. Let the love and service continue till death, and still they would come strictly within the limits of duty. How manifest, then, it is that there would be no superfluous obedience to make up for past failures. The performance of present duty never atones for past delinquencies. How, then, is justification by works a possible thing? It evidently is not. That no act of man can have a retrospective influence, results necessarily from his inability to do more than his duty. In an act which is a present duty, what influence is there to expend on the past? Absolutely none. But the past must be affected before there can be justification by works. This, however, can not be, and therefore justification by the deeds of the law is impossible.

III. JUSTIFICATION IS THROUGH CHRIST ALONE.

He is the end of the law for righteousness. Believers are said to be "justified by his blood," and "saved from wrath through him;" "justified freely by divine grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" "justified by the faith of

Christ," etc. These are but specimens of the passages of Scripture which teach the method of a sinner's justification before God. They direct our attention to the interposition of Jesus Christ in man's behalf. He was "made under the law that he might redeem them that were under the law;" he suffered "the just for the unjust;" "he was delivered for our offenses, and rose again for our justification." The obedience and death of Christ constitute the meritorious basis of a sinner's acceptance with God. They constitute such a basis, because they answer the demands of the law. Nor was there a relaxation of the demands of the law when Jesus engaged in the work of mediation. An abatement of its claims would not have comported with the perfection of the Lawgiver. The law, retaining its unalterable strictness and immaculate purity, must be magnified and made honorable; its dignity must be asserted; its majesty vindicated. All this was done by the obedience and death of Christ; it was so done that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness; and God can be "just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus." The obedience and death of Christ are usually denominated his righteousness. This righteousness must be imputed to the sinner, in order to his justification. "Imputed righteousness," I am aware, is a phrase to which many persons make objections. It must be admitted that many absurd things have been said and written on the subject of imputation; but, notwithstanding this, the doctrine, properly understood, is replete with comfort. Though our sins were imputed to Christ, they were not imputed in such a sense as made him a sinner; and, though his righteousness is imputed to us, it is not so imputed as to render us personally worthy of the favor of God.

Christ was treated *as if he had been a sinner*, and we are treated *as if we were righteous*. He was so treated for our sakes, because he bore our sins in his own body on the tree; we are so treated for his sake, because the robe of his righteousness adorns us. Neither sin nor righteousness is transferable, except in its effects. Transference of moral qualities is impossible. Christ died, the *just* for the *unjust*. There was surely no transfer of the moral qualities of those

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for whom Christ died to him. For, if there had been, he could not have remained *just*, nor could they have remained *unjust*. The awful consequence of their guilt, which was obnoxiousness to the curse of the law, was transferred to him; the glorious consequence of his righteousness—namely, a full satisfaction of the law's demands—is transferred to them. Some prefer speaking of the obedience and death of Christ, as constituting his “merits,” rather than his righteousness. But this is only employing a different term to express substantially the same idea.

“We are justified,” say they, “by the merits of Christ.” What do they mean? Evidently that God deals with them as justified or righteous persons, on account of the merits of Christ. If they are justified by the Redeemer's merits, there must be an imputation of those merits in their effects; and so, after the change of phraseology, there is essentially the same imputation. As moral qualities are incapable of transfer—as justification changes our state, but not our hearts, I venture to say that there is no way in which Christ's righteousness becomes ours, except by imputation. It may be, and is accounted ours and God deals with us accordingly. “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.” How the end of the law? Because the claims of the law received satisfaction in him. He never could have become *the end of the law*, if the demands of the law had not been met in him. We are accepted in the Beloved. We are reinstated in the favor of God on account of what Christ has done. The Justifier, in justifying, takes into consideration the work of Christ alone. The cross supplies the only reason for the exercise of justifying grace. It is emphatically “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” that we are justified.

IV. JUSTIFICATION IS BY FAITH.

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to *every one that believeth*. Observe the limitation: To every one that believeth. It is elsewhere said: “He that believeth on the Son is not condemned.” Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God. “By him all that believe are justified from all things.” “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” These passages are remarkably explicit, and

they conclusively prove that faith in Christ is the hinge on which turns the sinner's justification. Nor is the method of justification by faith obnoxious to the charge of novelty. It is as old as the patriarchal age. Paul argues that Abraham was justified by faith. The Jews supposed that circumcision had much to do in the matter; but the Apostle shows that he was justified while in un-circumcision, and that his circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of the faith he had, yet being uncircumcised. Paul refers to Abraham's justification before God, which was by faith. The Apostle James refers to his justification before men, and very naturally makes mention of his offering Isaac on the altar. His justification by faith was a private transaction between God and his own soul, and was consequently unknown to the world; but when he offered his son, his faith, by which he had been previously justified before God, developed itself in works. The world saw it, and all succeeding generations have admitted its genuineness and admired its strength. Thus, taking into consideration the *different* objects the two apostles had in view, in referring to *different* parts of Abraham's history, we will see that there is no discrepancy between them. In one sense Abraham was justified by faith; in another sense he was justified by works. We are not to imagine that there is any thing meritorious in faith, because the justification of the soul is ascribed to its instrumentality. It is our duty to believe in Christ, for God commands us to do so. Merit can not be predicated of the performance of a duty. When we have done all that is required of us, we are taught by the Savior himself to consider ourselves "unprofitable servants, having done only our duty." Faith, then, being a duty, the principle which Christ has established, divests it of the merit which some would vainly attempt to attach to it. We are justified *by* faith, not *for* faith. There is nothing in faith for the sake of which we can be justified. Whatever justifies must meet the demands of the Divine Law. This faith can not do. Why then, it may be asked, is justification spoken of by the sacred writers in connection with faith, in preference to other graces of the Spirit. I answer, because it is emphatically the province of faith to *receive Christ*, and trust in him. The essential elements of justifying faith are involved in a cordial

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reception of the Lord Jesus, and an unreserved reliance on his righteousness. Thus, faith is the *instrumental* cause of justification, and the righteousness of Christ is the *meritorious* cause. The instrumental cause brings the sinner into vital contact with the meritorious cause, and the work is accomplished. To use Paul's language, "It is of faith that it may be by grace." Grace and faith go hand in hand. Their operation, so far from being incompatible, is most harmonious; and we are "saved by grace through faith."

REMARKS

1. We should entertain clear views of the doctrine of justification. If we embrace material errors on this subject, we will misconceive all the teaching of the Gospel, and dislocate the evangelical system.
2. In view of the impossibility of justification by works, let none rely for satisfaction on the imaginary merit of their own performances. Such reliance will result in the loss of the soul.
3. Can you say that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, so far as *you* are personally concerned? Is he made to you wisdom, *righteousness*, sanctification, and redemption!
4. If justification is by faith, then baptism does not bring us into a justified state. Our justification is as evidently antecedent to baptism as is our faith. It is a prerequisite to baptism. Let it be remembered, however, that the faith which justifies is a living faith, and shows its vitality by prompting its possessor to walk in the pathway of God's commandments. A faith from which no good works result, is dead, even as "the body without the spirit is dead."
5. The unbeliever is condemned. The wrath of God abides on him. Unbelief, as long as it continues, entails condemnation. For those who refuse to believe in Christ, there is no rational hope of justification—no more hope than if the bloody tragedy of Calvary had never occurred. He that believeth not will be damned.



SERMON 48

THE DYING CHRISTIAN TRIUMPHANT

(Substance of a Discourse delivered on occasion of the death of Mrs. Mulligan, consort of J.C. Mulligan, Scottville, Kentucky.)

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing—2 Tim 4:7–8

It is interesting to contemplate the people of God at any point of their earthly pilgrimage, but especially so, to consider them in connection with the end of that pilgrimage. Then they stand on the frontiers of time—ready to launch into eternity. They look back on lives spent in the service of God—and look forward to the mansions of glory. They exclaim, “farewell, earth; welcome, heaven.”

The text and the context furnish us with an account of Paul’s views and feelings in prospect of death. He had been a faithful soldier in the army of Immanuel. He had fought many a battle and had won many a victory. He had become “Paul the aged,” and was about to suffer martyrdom for the cause he had so ably advocated. Knowing his work to be done, he said, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.” He had before said, “Having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.” Now the time of his departure had come. He was about to learn how much better it was to depart and be with Christ.

I. CONSIDER THE DYING SAINT AS REVIEWING HIS LIFE.

1. *I have fought a good fight*—Paul was a humble man, and in using this language he did not intend to compliment himself. He intended rather to intimate that he had been engaged in a *good* cause than that he had fought well. The Christian life is not a life of ease, but of laborious action. Hence the martial allusion in the text. There is reference to a fight, a contest. Nor is it a physical contest, maintained by physical weapons. It is a spiritual warfare, and the weapons it employs are mighty through God. In this conflict every Christian is engaged—is enlisted as a soldier of Jesus, the captain of his salvation.

The *nature* of this conflict indicates its goodness. It is a conflict between the spirit and the flesh—between holiness and sin—between righteousness and wickedness—between light and darkness, etc.

Before the regenerating process occurs, the flesh has undisputed ascendancy. Regeneration takes the ascendancy from the flesh and gives it to the spirit. Here the “old man” and the “new man” are brought into collision. The flesh wars against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. This conflict continues as long as the Christian is “in the body,” etc.

Holiness opposes sin. The renewal of the heart creates a love of holiness and originates the principle of holiness. Still a change of heart does not involve perfect freedom from sin. This would be to confound regeneration with sanctification. In the renovation of the heart holiness begins its opposition to sin, and there is truly a “fight” before the latter is completely subdued by the former, etc. So of the opposing elements, righteousness and wickedness—light and darkness, etc.

In this conflict it is not only necessary to crucify the flesh with its “affections and lusts,” but to “resist the devil” and assume a position antagonistic to the world. The soldier Christian is the object of Satan’s implacable malice. Every

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inch of his way heavenward is disputed by the arch-enemy, who assumes various forms, and is sometimes transformed into an angel of light.

The world is a foe to the Christian. How fascinating its splendors! How seductive its pleasures! How alluring its honors! How attractive its riches! Well do we sing:

Is this the vile world a friend too grave,
To help us on to God?
No! It is no friend—but an enemy.

Strenuous effort is requisite to live above the contamination of the world. This “*good fight*” may be considered as involving all the labor performed by God’s people in the advancement of his cause. They are required to “abound always in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as they know their labor is not in vain in the Lord.” The Christian who does his duty has no time for idleness. Labor, *labor*, LABOR is his business till he draws his last breath. Then, not till then, does he rest from his labors while his works follow him.

In this conflict whatever is good is opposed to whatever is evil—whatever is holy is opposed to whatever is sinful—whatever is right is opposed to whatever is wrong—and whatever God approves is opposed to whatever he hates. The nature of the conflict, therefore, indicates that it is a “good fight” in which the Christian is engaged; for he is on the Lord’s side. This “good fight” Paul, by the grace of God, fought, and our departed sister fought it by the same grace. Of this she was conscious in her last illness, and requested that I should, on this occasion, preach on the subject now before us.

Again, this is a *good fight*, because the good of every age have been engaged in it. The principles of right and wrong, good and evil, have been in collision in every generation. God’s people have ever identified themselves with the right. This was true of Abel and Enoch in the world’s infancy. It was true of Abraham and Melchisedec, the most prominent personages of the patriarchal economy. It was true of Moses and Elijah—Samuel and David—Isaiah and all the prophets

who succeeded him—Paul and his fellow apostles—of Stephen and all the martyred hosts who have gone to heaven through much tribulation. It has been true of the pious of every clime and of every century. The redeemed in heaven once fought this good fight. How fierce the struggle ere they emerged from the “great tribulation” which well-nigh overwhelmed them! I argue it is a good fight, because all the good that have died were engaged in it and all the good now living are engaged in it.

Once more! This is a *good fight*, because its issue is good. Victory perches on the Christian’s standard. He is more than conqueror. Observe the language. You have heard of conquering generals and victorious armies. Did you ever hear of a general who was more than conqueror? Of an army that was more than victorious? The victory of the Christian soldier is so complete that an adequate idea of his triumph is not conveyed if it is only said that he is conqueror. He is more than conqueror. Satan is “bruised under his feet.” The world is subdued. The flesh is crucified. “Principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, wicked spirits in high places”—all, all are discomfited. Death is so effectually disarmed of its sting that the dying saint inquires, O death! Where is your sting! Triumphantly defying the monster to say where and no answer is given. The grave is divested of its gloom, and the victory, to which it lays an invalid claim, God takes from it through Jesus Christ and gives to the exulting conqueror who overcomes through the blood of the Lamb. Truly, this is a good fight, because its issue is good. And strange as it may appear to the carnal mind:

Who first in such a warfare dies,
Will speediest victory know.

2. *I have finished my course*—Here the figure is changed. The Christian is no longer represented as fighting a good fight, but as running a race or course. Paul, in taking leave of the Ephesian Elders, said of the bonds and afflictions that awaited him, “None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I

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might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” He was anxious to finish his course with joy. Here he says, I have finished my course, and it was doubtless finished with joy. The Christian is called to lay aside every weight, and every besetting sin, and to run with perseverance the race set before him, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of his faith. He is required to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He is commanded so to run that he may obtain. This figure, as well as the one we have considered, shows that to live the Christian life involves strenuous effort—energetic action. He who runs a race must bring into requisition all his agility. Well may these felicitate themselves who, like Paul, finish their course with joy.

3. *I have kept the faith*—The system of faith is, I imagine, referred to here. Paul, at his conversion, gave in his adhesion to Christianity; and, while many others returned to Judaism and the world, making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, he adhered to the Christian system with unfaltering fidelity and perseverance to the day of his death. We must show our allegiance to Christ—our loyalty to our king as long as we live. We must cleave with purpose of heart to the Lord. All other systems must be kept in subordination to the system of Christianity. The language of the believer through life must be:

Should all the forms that men devise,
Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind the Gospel to my heart.

Enduring to the end the dying saint can say, “I have kept the faith.”

Thus have we contemplated the dying Christian as reviewing his religious life. Our departed sister, when the last hour drew near, surveyed her Christian life. She said, not in a spirit of boasting, but with profound gratitude to God, “I have fought a good fight.” The conflict was then about to end. “I

have finished my course.” Her religious life extended through a period of thirty-six years,—a long life compared with that of some—scarcely a moment compared with eternal life in heaven. “I have kept the faith.” She stood fast in the Lord. She had, if I may use the language of Bunyan, seen many Talkatives, and Pliables, and Timorouses, who, for a while, made religious pretensions, and then went back to the world. She kept the faith; for the faith kept her. She had seen many Christians (I hope such are Christians) who, in times of revival, were all life and zeal, and comparatively inefficient and dead at all other times. She kept the faith. She was the consistent Christian. Whether religion was popular or unpopular, she loved it. Whether few or many were found traveling to Mount Zion, she was always in the number. She kept the faith while she lived. She kept it in death; for the affections of her heart clung so tenaciously to the system of faith revealed in the gospel, that death could not disengage them; and those affections, now sanctified in a brighter world, still love that system.

II. LET US CONSIDER THE DYING CHRISTIAN ANTICIPATING HIS HEAVENLY REWARD.

Paul first reviewed his religious life, then looked to the mansions of glory. “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness;” “A crown,” etc. The victors in the Olympic Games were crowned, rewarded, and honored. Anciently, conquerors were crowned, and thus the crown became the symbol of victory. Kings have ever been crowned, and thus the crown denotes royalty, distinction, dignity. It is said of Jesus, in the Book of Revelation, “On his head were many crowns,” to indicate his many conquests and extensive dominions. To be crowned is to be recognized as a victor, and to be raised to distinction, to eminence, to honor. Thus are the people of God to be conspicuously distinguished. They are to be crowned. Their crowns are to symbolize the victory in the “good fight,” and to indicate that they ran the Christian race successfully, and finished their course with joy.

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The Scriptures refer to the “crown of glory” or the glorious crown. The crowns worn by kings and monarchs dazzle with their brightness; but what are they compared with “crowns of glory?” crowns beautified and enriched by the brilliant gems of eternity? The Scriptures also refer to the “crown of life.” Where, except in the vocabulary of heaven, do we find this collection of words? This crown will be given to the heirs of eternal life; it will be symbolic of this life. The wearer of this immortal crown will enjoy immortal life—life embittered by no apprehension of death; for death touches not those who wear the “crown of life.”

In the text, we are referred to a *crown of righteousness*. It is a crown which the righteous alone will wear. Most earthly crowns adorn the heads of the unrighteous, and they are obtained by unrighteous means. They are, many of them, stained with blood, and saturated with the tears of widows and orphans. Such are the crowns of unrighteousness. The crown laid up for the conquering saint is a crown of righteousness. This will appear if we notice:

1. *That it will be given to those alone who are justified by the righteousness of Christ*—No one will merit it. “Christ is the end of the law for *righteousness* to every one that believeth.” He is made to believers, “wisdom, *righteousness*, sanctification, and redemption.” They are “made the righteousness of God in him.” Paul, who uttered the words of the text, repudiated his own righteousness, and wished to be found in *Christ*, not having his own righteousness, but the righteousness of God by faith. Those who are by faith clothed with the robe of the Savior’s righteousness will wear the crown of righteousness.
2. *The crown will be given to those who are renewed after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness*—Man was made originally in the moral image of his Maker. When he sinned, that image was defaced. The principle of holiness was extinguished in his soul. He became earthly, sensual, devilish—the essence of unrighteousness. In this condition he is infinitely unfit to wear a crown of righteousness. He must be made righteous.

Regeneration must re-encrypt the image of God upon him. He must be made partaker of the divine nature. He must become a new creature in Christ Jesus, old things passing away, and all things becoming new. In short, while justification by the righteousness of Christ gives a title to heaven, regeneration must furnish the moral preparation to enjoy it. Those possessing this preparation are renewed after the image of God in righteousness, and they will wear the crown of righteousness; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

3. *This crown will be given to those who live righteously*—Those who pretend to magnify the grace of God in salvation, by denying or depreciating the necessity of practical piety, know not the genius of the gospel economy. The same “grace which brings salvation, teaches us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” Justification by faith, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, constitutes the best guarantee for holiness of life. Vainly do we pretend to be justified, if we live un-righteously; for the faith by which we are justified is a living faith—it produces good works. And when the Holy Spirit, in regeneration, “makes the tree good, the fruit will be good.” The life will be regulated by the Word of God. Those who are righteous, in the threefold sense now indicated, will be permitted to wear the crown of righteousness.

This threefold righteousness was our departed sister's. No one relied more entirely on the righteousness of Christ for justification. No one was more deeply impressed with the necessity of internal, personal righteousness. No one better exemplified the righteous precepts of the gospel in daily life. She, therefore, without presumption, and with an evangelical propriety, looked for a crown of righteousness. Looking back on her Christian life, she said, “I have fought a good fight,” etc. Looking forward, she said, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,” etc. She was ready to die, and yet somewhat anxious to live; not for her own sake, but for the sake of her youngest children, who needed a mother's

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care. What moral sublimity invested her dying scene! There was the redeemed spirit attracted by the glories of Paradise, struggling to free itself from the emaciated body, and go to its heavenly home; but a mother's love (let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if ever I forget the strength of a mother's love) detained it to lavish its farewell caresses on the younger born of the family. The spirit continued its struggles, overcame the detention imposed by the restraints of maternal tenderness, and "left the pale clay for its Creator's arms."

Though Christians are admitted at death into the kingdom of glory, their public coronation will take place on that last day. The resurrection will first occur. Those that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. The dust of his redeemed ones he will reanimate and reconstruct into bodies incorruptible and immortal. "At that day," the great day of the appearing of our Savior, the crown of righteousness will be placed on the head of every saint. There will be a multitude of the redeemed which no man can number. A countless host of crowned "kings and priests to God" will raise such hallelujahs as earth heard never, and as heaven will rejoice to hear.

REMARKS

1. We have much to console us when the pious die. A voice from heaven said to John, "Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Yes, they are blessed. How much better off than we who remain pilgrims here! Let the bereaved companion of the departed solace himself with the thought that whatever sorrows are his, and whatever trials may betide him, his loved one, the sharer of his joys and grief for a third of a century, is safe, forever safe. She has a home in heaven. And let these children, bereft of one of the fondest mothers, walk in her footsteps and follow her to glory.
2. Christians, fight the "good fight"—run with diligence the race set before you. Keep, O keep the faith, etc.

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3. Sinners, death is full of terror to you. You have no Savior to sustain you when you die, and no heaven to go to after you die. Receive Christ and then death, instead of inflicting an injury upon you, will open to your departing spirits the portals of Paradise.

THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIAN DUTY



BY

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PREFACE

The following numbers, entitled, “Thoughts on Christian Duty,” were published originally in the *Tennessee Baptist*. They were designed for Christians *generally*, and for young converts *particularly*. The author supposed that something of the kind would be beneficial to those who had just entered on the Christian life, and he undertook the task because no one else seemed inclined to undertake it. Persons recently converted to the faith of the gospel are objects of deep interest to those who love Zion. They are the hope of the churches; for soon the fathers and mothers in Israel will be no more. Their places will be vacated by death, and must be filled by those who are now in the freshness of spiritual youth. How important then that these young soldiers of the cross have proper views of “Christian Duty,” that they may be faithful in the commencement of their religious career, and continue faithful till death. Then the crown of life will be theirs. It is hoped that in these numbers not only young converts, but Christians advanced in the divine life, will find some suggestions which will prove of some value. It is needless to multiply prefatory words. It remains only to be said that a desire having been expressed that the “Thoughts on Christian Duty” be published in Tract form, the author does not feel at liberty to withhold his consent.



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NUMBER 1: THE CHRISTIAN PROFESSION

It is a solemn thing to make a profession of Christianity. It is doubtless an act which attracts the notice of angels; for they love to see accessions made to the number of those who love and serve their Lord. Making a profession of the religion of Jesus Christ formally draws the line of demarcation between his reputed friends and his reputed enemies. Those assuming his name avow themselves his disciples.

“What is implied in making a profession of Christianity?” is a question worthy of grave consideration. In answer to this question it may be said:

1. *That it implies faith in Christ.* Christianity is a derivative term—it comes from the proper name Christ—and has much to do with Christ. Paul refers to the profession of *faith*. There is an avowal of faith in the Lord Jesus. There is a declaration of the fact so boldly stated by Peter—“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” “If you believe with all your heart you may” be baptized, said Philip to the Ethiopian. Another scripture informs us that “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” And the Savior himself says, “He that *believeth* and is baptized will be saved.” It is evident from these and many other passages of the word of God that in making a profession of Christianity we express our belief in Jesus as the Messiah, and our exclusive reliance on him for salvation. We say that our hope of salvation has his atoning death

for its basis. There must be faith before there is a profession of faith. Common sense teaches this, and the order of the evangelical economy accords with common sense.

2. *A profession of Christianity implies "death to sin and resurrection to newness of life."* Paul's indignant, negative response to the question, "will we continue in sin that grace may abound?" derives its appropriateness from the fact that Christians are dead to sin. "Know you not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." While baptism has a commemorative reference to the burial and resurrection of Christ, it also recognizes the fact that as Jesus died *for sin*, the believer has died *to sin*, and has risen to newness of life. This death and resurrection occur in the process of "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." They are emblematically set forth in baptism. The believer in being baptized says, "I am dead to sin and alive to righteousness." This is one of the practical effects of the atonement of Christ. He "bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness." Those who died to sin should be emblematically buried, as those who die naturally are actually buried. Nor should God's people ever forget that in being "buried in baptism" they declare themselves dead to sin, and avow their purpose to live a new life.
3. *Making a profession of Christianity implies a solemn declaration that we are the Lord's.* We consider the amazing truth that we are bought with a price, and under the practical impression which it makes, we honestly and cheerfully say that we are not our own. The great question with us is, "Lord, what wilt you have me to do?" "The love of Christ constrains us, because we thus judge that if one died for all then were all dead, and that he died for all that they who live should not henceforth live

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unto themselves, but to him who died for them and rose again.”

The apostle's view of the matter seems to have been that as Jesus Christ died for me, no man has the right to live to himself. The selfishness which would allow this should have no place in the world in which the Savior suffered, and bled, and died. And when the selfish principle is expelled from the heart the love of Christ constrains, O how sweetly and powerfully. Under its delightful constraint a profession of the Christian faith is made. There is a cheerful avowal of allegiance to Christ. There is a willing acknowledgment of the obligations growing out of the fact that we “were redeemed not with corruptible things as silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ.” Let Christians ever remember that in making a profession of religion they solemnly and cheerfully said: “We are not our own; we are bought with a price: we are the Lord's.”

4. *The profession of Christianity implies a determination to yield obedience to the Divine commands through life and for ever.* There is a renunciation of our own wills. Gods will becomes our will and our rule of action. There is an honest purpose to serve God in all circumstances and at all times. Those who intelligently make a profession of Christianity do not suppose it optional with them to serve God for a few weeks, or months, or years, and then return to the “weak and beggarly elements of the world.” No, the consecration to God is for time and eternity. No reservation is made. The service of the Lord is to be the business of life, and when death comes it will transfer the faithful disciple to a state of sublime service in heaven. There is no time for inaction in this world. This is the place for labor. The rest that remains to the people of God is in the world to come. And that is not an inactive, sluggish rest, but a rest involving holy activity and unwearied employment in the Divine service.

If these views are correct the Christian profession implies much more than multitudes of persons suppose. How diligently should its import and its responsibilities be studied by all who have assumed the name of Christ! It is no little

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matter to be a Christian. It is infinitely desirable to hear from the lips of the Lord Jesus, when he comes, the eulogium, "well done, good and faithful servant: enter into the joy of your Lord."



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NUMBER 2: HOLDING FAST OUR PROFESSION

Having shown what is implied in the Christian profession, I wish now to show *how* and *why* we should hold fast our profession.

1. *We must hold fast our profession by a frequent consideration of what it implies.*

While we have proper views of the import of our profession we will be likely to hold it fast. But a thoughtless inattention to its import is ruinous to the interests connected with it. Every backslider is a melancholy illustration of this truth; for backsliding begins with an inadequate appreciation of the importance and the solemnity of the Christian profession. Who that considers that in making this profession he avowed his faith in Jesus Christ—declared his death to sin—proclaimed himself the Lord's—and expressed the determination to serve the Lord forever—can give up such a profession? All Christians should set apart and sacredly observe, at least weekly periods to consider the solemn facts recognized in their profession. A course of this kind would be highly promotive of their spirituality and an almost infallible preventive of backsliding.

2. *We must hold fast our profession by a diligent use of the means of grace.*

Among these means I mention secret prayer—attendance on public worship—and the perusal of the Scriptures. There are other means which I will not now specify.

Secret prayer. “When you pray,” says the Savior, “enter into your closet,” &c. Our approaches to the mercy-seat must be frequent. We must there hold intercourse with the Father of Spirits. Prayer is a precious privilege. Those who forsake their closets cannot *hold fast* their profession. “Pray without ceasing.”

Attendance on public worship. The sanctuary is a delightful place. There the praises of the Most High are celebrated—there his word is preached—there his mercy is implored—there Christian association is enjoyed, &c., &c. The services of God’s house are designed to edify his people—strengthen their religious principles—promote their growth in grace. Those professors for whom the sanctuary has no attractions will probably fail to hold fast their profession. It is perilous to mark out a course for ourselves different from that prescribed by Jesus Christ. His wisdom is perfect.

Perusal of the Scriptures. Those who would hold fast their profession must take the word of God for their guide. They must study its sacred pages. They must devoutly peruse it with a determination to do what it requires. Who that does not hold fast the word of God can hold fast the Christian profession?

3. *We must hold fast our profession by cherishing a sense of constant dependence on Christ.*

“Without me,” says the Savior, “you can do nothing.” Paul says: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.” We must hold fast to Christ if we would hold fast to our profession. Barnabas exhorted the disciples at Antioch to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. Those are most safe who are most sensible of their dependence on Christ. They will hold fast their profession as long as they feel dependent on the Lord Jesus for grace to hold it fast. If they depend on themselves, they will let their profession go.

Here an important question arises: *Why* should we hold fast our profession? The following reasons may be given:

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1. *To show our sincerity in making it.*

The same considerations which prompted us to make a profession of Christianity should prompt us to hold fast that profession. If we abandon our profession it may well be suspected that proper motive did not actuate us in making it. The perseverance of *saints* is the doctrine of the Bible. When the professed Christian ceases to hold fast his profession he may well doubt, and ought to doubt, his sainthood. If we pursue a course which makes our sincerity in professing Christianity *questionable* we do great harm.

2. *To promote the cause and the glory of God.*

There is nothing more injurious to the cause of God than for its professed friends to abandon it. Their unfaltering adherence to it is one important element of its prosperity. Then professors of religion, by abandoning their profession can do more harm than a hundred infidels. They virtually say, "We espoused the cause of God, but have found it unworthy of our espousal; we therefore renounce it." When this is done the cause of God is injured and his name is dishonored. A relinquishment of the Christian profession tarnishes the Divine glory and insults the Divine majesty. It says in effect that God is not worthy of service continued till death. Who does not see that this aspect of the subject furnishes a strong reason why we should hold fast our profession?

3. *To benefit the world.*

Christians are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. But if they do not hold fast their profession, the salt loses its savor, and the light becomes darkness. Let those who have espoused the Christian cause abandon it, and they lose their ability to benefit and bless the world. Indeed, they become moral nuisances. It would be better for the world if they were not in it. Let Christians, then, by all their solicitude to benefit the world be entreated to hold fast their profession.

4. *To justify the indulgence of the hope of heaven.*

Consistency requires that those who renounce the Christian profession should also renounce the hope of heaven. There is no guarantee of salvation to those who do not endure to the end. The crown of life is promised only to those who are faithful unto death.

The hope of glory cannot, therefore, be entertained, according to the gospel, if there is an abandonment of the Christian profession. Surely then, the people of God should be influenced by all the consolations which that hope creates to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering.



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NUMBER 3: READING THE SCRIPTURES

In the fabulous records of ancient Greece it is stated that a sentence—*one sentence*—came down from heaven. The words were considered so precious as to deserve a conspicuous inscription in golden letters on a magnificent temple. Millions in all probability read that sentence, and treasured it up in their memories, because they supposed it came down from heaven.

Christians have not a sentence merely, but a *book* which has come down from God—from which the divinity of its origin is stamped to *verify that* it carries with it, wherever circulated, *express credentials* of its inspiration. It courts the *trust* of friends, and challenges the scrutiny of *critics*.

The Bible is God's book to man. There is *nothing* like it. The truth which it contains is *more precious* "than gold, yes than much fine *silver and sweeter* than honey and the honeycomb." *Paul's testimony*, or rather the Holy Spirit's *inspiration* through Paul, is, that "the Holy Scriptures *are* able to make us wise unto salvation *through* faith in Christ Jesus." If these sacred *writings* have something to do with the salvation¹ . . . of the soul, they are important indeed. Alas, how few appreciate them properly! There is among many professed Christians a lamentable ignorance of the

¹ The original autograph was illegible at points. Because no legible copy of this section can be found, the editor attempted to decipher the blurred text. The words which could not be read clearly are in italics. Words not in italics are clearly the words intended by Pendleton.

word of God. They do not study it. They do not possess that deep spirituality of mind which is essential to a profitable perusal of the sacred volume. They read hastily, thoughtlessly, and the impression made upon their minds is altogether superficial.

If I can do so, without being charged with presumption, I wish to give some directions for reading the Scriptures.

1. *Read them without any preconceived opinions as to what they ought to teach.* This it is difficult to do, and it will never be done without a strenuous effort. Many persons read the Bible determined to place a Calvinistic construction on its teachings, while others are predisposed to an Arminian interpretation. Some read it with impressions favorable to the divinity of Christ and the expiatory nature of his sufferings others with Socinian views and partialities. Some read it established in the doctrine of justification by faith—others, confident that there is no justification before baptism. Some read it with the belief that immersion alone is the baptism of the Scriptures—others are resolved that the claims of pouring and sprinkling will not be disregarded, &c., &c.

Now, instead of these preconceived opinions there should be an honest willingness for God to say just what he pleases. And as he has spoken in his word, the only question is, "What has he said?" This question should be asked with the docility indicated by the remarkable words: "Speak, Lord; for your servant hears." If the Scriptures were read in this way, how soon would the religious world be united! At present there is so much prejudice—such a disposition to make the Bible teach what its readers, with their various preconceived notions, wish it teach—that the many religious denominations contend for different doctrines and practices with as much earnestness and bitterness as if they had different Bibles. Alas, that the understanding is so often darkened through the blindness—that is to say the depravity of the heart.

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2. *Read in connection those portions of Scripture which treat of the same subject.* This is highly important. It includes something more than a comparison of parallel passages—an exercise both interesting and profitable. Passages which cannot be called parallel often contribute to the illustration of one another. Take, for example, those Scriptures which teach the doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ. Those which teach the impossibility of justification by the “works of the law” are not exactly parallel, but illustrative and confirmatory. Certain portions of the Epistle to the Hebrews ought to be read, by all means, in connection with the book of Leviticus. Whatever any one of the sacred writers has said on any subject should be diligently compared with whatever others have said on the subject. It will be surprising to those who have never made the experiment how much knowledge of the Holy Scriptures may be acquired in this way.
3. *The Bible should be read with a spirit of self-application.* In its perusal the impenitent sinner ought to say: “These commands to repent and believe the gospel are addressed to me *personally*—to me as certainly as if the sun shone upon no other sinner. Their binding obligation on me is not abated in the least by the fact that they have reference to millions of other impenitent souls.” The penitent believer in examining the sacred pages should say, “This requirement, ‘be baptized,’ is as evidently intended for me as if I were called *by name*, and directed to go into the baptismal waters. I will, therefore, obey it with the promptest alacrity.”

The baptized disciple, in reading the inspired volume, should express himself thus: “It is now incumbent on me to do all things whatsoever Jesus my Lord has commanded. I will do what he tells me to do though opposed by the influences of earth and the powers of hell.”

Let the readers of the Bible remember that in it God speaks to them. Then will they apply to themselves its holy teachings.

4. *The reading of the Scriptures should be a devotional exercise.* This is very difficult, perhaps at times impossible to translators, revisers, critics, commentators, &c. With them the intellect is so intently occupied as to leave the heart comparatively unmoved. Those who have read the Bible critically in the original languages know what I mean. I do not depreciate their criticisms, but they ought to have stated times for reading the Scriptures as a devotional exercise. And this is eminently true of the multitudes who can read the word of God only as they have it translated. Their reading must of course employ the intellect, but it ought to exercise the heart rather. The intellect, I had almost said, should be discarded except as the means of reaching the heart. There should be an excitement of the pious feelings and affections of the soul. The Bible speaks to the heart, and a devout perusal of its pages is necessary to the maintenance of Christian spirituality. And if the exercise of reading is interspersed with ejaculatory prayer, so much the better. Indeed, it would be well for the word of God as read to be paraphrased by prayer.
5. *The reading of the Scriptures should be accompanied by meditation.* If reading may be compared to *eating*, meditation is analogous to *digestion*. In a sound physical constitution, digestion always follows eating, and in a sound spiritual constitution, meditation on divine truth accompanies the reading of that truth. Said David: "O how I love the law! It is my meditation all the day."

Numerous and diversified are the topics of meditation furnished by the Bible. They are infinitely important, attractive, sublime, glorious, and awful. The loftiest intellect may find in them enough, and more than enough, to employ all its powers; while the most devout heart will be supplied with spiritual ailment to nourish and sustain the most exalted devotion.

Christians! Having read the word of God, meditate on it!—study it. At first you may find it difficult, soon it will become an easy and a delightful exercise. If you will be persuaded to

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read the Bible, as I have now advised, this article will not have been written in vain.



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NUMBER 4: WHAT ARE THE REQUISITES OF AVAILING PRAYER?

1. I answer a *willingness to relinquish every sin*. David said long since, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." In prayer we call upon a holy God who looks on sin with infinite abhorrence. How can such a God be approached acceptably by those who "regard iniquity?" The "prayer of the wicked" is of necessity "an abomination to the Lord." To offer availing prayer we must view sin, in some degree, as God does. As he hates it, we must hate it also. And our hatred of sin must induce a determination to abandon it. All the paths of iniquity must be forsaken. There must be a relinquishment of *external* sins, and there must be no toleration of *internal* iniquities. There must be an uncompromising war, a war of extermination, waged against sin in all its forms.
2. A second requisite of availing prayer is *sincerity*. We can never successfully draw near to the throne of grace, unless our petitions proceed from sincere hearts. Sincerity is closely allied to a willingness to relinquish every sin. Where this willingness does not exist, there cannot be evangelical sincerity. How can we sincerely ask God to forgive sins which we are reluctant to forsake? While man looks at the outward appearance, God looks at the heart. Petitions may be presented at the mercy-seat in language the most eloquent—they may be specimens of the richest rhetoric; but what will they avail in the absence of sincerity? Absolutely nothing. To all who offer such petitions, it may be said, "You ask and receive not because you ask amiss." They would be obnoxious to the

charge which so deeply implicated the Israelites of Isaiah's day, and the Pharisees during the Savior's ministry: "This people draw near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

3. A third requisite of availing prayer is *a disposition to forgive injuries*. We live in an apostate world—we belong to an imperfect race. This being the fact, it is not marvelous that we sometimes offend others, and that others sometimes trespass against us. When we pray, if we would have God to hear us, we must forgive those who have offended us. We must indulge no malevolent feelings toward any fellow-creature. We may say this is very difficult. So it is. But we must remember that God has forgiven us infinitely more than we are required to forgive. An unforgiving temper is a curse to its possessor. The Savior says: "If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." This is strong language, but it is true. We are taught to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses *as* we forgive those who trespass against us." When we offer this petition, and do not exercise a forgiving spirit, we virtually imprecate the vengeance of Heaven on our own heads. We ask God to deal with us as we deal with others. We do not forgive others, and therefore, in effect, we ask God not to forgive us. How often does an unforgiving disposition prevent a successful approach to the throne of grace! The unforgiving injure themselves more than they do those they are unwilling to forgive. They make it morally impossible for God to hear and answer their prayers.
4. *Purity of motive* is a fourth requisite of availing prayer. By this I mean that the blessings for which we pray should be sought for *the proper reason*. And the proper, the comprehensive reason is that God may be glorified. When Christian pray that they may grow in grace, they should desire progress in the Divine life far more that God may be glorified than on account of any considerations personal to themselves. Parents should

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desire the salvation of their children, not merely that the solicitude growing out of parental love may be gratified, but chiefly that their salvation may promote the Divine glory. How many parental prayers are never heard, because they are so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of selfishness? Many a minister prays to be useful, but does not, as he should do, look upon his usefulness as the means of glorifying God. He is too anxious; it may be, for it to be known through the newspapers that he is living to some purpose. A church may pray for a revival, and desire it principally as the best method of gaining the vantage-ground among the conflicting religious denominations. There may be *sectarian* earnestness, and even paroxysms of *sectarian* agony in prayer, but the glory of God is comparatively uncared for, and Heaven does not give ear.

5. A fifth requisite of availing prayer is *confidence in the divine promises*. The language of Christ is: "Whatsoever things you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them and you will have them." The Scriptures attach great importance to faith. When the "two blind men" went to Christ and entreated him that their "eyes might be opened," he did not *at once* exert his power in restoring their sight, but said, "Believe you that I am able to do this?" They said, "Yes, Lord." He would not open their eyes until they expressed their confidence in his ability to give them sight. Then he said, "According to your faith so be it unto you." "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Nor is it strange that confidence in the Divine promises is essential to availing prayer. Men are never more highly offended than when their veracity is called in question. "God is not man that he should lie." "His truth endures to all generations." How infinitely insulting, then, must it be to the God of the universe for his veracity to be questioned? And it is questioned by all who do not repose confidence in his promises. It would be most unreasonable to expect God in fulfillment of his promises, to answer the prayers of those who doubt the truth of those promises. To approach the throne of grace acceptably, we must draw near in "full assurance of

faith.” How many prayers does the spirit of unbelief pollute and ruin.

6. A sixth requisite of availing prayer is that our *petitions be presented in the name of Christ*. The Redeemer says of himself: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Sinless beings can approach God without a Mediator. I suppose our first parents in Eden, in drawing near to God, were not dependent on any mediatorial arrangement. But as soon as they sinned, the way of access to the Divine throne was obstructed, and the obstructions were susceptible of removal only by the mediation of Christ. In this way they were removed, and sinners can approach God and live. By Jesus Christ both Jews and Gentiles have “access by one spirit unto the Father.” The Father is accessible only through the Son. The genius of the gospel economy tolerates the presentation of no petition to God except in the name of Christ. The Savior said to his disciples, “Whatsoever you will ask the Father *in my name*, he will give it you.” How delightful the thought that Jesus is our Advocate in the court of heaven. He ever lives to make intercession for us. The heart that throbbed and bled on the cross still feels for us, still loves us. Let all our petitions be presented in his name, in humble and exclusive reliance on his mediation, and God will graciously hear and answer them.
7. The last requisite of availing prayer which I will mention is *importunity*. The Savior forcibly inculcates the propriety of importunate prayer in Luke 18:3, 5.

According to this representation, importunity accomplishes what considerations of friendship cannot affect. “And,” subjoins the Savior, “I say unto you; ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened unto you.” I imagine that God sometimes delays the bestowal of the blessings sought by his people, that he may put to the test their sincerity and their faith. When, however, their requests are not immediately granted, they should pray more earnestly. They should knock louder and louder at the door of

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mercy. *Spiritual blessings alone* are to be sought with importunity. Temporal mercies are not to be sought thus. Affliction may come upon us, and we may pray for health, but it would be improper to pray with importunity; for it may be better for us to be afflicted. With regard to spiritual favors we cannot be too importunate. They are of superlative value, and their infinite worth justifies importunity. God in bestowing spiritual blessings promotes our best interests and glorifies his own name. Every Christian may, therefore, say with Jacob: "I will not let there go except you bless me."



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NUMBER 5: FAMILY WORSHIP

The family constitution is of Divine origin; for it is God “who sets the solitary in families.” There is admirable wisdom in the arrangement, and if the purposes of the domestic organization are carried into effect the influence on church and state will be most favorable. The family circle is the first place to make religious impressions, and it may be said that, with very few exceptions, the members of an untrained or badly-trained family make worthless citizens. But what is it to train a family properly? Is it merely to care for the physical welfare and the mental improvement of the members of that family? It surely implies something more. Moral and religious interests must be prominently regarded. They must be considered of paramount importance. Parents are very guilty before God if they place any of the interests of their children on an equality with their religious interests. The principle of parental love exists for valuable purposes, and its legitimate operation leads fathers and mothers to seek the spiritual welfare of their offspring.

Here the question arises: “Can the heads of families perform their duties to children and domestics without maintaining family worship?” To this question I give a negative answer.

1. Because where family worship is not observed *there is no family recognition of obligation to God or dependence on him.*

There may be individual acknowledgment of obligation, &c., but that is all. Prayerless heads of families virtually say that they are under no family obligations to God—that they are

not indebted to him for family blessings—that they are not dependent on him for domestic enjoyments, &c., &c. They would not say so in words, but in effect they say so. What impression is, by a course of this kind, made on the minds of children and servants? Evidently an impression which, so far as it is influential, is promotive of practical atheism. It leads those children and servants to act as if there were no God. I know that in many instances there are counteracting influences which correct that impression, but no thanks are due those prayerless ones for these counteracting influences. They are originated by others, not by them.

Can there be in any family a suitable recognition of obligation to God without family worship? And without this recognition can the heads of families meet their responsibilities and perform their duties to children and domestics? No one will answer these questions affirmatively.

2. Where family worship is not maintained *there is not a suitable appreciation of, nor a proper gratitude for, domestic blessings.*

I know that many will refer at once to individual appreciation of Divine favors, and individual gratitude for them. This is all right, and very appropriately calls forth the thanksgiving of secret prayer. Individual blessings call for individual praise. How manifestly proper it is for the members of a family receiving, as they do, the blessings of heaven conjointly, to offer their conjoint praises to the God of heaven! But are these domestic thanksgivings possible without family worship? How can they be? And can children be expected to cherish a grateful remembrance of Divine favors when they hear from their parents around the domestic hearth no expressions of gratitude to God? How can children be trained up in the way in which they should go, unless the propriety of thanksgiving to God for his mercies is inculcated? And what inculcations are so impressive, so forcible, as those of family worship? I see not how the duties of heads of families to their children and servants can be adequately performed without family worship.

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3. In the neglect of family worship *there cannot be a proper acknowledgement of the necessity of salvation, and the importance of seeking it.*

In surrounding the family altar the fact is impressively set forth that the religion of Jesus Christ is the one thing needful. It is said in language too plain to be misunderstood, "we who here bow down before God are sinners and need his mercy." The devout father confesses his own sins and the sins of his family, while united supplications are offered for pardon. There is a daily confession of sin, and there are daily petitions for its forgiveness. Nothing is better adapted to impress the members of a family with the importance of salvation than a properly conducted system of family worship. How professedly religious parents can satisfy themselves that, though they neglect the worship of God in their families, they are doing their duty, so far as the salvation of their children and servants is concerned, is very difficult of explanation. What opinion must children form of religion when they never hear their parents, who profess to be religious, call on God in prayer? Can they deem it a matter of much importance? And does not a neglect of family worship often counteract the teachings of the pulpit? Alas! Family religion is woefully at fault in this age. There are thousands of prayerless families among professed Christians. They ought to tremble when they read Jeremiah 10:25: "Pour out your fury upon the heathen that know you not, *and upon the families that call not on your name.*" Ah, who can tell how prayerless families will escape when God pours forth his fury? It is the part of wisdom for every father to say with Joshua, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

The best method of conducting family worship is entitled to earnest consideration. On this point the following suggestions are made:

1. *That hour should be selected for this service at which the members of the family can most conveniently come together.*

I do not mean by this that consideration of convenience settle the question of duty. Far from it. My meaning will be

indicated by what Paul says of “attending upon the Lord without distraction.” There are times in every family when domestic cares can be more effectually dismissed from the mind than at other times. When there can be the most perfect freedom from these cares is the period for family prayer. And if it is not possible to accommodate all the members of a family let as many be accommodated as practicable. Common sense will suggest, of course, that the morning hour of family worship should not be so early as to preclude, on the part of some, preparation for it; nor should the evening hour be so late as to affect the interest and the vitality of the service.

2. *The exercises of family worship should be short.*

This is important for the sake of younger children; nor is it needless on account of those who are older. Indeed it sometimes happens that the wearisome services cause the mother to think, while on her knees, that it will be necessary to prepare a second breakfast. When this is the case there can be but little of the spirit of devotion in her heart. Why should the conductor of family worship deem it necessary to look five minutes for a chapter containing sixty verses, and having read it to look five minutes more for a hymn of eight or ten stanzas, and then offer a prayer as long as Solomon’s at the dedication of the temple? I do not say the angel Gabriel would become tired of such services, but I insist that the most pious man on earth might religiously desire their abbreviation. The reading of a few verses—the singing of three or four stanzas—the offering of a short prayer, are, in ordinary circumstances, greatly preferable to more protracted exercises. It is a sad thing when family worship, so far from being invested with attractions, is considered a task and a burden. The tones of the bell calling the family together for prayer should be the sweetest heard during the day.

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3. *All the members of a family should, if possible, be interested in family worship.*

In some cases this will be very difficult. Perhaps all effort to accomplish it will be vain. Still those who have the management of family worship should try and enlist all who are present at its observance. I have thought it would be well for all who can read to have their Bibles, and read in rotation. This plan will undoubtedly secure the attention of many persons better than the ordinary one according to which one individual does all the reading. Sometimes explanations of the portions of Scripture read will be necessary. Let the father not explain if any child is competent. The very fact that children can be called on any moment to give explanations will make them read more attentively.

Young children probably take more interest in singing than in any other part of family worship. It is a good thing to sing praises to the Lord. It is well for all who can read to have hymn-books, and then when the number of hymns is announced, they can turn to it, and sing it without any interruption from giving out the lines or a failure to remember the words.

Prayer in family worship should be appropriate. It should have reference to the condition of the family. Family prosperity should be gratefully recognized, and the sanctification of family adversity and affliction should be anxiously sought. Absent members of the family should be commended to the protection and mercy of God.

4. *No trivial matter should be allowed to prevent a regular observance of family worship.*

If trifles are permitted to lead to its neglect *once*, they will induce its omission *more than once*. If difficulties are yielded to, there will always be difficulties. If excuses are tolerated they will multiply. If objections are treated with too much respect, they will soon be considered valid. Here the thought present itself; Perhaps, I have now indicated the process by which many a family altar has been demolished. O you

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backslidden heads of families! You who once bowed around the hearthstone, do you not now neglect family worship altogether? And has not this state of things been brought about because you suffered trivial matters, and difficulties, and excuses, and objections to keep you from the family altar? Return to the forsaken altar—rebuild it—and let the morning light and the evening shades witness the regularity of your devotions.

The advantages of family worship constitute a theme on which a great deal might be said. I have, however, already transcended the limits I had prescribed to this subject. O that all who are called by the name of Christ were more diligent in the cultivation of family religion! A much brighter day would then dawn on the churches of the saints.



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NUMBER 6: PUBLIC WORSHIP

It is the duty of Christians to worship God, not only in secret and in the family, but in the public assembly. They are not to forsake the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some was in apostolic times, and as the manner of many is in these degenerate days. It is painfully surprising to know how many professed Christians fail to attend the services of the sanctuary with any regularity. Perhaps they fill their seats if some preacher of national celebrity is to preach—that is to say, if that preacher is not the pastor. In other words, they attend preaching only to have their curiosity gratified. They do not aim to obey God, nor are they anxious for spiritual benefit. Others go to the house of the Lord if it is perfectly convenient. If they feel perfectly well—if the day is not too warm or too cold—if there is no appearance of rain or storm—they go to the sanctuary. They serve God as it may suit their convenience. They do not believe in doing anything which subjects them to the least inconvenience. Theirs is a strange religion. If the days of persecution should return, I am afraid they would deny the Lord Jesus because it would not be convenient to pour forth their blood, or be wrapped in a flame-shroud in honor of his name. This *convenient* religion will be very *inconvenient* in a dying hour. How it is that Christians are disinclined to engage in the exercises of public worship I do not understand. It is a mystery which defies all comprehension; for the disinclination involves disloyalty to the object of their worship. How can they love God if they feel no interest in his public worship? Or are unwilling to be recognized as his

public worshippers? With the Bible before me I am not authorized to consider them real Christians. I fear theirs is a nominal religion. Those for whom the earthly sanctuary has no attractions are unfitted for the services of the heavenly temple.

To the people of God his house has ever been a delightful place. David says, "I have loved the habitation of your house and the place where your honor dwells." "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." "How amiable are your tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yes, even faints, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. For a day in your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." This is the language of the pious heart. To the devout Christian attendance on the services of the sanctuary can never be a matter of indifference. The house of God cannot be divested of sweet and powerful attractions.

How to make attendance on public worship profitable is a subject well worthy of consideration. I offer the following suggestions:

1. *Preparation for the sanctuary should be made by the cultivation of a devotional spirit at home.*

The advantages accruing from public worship depend much more on the state of the heart than many suppose. The heart must be right with God. If not, it may be said in truth, "This people draw near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." When the spirit of prayer is enjoyed at home—when the Bible is devoutly read—when its truths are made the theme of earnest meditation—then the services of the sanctuary will be profitable. The children of God should never go to his house without praying fervently that they may enjoy spiritual interviews with him, and so wait upon him as to renew their strength. O, how much unprofitable resort there is to the place of worship, because no preparation is made for it! The failure to receive benefit results much more frequently from

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this want of personal preparation than from any weakness or imperfection in the exhibitions of the pulpit. Seldom is a sermon preached so objectionable in manner, and so defective in matter, as to preclude spiritual advantage, if indeed the hearers are in a devout frame of mind.

2. *The word preached should be heard with solemn attention as the word of God.*

“Take heed,” said Jesus Christ, “how you hear.” This surely intimates the possibility of hearing the word of God in an improper manner. And it is heard improperly unless it is listened to with solemn attention as the word of God. Paul says to the Thessalonians, “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when you received the word of God which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe.” The hearer who would be profited by preaching must feel that so far as God’s ministers declare his truth, God himself speaks. And when the Lord of glory utters his voice let mortals listen with reverent attention.

3. *The subjects discussed in the sanctuary should be themes of meditation and conversation in the family.*

Do not think your duty is performed when the sermon is over. The minister has only furnished you with spiritual food which must now be digested to do you good. Perhaps you are in a state of spiritual dyspepsia. If so, avail yourself of the “milk” rather than the “meat” of the discourse. After a while you will be able to digest the “meat.” Meditate on what you hear. Converse about it in the family circle. Engrave the truth deeply on your own mind and on the minds of others. Would it not be well for a portion of the Lord’s day to be spent in these family conversations on what is heard from the pulpit?

4. *Earnest prayer should be offered that the influence resulting from public worship may be beneficial.*

Alas, what multitudes mingle in the congregations of the saints and derive no benefit from the services of the

sanctuary. Their hearts even become harder under the means adapted to soften them. There are few things more to be deprecated than an unprofitable attendance on the exercises of the Lord's house. It is awful, indeed, when the gospel proves "a savor of death unto death."

But how may public worship do us good not only while we are engaged in it, but when it is over? Evidently by the blessing of God. Nor can we be profited without his blessing. The most charming music, the best arranged prayers, the most eloquent sermons will be of no avail unless the Lord will be pleased to bless. And how may his blessing be secured? In answer to prayer. The God we worship has ever been the hearer of prayer. "His eyes are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cries." How full of encouragement are these words! How clearly do they indicate that prayer is efficacious! Those who pray before going to the house of God, and pray while there, and pray when they return home, will be benefited by the services of the sanctuary. The influence resulting from public worship will be a hallowed influence, pervading every secular avocation and spiritualizing the affections of the heart amid the operations of physical or mental labor. This is what is needed—a religion displaying its power, not only in the Lord's house on his holy day, but diffusing its salutary energy through the business transactions of the week. Under the influence of such a religion, the devout worshiper on the Lord's day, will, through the week, be fervent in spirit while diligent in business, and the man of business will be glad when the time comes to go into the house of the Lord.



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NUMBER 7: PRAYER MEETINGS

There are many professors of religion who fill their places in the sanctuary on the Lord's day, and listen with attention to the preaching of the word, but they are seldom seen in a prayer-meeting. Various reasons might be given for their absence, none of which, perhaps, would bear a rigid scrutiny. The impression seems to prevail, that meetings for prayer are less important than those for preaching. The correctness of this impression may well be questioned. It is difficult to conceive how any meetings can be more important than those in which the supplications of a Church are offered to God. The prayer-meeting has been sometimes referred to as the moral thermometer of a Church, indicating its spiritual state. The figure is appropriate. Well attended prayer-meetings evince deep spirituality; but when the attendance is meager piety is in a declining state. There may be a numerous membership—respectable, wealthy, and intelligent—but there is little of the power of godliness when the hour of prayer is not hailed as a welcome hour. The Christian who is growing in grace loves to pray in secret and delights to call upon God in the social meeting.

Prayer-meetings were held in apostolic times. The Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit was preceded by a protracted prayer-meeting. The apostles "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." The example here left us should be influential. The apostles prayed. They did not consider it a condescension to be present in prayer meetings. They were glad to be there. The

female members of the Church were there. The desires of their hearts were poured forth in supplication. They looked for the promised blessing. Jesus had given assurance of a more copious effusion of the Spirit than had ever been enjoyed. The disciples did not say, "The promise of our recently ascended Lord is reliable—it will certainly be fulfilled—and therefore we will supinely wait for its accomplishment." No, their confidence in the promise, so far from abating their earnestness and importunity, increased both. They prayed with greater fervor, because they expected that to be done which the Savior had said should be done.

When Peter was in prison, "prayer was made without ceasing of the Church of God for him." The Church knew that God was able to bring his servant out of prison. I do not know that any of the Church expected an angel to be sent from heaven to break Peter's chains and open the prison doors; perhaps they had not thought particularly of the manner in which their prayers would be answered. God in granting the requests of his people is often pleased to overwhelm them with delightful surprise. When Peter was released from prison he went "to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying." That was a prayer-meeting very well attended. Many were there, and they were there for a specific object—prayer. They were too much like modern Christians in one thing—the weakness of their faith. They thought the "damsel Rhoda mad" when she affirmed that Peter was at the door. They did not expect so early an answer to their prayers, or at any rate they did not expect Peter's personal presence in their midst would be the proof God would give that their supplications had been heard. Our Heavenly Father reserves to himself the right to answer prayer when and how he pleases. Perhaps it would be well for me to say how many prayer meetings might be rendered more interesting and profitable.

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1. *There should be a prompt and general attendance of the members of the Church.*

All should be present at the appointed hour. Those who are tardy disturb the devotions of those who are in time. This they have no right to do. Who has not, when kneeling before God, been annoyed by the footsteps of those who are too late in their attendance? Such persons for religion's sake, and for propriety's sake, should wait at the door till the prayer is ended. The attendance of Church members at prayer-meeting should not only be prompt but general. All should be there unless providentially kept away. Why not? All have wants which should be expressed in prayer. All have sins which ought to be confessed. All are the recipients of favors which should be gratefully acknowledged. None are too rich to attend prayer-meetings, and none are too poor. The rich need to pray that their wealth may not monopolize their thoughts, and the poor that they may not repine at their poverty. None are too wise to pray, and none are too ignorant. None have too much of the grace of God in their hearts to pray, and those who have very little are the very persons that ought to pray for more. I see not how any class of Church members can be excused from a regular attendance at prayer-meetings. And suppose there should be a regular attendance of all classes in all the churches of the saints. It would be spoken of and written about as the most remarkable moral phenomenon of modern times. Many would conclude that the millennium was about to bless and illuminate the world with the splendor of its glory. Alas, as it is, there is scarcely a church of any size, one half of whose members are ever seen together at a prayer-meeting. A majority of professed Christians practically object to meetings for prayer. They say by staying away that such meetings ought not to be attended.

2. *Appropriate prayers add greatly to the interest and profit of prayer-meetings.*

Appropriateness is important in every thing. A brother, of course, should not pray in a time of spiritual declension as he

would in a time of revival. The prayers recorded in the Bible were adapted to the circumstances that called them forth. It would have been highly incongruous if Solomon, at the dedication of the Temple, had offered such a prayer as David did when his heart was oppressed with the fact that Jerusalem was desolate. There is a time for everything. There is a time to pray for spiritual wisdom, but that time was not when Peter was sinking beneath the waves of the sea. Then was the time to pray as he did pray, "Lord, save, or I perish." The apostles prayed appropriately when they said, "Your kingdom come," while the penitent thief and the martyr Stephen prayed with equal appropriateness when the former said, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom," and the latter, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit."

No one should pray at a missionary concert meeting as he would do at an ordinary prayer-meeting. There is a specific object to be prayed for, and other objects must be held in abeyance. It may be said that it is difficult to offer at all times appropriate prayers. This is true. The best way to acquire the habit of praying appropriately is to have a devout heart, and then reflect before we pray what we ought to ask God for at that particular time. I do not advise that prayers be written and committed to memory. Far from it. But suitable topics to be dwelt upon in prayer should command earnest and devout consideration. Prayers to be appropriate must generally be short. There are very few men who can make a long appropriate prayer. There are times, however, when an unusual state of feeling makes this practicable. But ordinarily the longer prayers are the less appropriate.

3. *Suitable portions of Scripture should be read and suitable hymns sung.*

Many who lead prayer-meetings seem to give themselves no trouble in selecting such parts of the Bible as are most appropriate. This in some instances is owing to an imperfect acquaintance with the inspired volume—in others it is the result of thoughtlessness and carelessness. Any man can, if he will try, find much in the Scriptures that has a direct bearing on the subject of prayer. Occasional comments on the

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passages read at a prayer-meeting will add to its interest. The hymns sung should be suited to the occasion. The same order of hymns would not do for ordinary prayer-meetings, missionary concerts, and revival convocations. There should be adaptation. And the adaptation should extend to the tune as well as the sentiment. Some tunes sung to some words produce a ludicrous effect; destroy all devotional feeling, and are a burlesque on music. Let all take heed to Paul's words, "Let every thing be done decently," that is in a becoming manner.

Christian reader, will you not in future attend the prayer-meetings of your church? Never, I entreat you excuse yourself from going to the assembly of the saints by saying, "It is only a prayer-meeting."



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NUMBER 8: CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

There is music in heaven. The inhabitants of that pure world all sing. Availing themselves of the best forms of musical expression they celebrate the praises of God. How sweet their songs! How melodious their strains, even though loud as “the sound of many waters and mighty thundering!” There is no discordant note, but perfect harmony. There is a commingling of angelic, seraphic, and cherubic voices.

But should the praises of God be confined to the celestial world? By no means. Jehovah is worthy of praise “in all places of his dominion.” The earth should be vocal with songs of adoration and thanksgiving; for here God makes himself known, and bestows blessings with a liberal hand.

Singing is an appropriate expression of the joy of the heart. Hence the ancient Israelites having passed safely through the Red Sea sung a song of gladness and triumph. And how often did David sing psalms to the God of his salvation! “Awake up my glory,” says he, “awake psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.” He refers to his tongue as his “glory.” The tongue is the glory of man; for with it he articulates the words he employs in praising God. This, no irrational creature can do. Dr. Watts’ paraphrase is full of beauty:

My tongue, the glory of my frame,
Will ne’er be silent at your name.

Man's articulating tongue not only gives him superiority to other animals, but occupies a very important place among the members of the body. It may be used in many ways, but it ought certainly to be employed in the utterance of musical sounds. Paul and Silas when immured in the prison of Philippi "prayed and sung praises to God." This they did at the hour of midnight. "Is any merry?" says the Apostle James; "Let him sing psalms." And Paul in writing to the Colossians uses the language: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." This shows that the sentiment of a song is a matter of much importance. How can we "teach and admonish" in singing, if the words we sing are nonsensical? And there must be "grace in the heart." The musical sounds of the tongue must appropriately express the devotion of the heart.

I imagine that most of our churches are culpably negligent of the duty of congregational singing. This is a part of public worship in which many brethren and sisters do not join. I hope they pray. But is it not as evidently their duty to sing as to pray? Ought they to be so selfish as to seek blessings in prayer and render no thanksgiving in songs for blessings received? It is as much the duty of a Christian to sing, if he can sing, as it is to pray. They are both important parts of religious worship.

Congregational singing has gone in many places very much into disuse. The music of choirs has been substituted for it. These choirs are very tenacious of their rights, and suppose one of their rights to be a monopoly of music. They think it is the business of the minister to preach and that it is their business to sing. They suppose it would be as impertinent for any one to interfere with them in their singing as with the minister in his preaching. I refer to some choirs—not to all. Every church should reserve to itself the right to control its music. Irresponsible choirs will always be annoyances, if not nuisances. There is no objection to choirs if they know their place, and will keep in it. It is their business to *lead*, not to *monopolize* the singing. The congregation should sing also.

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For why should God be praised by proxy? And here I may say that both choirs and congregations are often reprehensible. Choirs are so anxious to enjoy the self-satisfaction, resulting from a perfect musical performance that they are tempted to select tunes which the congregation cannot sing, so as to avoid the occasional discord produced by unskilled voices. This is wrong, and sooner or later it frets the congregation. On the other hand the members of the congregation are frequently unreasonable. They make no effort to learn to sing. They object to all new tunes and pronounce encomiums on all that are old. I will not say they wish those tunes sung, which were sung by Noah, when he first came out of the ark, but they have a preference for tunes sung before Kentucky and Tennessee, were admitted into the Federal Union. Why may there not be improvement in music? The principles of musical science, have been remarkably developed in recent times; and why should not the churches of the saints, practically avail themselves of the fact? It is their duty to do so. It is a singular circumstance, that many persons who object most strenuously to new tunes, do not sing those that are old. They do not sing at all, though they can sing. They are fault-finders.

There should be this compromise, between choirs and congregations: Let the former, introduce new tunes less frequently—one during a service is enough—and let the later, instead of complaining, earnestly try to learn every new tune. If this plan is faithfully pursued, there will soon be a sufficient variety of tunes, familiar to congregations as well as to choirs. It would be well too, if in every congregation, a general singing-class could meet once a week, if not oftener. This would be a good preparation, for the musical exercises of the Lord's day.

There are very few things that contribute more to the interest of public worship, than good congregational singing. It is highly instrumental in exciting a devotional spirit, and often renders the prayers, that are offered more fervent, and the sermons preached more effective. It should be remembered that, in assembling for the worship of God, we have in view not only the honor of his name; but the good of

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our own souls. All the exercises, therefore, which make up the entire service, should have a bearing on the promotion of these objects. Singing, prayer, and preaching should conjointly tend to glorify God, and to benefit the souls of the people. And inappropriate hymn, badly sung, often has a bad effect on all the succeeding services. Every thing should be done decently, and in order. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praise, and his greatness is unsearchable." He is infinitely worthy of adoration, and his name should be magnified in the assemblies of his people. How great is the privilege of celebrating his praise! In so doing we pour forth the devotion of our souls, and anticipate our eternal employment in heaven. When we reach the bright mansions of glory, we will sing in strains sweeter than angels use. Ours will be the song of redemption through the blood of the cross. Turning our admiring eyes to our great Deliverer, we will say: "You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood."

But let us not wait till we reach heaven, before we sing the praises of God. Let us praise him in our hearts, "making melody to his name." Let us praise him in our families as the Author of all our blessings. And when we walk to the house of God in company, let us adopt the language of David: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all you lands. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing. Know you that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endures to all generations."

If the reading of this chapter will lead any to attach its proper importance to congregational singing, and make the requisite effort to introduce it into our churches, my object will be accomplished.



THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIAN DUTY

NUMBER 9: GROWTH IN GRACE

Growth in grace is a phrase which denotes the progress the Christian makes in the divine life. That the doctrine of growing in grace is taught in the Scriptures the following passages clearly indicate: "The righteous will hold on their way, and he that hath cleans hands will grow stronger and stronger." "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day." "All the body by joints and bands having nourishment, ministered and knit together, increases with the increase of God." "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." We read in the apostolic epistles of faith growing exceedingly, of hope abounding, of love increasing, and of patience having its perfect work. Wherever this is the case there is growth in grace. It should be remembered that growth in grace implies a symmetrical development of Christian character. None of the graces of the Spirit are so strengthened as to enfeeble others; but there is proportional improvement in all. The thrifty plant or the vigorous tree grows in all its parts. The well-formed body exhibits harmonious proportions in all its various members. So in those who grow in grace the elements of Christian character are mingled in beautiful proportions. While they make attainments in knowledge, their faith is strengthened, their love is increased, their zeal becomes more ardent, their hope assumes new vigor, their humility is deepened, their patience is rendered more thorough, and they are richly adorned with all the virtues which constitute the ornament of saints. This is the Divine arrangement, and it is an admirable one. For knowledge, disconnected from faith and love, would be merely speculative—it would "puff up," but could not edify. Faith without knowledge would

degenerate into blind credulity. Love and zeal, sundered from their appropriate connections, would result in enthusiasm and fanaticism. Indeed, it may be said of every Christian grace that if separated from its kindred graces, it would be divested of much of its beauty and loveliness.

I fear the doctrine of growth in grace is very imperfectly exemplified in most modern professors of religion. How many appear more devout at their entrance on the Christian course than ever afterwards! How many run well for a time, and then move with so tardy a step as scarcely to advance at all! And others seem to be stationary, while others still make an apparent retrogradation. Reader, are you growing in grace? Say not this question would suit your neighbor. It is intended for you. Revolve it in your mind every day till you can give it an affirmative answer. If you are not growing in grace, what scriptural hope can you entertain of heavenly glory? Perhaps you would like to have some of the evidences of growth in grace pointed out. I will name the following:

1. *Increasing hatred of sin.* It is characteristic of all Christian that they hate sin, but in their hatred are many degrees. The hatred of some is much more intense than that of others. Why is sin hateful to Christians? Because the obliquities of their moral vision have been so corrected as to enable them to see things in some degree as they are. Sin is intrinsically and invariably odious, but no man sees it till he is born again. There is no change in sin, but the change is in the subject of regenerating grace. There is a new moral taste, and there is a new moral vision, the taste resulting from the vision. If this be so, the more acute the vision the more acute the taste, and the more acute the taste the deeper the hatred of sin. There are degrees in the acuteness of moral vision. All Christians see sin where other Christians do not—angels see sin where the best Christians do not—and God beholds it where no angelic eye can discern its existence, because in him is exemplified an infinitely perfect moral vision. It follows then that the more acute our moral vision is, the more we are like God, and the more we are like God the more we hate sin. Hence an increasing

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hatred of sin is one of the best evidences of growth in grace. Our spiritual state may always be determined by the depth of our abhorrence of sin.

2. *Deadness to the world.* Christians cannot love the world supremely, but they may love it inordinately. There are many illustrations of this inordinate attachment. Now as the spirit of Christianity and the spirit of the world are directly opposite, it is manifest that growth in grace implies an increasing indifference to, and contempt of, the world. Paul was crucified to the world. Crucifixion was a lingering death. The point which the believer's crucifixion to the world has reached is the point he has reached in his growth in grace. What say you, Christian reader? Are you becoming dead to the world, to its honors, its riches and pleasures?
3. *A deep sense of personal unworthiness.* Job was growing in grace when an exhibition of the glory of the Divine character caused him to say: "Behold I am vile: I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Isaiah was advancing in the Divine life when a contrast of his imperfect character with the perfect character of God led him to exclaim: "Woe is me! For I am undone! I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." Paul was rapidly ascending the summit of Christian excellence when, with inimitable modesty, he said: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given." Growth in grace promotes humility, and humility arises from a sense of personal unworthiness; and hence this sense of unworthiness is an evidence of growth in grace.
4. *Tenderness of conscience.* Many professed Christians, I am sorry to say, do not exemplify this tenderness of conscience. They do and say many things from which the sensibilities of a tender conscience would revolt. And why? Because they are not Christians? I do not so say. But because they are not growing in grace. Those who grow in grace, having tender consciences, are afraid of sin. They do not lay claim to perfection. They sometimes, yea, they often sin. Conscience condemns them in

proportion to its tenderness, and they feel the deepest grief on account of their deviation from the path of rectitude. Tenderness of conscience is an invaluable possession and indicates growth in grace.

5. *A disposition to forgive injuries and do good to enemies.* These are duties which to the lukewarm professor are very difficult of performance. They come directly into contact with the impulses of human nature. It is natural to retaliate injuries and to do evil to those that hate us. When Divine grace enables us so to subdue the propensities of our nature as cheerfully to forgive those who trespass against us, and do good to those that hate us, we may know that we are growing in grace. We are becoming more like God who delights in the exercise of forgiving mercy, and makes his enemies the recipients of ten thousand blessings.
6. *An increasing love of communion with God in secret prayer.* We take delight in holding intercourse with those we love. The throne of grace is one of the places at which God permits his people to enjoy spiritual interviews with himself. The guilty backslider is ashamed and afraid to draw near to God—the warm-hearted Christian comes into his presence with delight, and communes with him at the mercy-seat. Those who are growing in grace would not for all the wealth of the world be deprived of the privilege of secret prayer. Such deprivation they would consider a most grievous calamity. If their access to the throne of grace was cut off they would be wretched indeed. Reader, do you love to pray in secret?
7. *A cheerful readiness to do any thing to promote the cause and the glory of God.* It is a mortifying truth that Christians sometimes become indifferent to the interests of the cause of God. They can see Zion languish without any special sorrow—they can see her prosper without any special joy. They are at ease—in a state of guilty apathy. They are not zealous for the Divine glory. They can see God dishonored, and their hearts are not broken by the sight. They can see his glory tarnished, and their spirits

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are not stirred within them. I need not say that the doctrine of growth in grace is not illustrated in such Christians. Those who are advancing in the Divine life ardently love the cause of God, and desire above all things the promotion of his glory. The honor of God is dearer to them than all other objects. Hence they evince a cheerful readiness to do any thing they can do to promote the cause and the glory of God. Verbal expressions of attachment to this cause do not satisfy them. They must *do* something, and *will do* something, to sub serve its advancement. They do not think it sufficient to say in words that they desire the Divine glory; they prove their sincerity by acting with a view to its promotion. In short, those who are growing in grace regard religion not as a nominal thing, but as a reality of transcendent importance. They have in their souls the power of godliness and they are a peculiar people.

Reader, in view of these evidences of growth in grace, are *you* growing in grace? Is your path like that of the just, shining brighter and brighter? Are you forgetting the things that are behind—reaching to those before—and thus pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? I pray you examine the matter. Be not satisfied with “a name that you live” while you are comparatively dead. Bow down before God, and ask him that you may grow in grace till the day comes when grace will effloresce in glory.



THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIAN DUTY

NUMBER 10: REQUISITES TO CHRISTIAN USEFULNESS

The Savior terms his disciples “the salt of the earth.” We are all acquainted with the utility of salt. We apply it to various substances, and they are not only preserved from putrefaction, but rendered palatable. Its operation therefore is salutary. There is an analogy between the influence of salt is physical—the influence of Christians is moral. The efficacy of salt depends on its quality. When it loses its savor it is good for nothing. The usefulness of Christians arises from their moral qualities. The nearer these qualities approach perfection the more useful do their possessors become. Every Christian is under the strongest obligations to be as useful as possible. His usefulness should be commensurate with the possibilities of usefulness. He is deeply criminal if he becomes like salt which has lost its savor. As Christians should aim to be useful servants of God, my object at present is to point out some of the requisites to Christian usefulness.

1. *An intimate acquaintance with the word of God.* Ignorance is not the matter of devotion. God is not accustomed to sanctify ignorance. The Bible is the store house of knowledge. It is the source whence we derive religious instruction. There we learn the will of God. How likely will we be to act in opposition to that will if we do not know it! We will be “carried about with divers and strange doctrines” unless we are well acquainted with the word of God. Intelligent piety is one of the first requisites to Christian usefulness. If this is true, we are at no loss in understanding why so many members of the churches are

so inefficient. They do comparatively nothing. They are only partially acquainted with the holy Scriptures. Their piety, whatever other features it may possess, is not conjoined with intelligence. Ignorance is in the way of its successful operation. "That the soul be without knowledge is not good."

2. *Zeal for the glory of God.* This sacred emotion should animate every Christian heart. It should put all the machinery of the soul in motion. It must be zeal for the Divine glory. Zeal for any other object will contaminate our performances; for it will preclude purity of motive. This zeal must be ardent, so as to be undiminished by difficulties and obstacles. It must be untiring, so as to hold on its way, hoping against hope, for the accomplishment of its object. The Christian will never do much in the cause of God without zeal. He will faint and tire unless a sacred enthusiasm imparts its impulsive influences. These influences must be steady. The Christian who acts under them will probably be regarded by the world as beside himself. Auspicious to the interests of Zion will be the day when the world will consider Christians *deranged* on account of their absorbing solicitude for the glory of God. The apostles and first Christians were looked upon by their enemies as bereft of reason. Zeal should be according to knowledge; and it will be according to knowledge if there is an intimate acquaintance with the word of God.
3. *Love to immortal souls.* How are Christians to be instrumental in the salvation of souls unless they labor to effect this object, and what but love to souls will elicit effort? This view of the matter suggests one of the causes of the uselessness of a great many professors of religion. They have nothing like an adequate love for immortal souls. Hence the general defectiveness of family religion. How many heads of families show a criminal indifference to the salvation of children and servants! They have no family altars. They have no morning and evening sacrifices! Why is this? Their family religion is defective because their love of souls is defective. And they can let

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their impenitent neighbors go unwarned into eternity. No Christian can make any rational calculation on usefulness, so far as the salvation of sinners is concerned, who does not fervently love their souls. Love to immortal souls is a most important element of Christian usefulness. Look at those ministers whose preaching has been most successful in bringing sinners to the knowledge of the truth. Have they not been most distinguished for their love of souls? And so of private members of the churches. Christian, if you would be useful in "saving souls from death," cherish for them some of that love which brought the Savior down from heaven; and often ponder the question: "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

4. *A willingness to do good in little things.* This is an essential requisite to usefulness. Some persons would overturn a mountain if they could, for it would attract attention; but they would not care to perform an act which would be unnoticed. They covet notoriety and laudation. Some church members give largely to objects of benevolence who never hand to a neighbor the unostentatious tract. Some parents appear very religious in the house of God; but they fail to exemplify the excellences of religion in the family circle. Some masters make eloquent missionary speeches in our annual convocations who would think it a great condescension to go into their "kitchens" and read to their servants the word of God. They are not willing to do good in little things. Let it be considered that very few persons can occupy prominent positions. Very few can do good on a conspicuous theatre. If the great mass of Christians would be useful, they must be willing to do good in little things. And they may even do more in this way than any other, as the dew of heaven in the silence of its influence does infinitely more for the world than Niagara with its mighty thundering.
5. *Uniformity and constant perseverance in our efforts to do good.* Some Christians do very well at times. They are periodically faithful. Their zeal for the glory of God and

their love of souls are periodically excited. But they relax their efforts. There should be no relaxation. It is as much our duty to serve God at one time as another. We are required to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord." Men of the world do not understand *periodical* religion. When we exemplify it we lessen our influence over them. They see the propriety of Paul's declaration: "It is good *always* to be zealously affected in a good thing." A uniform constancy in our efforts to do good is requisite to Christian efficiency.

6. *The possession and the exercise of the spirit of prayer.* All effort is unavailing without the blessing of God. How is his blessing to be secured except by prayer? Useful Christians have ever been praying Christians. The apostles were men of prayer. All faithful ministers have been praying men. Prayer establishes an alliance between the weakness of the creature and the omnipotence of the Creator. "Prayer moves the hand that moves the world." Christian, if you would be useful pray much—pray and faint not—pray without ceasing. Prayer has accomplished wonders. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." Labor as diligently to do good as if every thing depended on your own efforts; and then pray to God for success as earnestly as if you had done nothing. This is sound doctrine.



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NUMBER 11: THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

The influence of example is proverbially great. Precepts un-exemplified are of little value. History has been defined—"Philosophy teaching by example." The definition is very good. When history teaches us to practice the virtues of the good and avoid the vices of the bad, we cannot be too well acquainted with the annals of the past. The example of the wise and good ought to be copied. The best men, however, are imperfect. Their example is, therefore, imperfect. Hence it must not be too closely copied. But the example of Christ is perfect. It is the example of "God manifest in the flesh." Jesus became a man not merely to die, but to show men how to live—to exemplify the excellence of the Divine precepts.

In answer to the question, "In what respects should we imitate Christ?" the following thoughts are submitted:

1. *In his reverential regard for the will of God.*

He says, "I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." "Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do your will, O God." "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." As Mediator he was in subjection to the Father. The Father's will was his rule of action. He became obedient, and his obedience was universal. At his baptism he said, "Thus it becomes us to fulfill *all* righteousness." He never said of any Divine command, "This is a trivial matter—a non-essential." His reverential compliance with all the will of God was seen in

his life and death. Christian, he has left you an example. Revere and obey the statutes of Jehovah.

2. *In the cultivation of a devotional spirit.*

As man it devolved on him to do this. We can imitate him only in what he did as man. How often we are told that he prayed. Frequently he withdrew from his disciples to pray. Sometimes he spent whole nights in prayer to God; and at other times he rose before the dawn of day and retired to a solitary place to hold uninterrupted communion with his Father. There were periods when he wished to be alone with God, and when the presence of even "the beloved disciple" would have been a disturbance. How ineffably sublime were his communing with his Father! How did such communing nerve him for the conflicts through which he passed! The cultivation of a devotional spirit had much to do in inspiring the invincible patience he displayed when, "oppressed and afflicted," he opened not his mouth.

Christians must ever imitate their Savior in the cultivation of a devotional spirit. Their happiness and usefulness depend materially on their so doing.

3. *In his zeal for the Divine glory.*

There was no object as dear to his heart as the glory of God. In him was illustriously fulfilled the declaration, "The zeal of your house hath eaten me up." He saw the temple desecrated, and his zeal for the honor of the God of the temple became intense, overwhelming, consuming. When, in view of the agony of the garden and tragedy of the cross, such trouble came upon him as had never been known on earth, he said, "Now is my soul troubled, and what will I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify your name." As if he had said, "Let the Divine glory be promoted through my sufferings and I will bear whatever may come upon me." His zeal was so great that the prospect of a most agonizing death could not extinguish it—nor could the damps of the sepulcher chill it.

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Christians, in imitation of Christ, should be animated with a holy zeal for the Divine glory. The glory of God is the most important object in the universe. Christians are not at liberty to propose to themselves the accomplishment of any other object which comes in conflict with this. They should be inspired with zeal for the Divine glory till death—in death—and after death, even to eternity.

4. *In his resistance of the temptations of Satan.*

At his baptism the Savior heard the approving voice of the Father—the Spirit descended like a dove and abode upon him—but immediately after, he was led into the wilderness and there tempted of the Devil. How violently was he assailed! Temptations were presented in every form Satanic ingenuity could devise. He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. That is, he resisted. Tried severely, he resisted firmly. He said to his adversary, “It is written,” &c., and triumphed over him—a fact which shows how important it is to have the mind well stored with the word of God. Christians must never forget that Christ in resisting the temptations of Satan left them an example that they should follow his steps. “Resist the devil,” is a Divine command which must be obeyed. The example of Christ should prompt all his disciples to obey it.

5. *In his superiority to the world.*

What cared the Savior for earthly honors and riches? He considered them worthless as dross. He might have encircled his brow with a brighter crown than ever monarch wore. He might have exerted a silent influence on the nations which would have caused them to pour the wealth of the world at his feet. But the realities of the invisible state occupied his attention. He lived far above the contamination of the world. He breathed the atmosphere and imbibed the spirit of heaven. “The signs of the times” indicate that it is at present peculiarly incumbent on Christians to be like Christ in his superiority to the world.

Ah, how much worldliness there is in the churches of the saints! This worldly spirit is placing gigantic obstacles in the

way of the progress of the cause of God. Christians remember your Savior's example.

6. *In his love to the souls of men.*

Love brought him down from heaven. "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Love led him to the cross and presided over the crucifixion scene. When Christians are like Christ they love the souls of men, and when they copy his example they do whatever they can to promote the salvation of souls. O that more of the love displayed on Calvary could be infused into the hearts of Christians!

7. *In his meekness under injurious treatment.*

"When he was reviled he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not." "He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter." How uncomplaining! Meek as a lamb! We had power to retaliate every injury by sending its perpetrator to hell. But he would not—he did not. Christian, copy the example of your Savior in his meekness under injurious treatment.

8. *In the indulgence of a forgiving spirit.*

While his enemies were nailing him to the cross he said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." What God-like magnanimity! Whose admiration is not excited? Stephen the first Christian martyr imbibed the spirit, and copies the example of his dying Lord. When his enemies were stoning him to death he said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Did he not display a noble spirit?

Remember, Christians, that in these, as well as in other respects, Jesus has left you "an example that you should follow his steps."



THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIAN DUTY

NUMBER 12: CHRISTIAN LOVE

Christians are a peculiar people, distinguished in many respects from all other people. One thing about them as distinctive as any other is their love for one another. Jesus gave his disciples a new commandment, that they should love one another. It was new because love was to distinguish his followers, and invest his religion with an attractive peculiarity: “By this,” said he, “will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.” Love was to be the badge of discipleship.

The nature of Christian love should be considered.

It is not a love based on natural relationships. Parents and children, brothers and sisters love one another. The love arises from the natural relation they sustain. This has nothing to do with Christian love. The latter is altogether different. Nor is Christian love based on the similarity of the tastes and habits of those who move in the same circles in society. Such persons necessarily contract partialities for one another. But in these partialities the element of Christian love may be totally absent.

Nor is Christian love based on sectarian preferences. The most wicked men may have denominational preferences. And they sometimes exemplify the strongest partialities and prejudices.

Christian love has for its basis the fact that those toward whom it is exercised are Christ's—belong to Christ. “Whosoever will give you a cup of water to drink in my name,

because you belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he will not lose his reward.” Christian love grows out of the fact that its objects are Christ’s disciples. It, therefore, always implies previous love to Christ. It cannot exist without love to the Savior. This is the reason why it proves so conclusively that its possessor has “passed from death to life.” Christian love recognizes another fact—that its objects bear the moral image of Christ. All Christians love the image of their Savior. Wherever they see his likeness they admire it. The more striking the likeness the more intense the admiration. Hence Christians love those most who are most like Christ. In some the lineaments of the Redeemer’s image are so faint that scarcely any love is excited. How many who call themselves Christians hardly deserve to be loved at all.

I will mention some of the *hindrances to Christian love*. A general hindrance is the imperfection that cleaves to all Christians. They are not angels. They are fallen human beings whom Divine grace is fitting for heaven. But to be more specific:

Too little religious intercourse is a hindrance to Christian love. I do not mean that Christians do not often see one another, but they do not talk as much on religious subjects as they ought to do. In ancient times “those who feared the Lord spoke often to one another and the Lord hearkened and heard it.” Conversation on experimental religion excites Christian love in a wonderful manner. The hearts of those engaged in fraternal colloquy often burn within them.

Evil speaking is a hindrance to Christian love. By evil speaking I mean not only that which is false, but that which, if true, is injurious to those spoken of—that is to say, unless good can be accomplished by speaking, which will more than counterbalance the injury the person spoken of might suffer. Suppose a brother is spoken of disrespectfully and disparagingly by his brethren, it at once cools his love toward them. This will be the case as long as human nature is what it is. The imprudent and sinful use of the tongue is prominent among the hindrances to Christian love. The tongue is a small member, and is the instrument of much

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mischief. What Christian's tongue has not spoken improper words, and those words have weakened the cement of Christian love. They have done a spiritual injury to the person speaking, and the person spoken of.

A suspicious disposition is also a hindrance to Christian love. I pity those who possess it. Such persons are always expecting something bad. They imagine a thousand evil things. They think they see unfavorable indications in the manner of their brethren, when nothing unfavorable is intended. Those who are disposed to be suspicious will suffer their suspicions to impair, in a great degree, their Christian love. It sometimes happens that positive alienations have their origin in gratuitous suspicion.

Pride is an obstacle to the exercise of Christian love. It operates in many ways. Sometimes a brother does wrong and is too proud to confess it. The wrong done weakens Christian love, nor can it be strengthened without confession. Sometimes pride makes the offended brother require too much of the offender. No Christian should be expected to degrade himself in giving satisfaction to an offended fellow-Christian. Christianity promotes humility, not degradation.

Want of faithfulness in administering reproof to those that need it is a hindrance to Christian love. "Let the righteous smite me," said David, "and it will be as an excellent oil that will not break my head." Our best friends are those who tell us of our faults with the view of correcting them. Reproof administered and received in a proper spirit promotes Christian love. There is, however, a great deal of unfaithfulness among Christians. How many practically prefer speaking of the faults of brethren to others—even to men of the world! This course paralyzes the strength of Christian affection. It is vastly injurious.

Some of the effects of Christian love deserve notice. It produces *union, harmony, and cooperation* among brethren. It is the bond of union. Truth is the basis, and love the bond of union. It is the sacred cement that binds redeemed souls together. Where there is love there is union—there is

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harmony—there is co-operation. In the absence of love none of these things are to be found.

Christian love produces *a spirit of forgiveness among brethren*. We can easily forgive those we love. Love makes that easy, which, in its absence, is difficult, and even impossible. How promptly are church difficulties adjusted when brethren love one another!

Christian love *adds greatly to the moral power of a Church*. It is one of the most important and vital elements of moral power. All is weakness where there is no love. Talents, learning, worldly respectability—all these are nothing without it.

Christian love has *a most favorable influence on the world*. “By this,” said Jesus, “will all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another.” The ardent love of primitive Christians for one another made an impression on their enemies. Their persecutors saw among them an attachment equally mysterious and undeniable.



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NUMBER 13: HUMILITY¹

Their own imaginary self-sufficiency what doctrines the Bible ought to teach; and then they read it. Every one must see how disadvantageous it is to read the word of God in this way. Humility causes us to repair to the inspired volume as to the fountain of truth. It makes us willing to be taught of God. It prompts the adoption of Samuel's language: "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears." It inspires a docile spirit without which the Bible can never be studied to advantage.

- It inspires a cordial admiration of the gospel plan of salvation.* This plan originated in grace, and every part of it develops the grace of God. Now humility implies that we consider ourselves culpable, guilty, unworthy creatures, our sins that render us so originating in ourselves. It recognizes another fact, that every thing good in us is the result of extraneous influence. Every plant of good quality that flourishes in the soil of the heart is an exotic, not indigenous. God has put it there. Salvation by grace is the only salvation suited to the condition of sinners. But the doctrine of salvation by grace is to the proud heart most unpalatable and repulsive. There is no admiration of the gospel plan of redemption where pride sits enthroned in the heart. Humility alone inspires an admiration of that plan.

¹ Only part of number 13 is available the remainder can only be assumed to have been lost forever.

3. *It secures the communication of Divine grace to the soul.* God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. We need grace at every step in the journey of life. We need it in prosperity to prevent too great elation, and in adversity to prevent unreasonable depression. We need it in health to inspire gratitude—in sickness to prevent repining. We need it in life to sustain us—in death to cheer us. God's grace alone is sufficient for us. This grace he is pleased to give to the humble. How advantageous is humility, securing, as it does, the communication of Divine grace to the soul!
4. *It qualifies for usefulness in the church.* The Head and Founder of the church was meek and lowly in heart. Surely then the members of the church should be like him. They will act with propriety toward one another when they are humble. Without humility in a church the objects of its organization cannot be carried into effect. Who are the most useful Christians? Those who are most humble. And then how easy to settle church difficulties when church members are clothed with humility!
5. *It produces patience under the afflictions of life.* When we have the sense of unworthiness which humility inspires we feel that we richly deserve our afflictions. The language of the humble is: "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, but rewarded us according to our iniquities." Hence they do not murmur under trials, but bow with uncomplaining submission to the will of God.

Do any inquire the best means of attaining Christian humility? I suggest the following thoughts:

1. *Frequent contemplation of the example of Christ.* He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation—took upon him the form of a servant—humbled himself—and became obedient to the death of the cross. What condescension! What humiliation! When we think of Him who though rich for our sakes became poor, it is well adapted to humble our souls within us.

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2. *A consideration of our sins and their demerit.* How numerous and how infinitely odious are our sins! Sin is the most hateful thing in the universe! God abhors it with an infinite intensity of aversion. Sin is the only thing that has disturbed the happiness of the Divine dominions. Sin is the highest insult that can be offered to the majesty of heaven. How deep should be our humility in view of the fact that our sins are many, and that they justly deserve the wrath of God.
3. *A reflection on what we were before conversion, and what we are destined to be.* Once enemies of the cross—now heirs apparent to thrones of glory; once on the way to hell—now hastening upwards to heaven; once far from God—now brought near by the blood of Christ, and destined to be nearer still.



THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIAN DUTY

NUMBER 14: CHRISTIAN JOY

It has been often urged as an obligation to Christianity that it lays an embargo on enjoyment during the present life. How many look on religion as a gloomy repulsive thing! How many consider its advantages altogether future, and that Christians are sacrificing their happiness in this world that they may enjoy eternal felicity in the world to come! These views are exceedingly erroneous. Christianity is not a foe to enjoyment. The religion of Christ, while it disallows thoughtless merriment and noisy mirth, inspires the soul with sacred joy—imparts to the mind a tranquility allied to that of saints in heaven. Why should not the Christian rejoice? Is he not a child of God? Do not all things work together for his good? Is he not an heir of glory? Are not the mansions of bliss to be his eternal abode? Is he not to dwell for ever at God's right hand? Are not these things so? And if they are, do they not authorize devout joy—sacred exultation?

Christian joy is an important element of Christian usefulness. In its absence it is very difficult to recommend religion to the favorable consideration of the impenitent. It would be well for the people of God to think of this. For whatever increases their usefulness deserves their attention. Christian joy is a Christian duty. "Rejoice evermore—rejoice in the Lords," are divine commands. They ought to be obeyed. They are not gratuitous injunctions. There is propriety in them. Christians ought to rejoice for many reasons, a few of which I will mention.

1. *Sublime joy should arise from the relations they sustain to the three persons in the Godhead.*

They are the children of the Infinite Father. Having been born of God they are filially related to him. They are the sons of God, and on this account, "God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying Abba, Father." The spirit of adoption prompts them to claim the relationship of children. The Christian can look up to the Throne and say, "My Father," and the Father looks down from the Throne and says, "My child!" O you saints! Is there not joy in the thought that the Being who manages the universe is your Father, your best friend! Does not the most sublime satisfaction arise from a consciousness of this fact?

Christians are united to Christ. The union is a glorious one and productive of unspeakable blessing. "Christ is made to them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." He is their Elder Brother. Their relation to him is paternal. It is so intimate a relation that Christ considers what is done to them as done to himself. "Why do you persecute *me!*" was the questions that pierced the inmost soul of Saul of Tarsus. Jesus is not ashamed to call his disciples "*brethren.*" From fraternal union with Christ flow the rich blessings of the "new covenant," for of this covenant he is mediator. These blessings were bought with blood. They are precious. Those who are permitted to claim them as their own may well rejoice evermore.

Christians are the temples of the Holy Ghost. He dwells in them as their Comforter and Sanctifier. He is the *Guest* of the individual believer and of all the churches of Christ. Christians have much to with the Spirit. They become Christians by being "born of the Spirit"—they "live in the Spirit"—"walk in the Spirit"—"are filled with the Spirit"—"pray in the Holy Ghost," &c. The love of God is said, to be shed abroad in the heart of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit is the gracious occupant of the Christian's heart, carrying on there a work which contemplates perfect conformity to Christ. Is there not joy arising from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit joy unspeakable and full of glory!

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2. *Christians ought to rejoice in the assurance that all things work together for their good.*

Who gives them this assurance? Does it come from men whose promises often create hopes destined to speedy disappointment? Is it given by angels whose power unequal to their benevolence cannot make it good? No, it is the assurance of Him who cannot lie and whose power is adequate to the performance of whatever he has promised. All things work together for good. *All things!* A phrase delightfully universal in its import. It includes prosperity with all its retinue of blessings. It embraces adversity with all its train of evils. These evils, however, are apparent rather than real; for the sanctifying grace of God has only to touch them and they instantly become blessings. By a process known to spiritual chemistry, good is elicited from evil, and sweet is extracted from bitter. There is, therefore, nothing really injurious in the fury of the storm—nothing pernicious in the howling of the tempest. These are among the “all things” that work together for good. Let this fact make its impression on the Christian’s heart, and he must rejoice, yea, will rejoice. How can the risings of joy in the soul be suppressed? How can feelings of gladness be extinguished? What considerations can create sorrow? Whence can come clouds of gloom to obscure the brightness of the moral sky? God is the author of the joy, and who can destroy it? Its source is in the infinite depths of the Divine nature, and cannot be affected by circumstances. Its indulgence is justified by the promise and oath of the Eternal. It is a joy which the approach of death increases rather than diminishes; for death introduces the Christian into “fullness of joy” of which present joy is only a foretaste. And this leads me to say:

3. *That the prospect of heaven should fill the saints with joy.*

What a prospect is this! How bright! How glorious! How sweetly it cheers the soul! How it animates the heart! How it enraptures the Spirit! Jesus says: “Where I am there will my servant be.” This is enough. To be with Christ will fully gratify all the desires of the redeemed soul. It is said of the glorified that “they will see his face.” What a sight! None like

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it in the wide universe. One view of the Lamb in the midst of the throne is worth more than kingdoms and empires. Christians! Heaven is before. Its bliss awaits you. Its palms are almost ready for your hands—its crowns for your heads—and its songs for your lips. “Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.” The prospect before you should inspire you with joy. It is your duty to be happy. You ought to be joyful. But you will not be—you cannot be—unless you cultivate deep spirituality of mind and ardent devotion of soul. Do this and your peace will flow like a “river”—your joy will abound—for God himself will be your “exceeding joy.” In the language of an apostle you will “joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ;” and you will find that the “joy of the Lord is your strength.” Then will you recommend Christianity to impenitent sinners; for they will see that it renders you happy. They will desire to share its blessings that they may have joys which they have never found in the unsatisfying pleasures of this vain world.



THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIAN DUTY

NUMBER 15: THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TONGUE

Of all the various species of animals that inhabit the earth man is peculiar in the possession of rational powers, and equally peculiar in the enjoyment of the faculty of speech. This faculty has, doubtless, been conferred for wise and beneficent purposes, but these purposes are often thwarted. The tongue is the prominent organ of speech, and it is needless to say that there is no member of the body more ungovernable. How many there are who though they may keep their feet from the pathway of transgression, and resolutely refuse to put forth their hands to iniquity, have but little control over their tongues. They say what they ought not, and “pierce themselves through with many sorrows.”

To acquire the habit of governing the tongue is so difficult that he who has made the acquisition is pronounced by an apostle, “a perfect man.” We may expect completeness of Christian character in him who can “keep his tongue as with a bridle.”

Some one will perhaps inquire, what is implied in the government of the tongue? I answer that it is not meant that the tongue will not be used at all, but that it will be properly used. But to be more specific:

1. *A properly governed tongue is controlled by an enlightened judgment and conscience.*

Feeling and passion may prompt the tongue to say what ought not to be said. This is often the case. Hence the cursing and swearing we so frequently hear. Hence the falsehoods so often uttered. Hence the indiscreet and wicked expression elicited by anger. In these cases feeling and passion monopolize the tongue and make it their instrument, desecrating it to the most unworthy purposes. Judgment and conscience stand in the rear. If they utter their voice it cannot be heard amid the clamor of passion. Can a well-informed judgment and an enlightened conscience approve the uses, or rather abuses of the tongue to which I have referred? Never! Were they allowed to do so they would put forth their voice in such tones as would agitate the soul like a moral earthquake. The tongue is never properly governed, unless a sound judgment and an enlightened conscience control it. It must not say what the judgment pronounces wrong—it must not utter what the conscience condemns. It must be silent unless it can secure the endorsement of judgment and conscience.

2. *A properly governed tongue is controlled by a will conformed to the will of God.*

The will has a mysterious power over the body. It is the doctrine of philosophy, that no bodily movement takes place without a previous exercise of the will. If this be so the tongue is under the influence of the will; and if the will is opposed to God, the tongue will inevitably say what it should not say. Hence the will must be conformed to the will of God. Then it will properly regulate the tongue. It will cause the tongue to speak of Divine things.

3. *A properly governed tongue is controlled by sanctified affections.*

The affections of the heart being unchanged, it may be expected that corrupt communications will proceed out of the mouth; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The tongue will spread an injurious influence all

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around so long as depravity controls the affections. Hence the necessity of a change of heart is manifest, for without it the affections will never take hold of worthy objects. When the regenerating process detaches the affections from things sinful, and places them on things Divine, the tongue feels the influence of the change; for as soon as regeneration imparts its sanctifying impulses to the affections, the affections bring the tongue under suitable control. They cause it to speak forth the praise of God. Divine subjects are dwelt upon with delight; for the renewed heart governs the tongue.

Having attempted to show what is implied in the government of the tongue, I may now refer to the necessity of its government. Why is it necessary?

1. *The faculty of speech is a noble endowment*—It is, as I have said, peculiar to man. As man is thus distinguished from other animals he should properly employ his tongue, which is called his “glory.” The prominent instrument in making articulate sounds ought to be used for valuable purposes. But it will never be used for such purposes unless it is properly governed. Hence arises the necessity of its government.
2. *The evils resulting from an ungoverned tongue show how important it is to control it*—The name of these evils is legion. How often does the tongue of one man (not to say woman) disturb the peace of a neighborhood! How often do slander suits grow out of the faculty of speech! How much the tongue has to do in the creation of Church difficulties! A large majority of these difficulties occur because so many church-members fail to govern their tongues. Alas! What an amount of evil-speaking necessarily proceeds from an ungoverned tongue.
3. *The government of the tongue is honorable to the Christian profession*—The Divine word says, “Keep your tongue from evil.” “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying.” Aye more, it is said, “If any man seems to be religious and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, that man’s religion is vain.” An ungoverned tongue

is a reproach to the Christian name; but a properly regulated tongue is an honor to a religious profession.

4. *The government of the tongue contributes greatly to usefulness*—How much good Christians might do if they would only use their tongues aright. Anciently those “who feared the Lord spoke often one to another.” Christians should consecrate their colloquial powers. They ought to consider “Holiness to the Lord,” written on their tongues. They should exhort one another daily. And how useful they might be in talking to impenitent sinners about their souls! How fluent they often are in talking of worldly things—how culpably silent in reference to things Divine! And how they should tremble when they remember WHO said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”
5. *We must at the Judgment, give an account to God of all we say.*—The Judge himself has said, “For every idle word that men speak they will give an account at the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words will you be condemned.” How solemn the thought that what we now say we must account for before the supreme tribunal! Were we suitably impressed with this thought we would see the necessity of the government of the tongue. Results glorious or awful will follow our words.

Those who wish to acquire the government of their tongues ought to resolve:

1. To think before they speak.
2. To avoid unprofitable associations.
3. To speak unfavorably of no one unless duty requires it.
4. To keep their hearts right with God.

Christians, will you observe these rules? If you do, you will neither regret it in death nor at the judgment.



THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIAN DUTY

NUMBER 16: SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

The spirit of Christianity and the spirit of the world are so unlike that it is perfect folly to attempt to reconcile them. They are as opposite as light and darkness—as contrary as truth and error. Many efforts have been made by nominal Christians to form an alliance between these spirits, but every effort has failed, and must ever fail, while holiness and sin are hostile to each other. Hence Jesus said, “You cannot serve God and mammon.” John, James, and Paul, under the impulse of inspiration wrote: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God. Be not conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.

I will aim to show that Christians should live separate from the world. This is practicable. Jesus said of his disciples, “I pray not that you would take them out of the world, but that you would keep them from the evil.” Again he said, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” It is possible, therefore, to be in the world and not of the world—kept from its evil. This is what professors of Christianity need at the present time—preservation from the evil of the world. The fact that they are not of the world urgently needs illustration. Religion is almost everywhere suffering for want

of this illustration. But why should Christians be separate from the world? I answer:

1. *Because the world is opposed to God*—Nothing is more evident than that those who are under the influence of the spirit of the world are enemies of God. Men of the world have carnal minds, and the carnal mind is enmity against God. The Scriptures inform us that “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life” are of the world. How comprehensive are these phrases! They are full of meaning. Those who are under the influence of the forms of evil denoted by these expressions are of the world. They are not on the Lord’s side. Now, if the world is opposed to God, Christians should be separate from it. How can they otherwise show their friendship for God? It cannot be done. Love to God, and love to his cause must be indicated by a separation from the world—by a repudiation of its spirit—by a non-conformity to its practices.
2. *That an important object contemplated in the death of Christ may be accomplished*—And what is that object? It is specified where Paul says of Jesus, “who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” A peculiar people. The ancient Jews were called God’s peculiar people. They were so nationally. Christians are a peculiar people, but not nationally. They are peculiar as individuals and as churches. But what does peculiar mean? It signifies something special in contrast with that which is common. A man who differs from other men is peculiar. Some trees and flowers are peculiar to certain climes. Some animals are peculiar to certain regions of the earth. Now Christians are required to be a peculiar people—that is unlike other people. There is to be something characteristic about them. If this is true they must come out from the world and be separate; for until they are separate they cannot be peculiar. Christians must practically remember the object Jesus died to accomplish—their redemption from iniquity—their purification unto himself, &c. This object was dear

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to him—so dear that he could not be deterred by the shame and the agony of the cross from an energetic pursuit of it. He gave himself—to poverty, persecution, sorrow, suffering, death that he might make for himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Do you not desire, Christian, that the purpose your Savior had in view when he expired on Calvary may be affected in you? Then you must be separate from the world. It may be that some one who knows the desolation of widowhood will read what I am not writing. And possibly that bereaved one will think of some object which her loved one in life and in death had his heart anxiously fixed on. She has thought and said, O how often! That object will be carried into effect if it is numbered among human possibilities. Her love for the departed one inspires this firm resolve. Christians, think of your Redeemer, your Husband, who to make you his bride shed his blood that he might cleanse you from moral defilement and purify you unto himself. Will not the object he had in view when he came down from heaven—when he lay a babe in the manger—when he agonized in the garden—an object he did not lose sight of when the heavens grew dark at his death—be accomplished in you? Will not Jesus in looking on you say, with triumphant satisfaction, “The object I had in view when I died is affected in them.” If you would afford your Savior this satisfaction, see to it that you are separate from the world. Be not conformed to this world.

3. *That one of the important purposes of Church organization may be carried out*—One of the plainest truths of the Bible is that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual. Unlike secular kingdoms it partakes not of the spirit of the world. Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” Now, it is evident that an important purpose of Church organization is to embody the people of God—to distinguish them from others? To be incorporated into one body they must be separate from the world. And after they are thus incorporated into the Church, they must remain distinguished from the world by being separate from it. That the Church organization is designed to be a holy organization is manifest because Church members

are commanded to withdraw from every brother that walks disorderly. Jesus Christ in granting to his churches the power of discipline teaches how important it is for every Christian body to be pure. No Christian body, however, can be unless it is separate from the world.

4. *That a salutary influence may be exerted on the world*—If Christians do not live separate from sinners they can have no religious influence over them. If professors of religion, instead of being separate from the world, enter into the spirit of the world, then the world will have more influence over them than they will have over the world. Suppose a professed Christian is guilty of fraud—speaks falsely—desecrates the Lord’s day—drinks ardent spirits—indulges a revengeful temper—becomes light and frivolous—is guilty of evil-speaking—foolishly extravagant and vain in dress—let a professed Christian do any of these things, and what influence can he exert over the world? Would sinners in their dying moments call on such a professor to pray for them? No, no. Christian influence depends greatly on separation from the world.



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NUMBER 17: GOD'S PEOPLE ARE HIS WITNESS

God in permitting his people to remain on earth must have in view some important object. They are prepared for heaven and would be unspeakably happy if translated to the world of glory. It is far better to depart and be with Christ. Why then is it included in the arrangements of the Divine economy that Christians will for a time sojourn on earth? Intending to answer this question only in part, I say that the people of God remain temporarily in this world that they may be his *witnesses*. They have a testimony to bear in favor of his cause. Their work on earth will not be done till they bear this testimony. God said to his ancient people, "You are my witnesses," and Jesus said to the apostles, "You are witnesses of these things." What an honor to be a witness for God! What a privilege to bear testimony for Christ! The goodness of a cause is established by what can in truth be said in its favor. There is no danger of exaggeration in what God's people may say in commendation of his cause.

But what should Christians testify? They should testify among other things:

1. That God is worthy of supreme love and adoration.
2. That happiness can be found in him alone.
3. That Jesus Christ is the only Savior from sin.
4. That the saved are new creatures in Christ Jesus.

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5. That the principles of Christianity are not only efficacious to renovate the heart, but to regulate the life.
6. That the soul is worth infinitely more than the body.
7. That the things of this world are comparatively worthless while eternal things are of infinite moment.

Christians must testify these things by word and action. They must combine their verbal and practical testimony. They must say that God is worthy of supreme love. Thus they will bear verbal testimony against all forms of idolatry, and by loving him themselves they must bear practical testimony to his worthiness of their supreme affection. They must furnish a practical endorsement of the declaration that he deserves their love. So of seeking happiness in him. They must show by seeking their happiness in him that they believe him to be the source of happiness—the fountain of living waters. Should they leave this fountain and hew for themselves broken cisterns holding no water, what would their verbal testimony be worth? Their practical testimony would contradict and nullify it. For practical testimony is much more effective than verbal.

In exemplifying the doctrine of salvation from sin, Christians testify to all that Jesus has done. I here avail myself of Paul's ingenious and triumphant logic. If we are saved from our sins, our faith is not vain—if our faith is not vain, our preaching is not vain—if our preaching is not vain, Christ rose from the dead—if he rose, he was buried—if he was buried, he died—if he died he became incarnate—if he became incarnate he came into the world to save sinners. Thus our being saved from sin proves the resurrection and, by consequence, the death of Christ. The virtue that saves proceeds from his death, and his resurrection is a triumphant recognition of that virtue. How important for Christians to testify that Jesus is the only Savior, and show that they have been saved by him! Christians in testifying that the saved are new creatures in Christ, only reiterate what inspiration has declared. "If any man be in Christ he is

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a new creature; old things have passed away, behold all things are become new." To be born again is a great spiritual change. Every such change testifies to the power and grace of God. Every such change proves the gospel true. It is, therefore, all-important that the new creation be seen—that the proof of it be exhibited. It must be shown that the principles of Christianity are not only efficacious to renovate the heart, but to regulate the life. "The grace of God that brings salvation teaches us that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." This is a *practical* age. Men want something more than words. A change of heart is to the person experiencing it a matter of consciousness. But it cannot be a matter of consciousness to the world. How then is the world to be convinced that the change has occurred? It must be indicated by the tenor of the life. When this is done the efficacy of Christian principles is seen. Their power to regulate the life is exhibited.

Christians must not only say in word, but they must say practically that the soul is valuable, and that the things of eternity are all-important. They must manifest much more solicitude about their souls than their bodies—they must evince a much deeper interest in eternal than in temporal things. Christian parents must let the world see that they are much more concerned about the souls than the bodies of their children. Christian friends should display far more anxiety for the eternal, than for the temporal welfare of their unconverted friends. Alas, that things unseen and eternal exert no more influence! "This is a lamentation, and will be for a lamentation."

Christians, considering themselves witnesses for God, ought to be careful to bear a uniform and consistent testimony. All can see the importance of this. Suppose a witness in court tells one thing and then contradicts it. Suppose his statements clash and are utterly irreconcilable. We lose confidence. And this is the reason why the world has no more confidence in many professors of religion. Their testimony is not uniform. There is no consistency in it. What did they say when they joined the church. That they were dead to sin and

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to the world. But how often do they act as if they were alive to sin and dependent on the world for enjoyment and happiness. In making a profession of religion they said they loved Jesus. But often since they have had not a word to say for him, and they have done very little for his cause. The world notices all this, and religion suffers because the testimony of its friends in its favor is strangely inconsistent and contradictory.

O Christians will you not bear a true testimony? Jesus, your Master, is called "the true and faithful witness." Would you not be like him? Do you not tremble at the thought of being found false witnesses? Would you not be like him? You have it in your power greatly to injure or greatly to promote the cause of Christ. Yours is a responsible position. Realize its responsibility and act accordingly. Then will it be said to you: "Well done, good and faithful servants; enter into the joy of your Lord."



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NUMBER 18: THE PROPER USE OF MONEY

There are many professors of religion who readily admit that they are the Lord's—that they have been bought with a price—but that their property belongs to God, and ought to be consecrated to his glory, they concede very reluctantly, even if the concession is made at all.

It is pertinent, therefore, in a series of articles on Christian Duty, to call attention to the proper use of money. I employ the term money, as representative of property, worldly possessions, &c.

The first proposition I lay down is, that *the money, the property of God's people, belongs to him*. To establish this proposition, it is only necessary to show that Christians, in soul and body, belong to the Lord. The language of inspiration is: "You are not your own; for you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Here the fact is clearly stated, that Christians do not belong to themselves. The reason of this fact is that they are bought with a price. The price paid for them did not affect a partial, but an entire purchase. It bought them in their compound nature as possessed of body and spirit. They, in their complete persons, belong to the Lord. If, therefore, they acquire property by the exercise of their bodily or mental powers, that property is the Lord's; for the body and mind are both his, and he is entitled to the products of the labor of both. The proper question, then, is not how much they should give to the Lord's cause, but how

much they are at liberty to appropriate to their own support. God sustains his servants while they serve him.

A second proposition I lay down is, that *the proper use of money is its employment in advancing the cause of God in the world*. And here it may be said, that an expenditure of money or its equivalent has always been necessary in maintaining the interests of religion in the world. It was so in patriarchal times. The sacrifices offered in that period of the world's history cost something. They were not supplied by miracle. The expenditure of money or its equivalent, under the Jewish economy, was greater than in the days of the patriarchs. It was, in some respects, an expensive economy, though it had reference to only one nation.

The interests of religion, under the gospel dispensation, are sustained by pecuniary benefactions. This dispensation is comprehensive as the world, and will continue until Christ's second advent. It contemplates the salvation of our lost race, and the world-wide extension of the kingdom of Christ. And how are these important objects to be accomplished? The gospel must be preached to all nations; and must be preached by men, not by angels. Preachers are not miraculously fed and clothed. Their wants must be supplied. This cannot be done without money. Whose physical necessities can be met without money, or that which it represents?

The Bible, translated into the various languages spoken by men, and circulated among the nations of the world, must be the prominent instrument of advancing the cause of truth and righteousness. And how is the Bible to be translated and circulated? There must be pecuniary expenditures. The Bible never was translated, printed, and circulated without expense, and it never will be.

The prosperity and triumph of the cause of God in the world involves the accomplishment of whatever objects are good and great. To affect these objects there must be the use of money; and the proper use of money is its employment to accomplish the most important purposes. Such purposes are inseparable from the promotion of the cause of God. How, then, can

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money be so appropriately used as in advancing this cause? If the word of the Lord is “more to be desired than gold, yes than much fine gold,” how can gold be so advantageously employed as in sending this word to the nations of the earth? In this way gold is made the means of conveying a treasure more valuable than gold.

Money is not worthily employed in securing worldly objects. And why? Because they are insignificant and unimportant. What objects pertaining merely to this world are to be named in comparison with those objects whose accomplishment, while it affects the best interests of time, has its chief bearing on the concerns of eternity? The Savior certainly teaches us that we may so use the “mammon of unrighteousness” as to promote our future welfare. We may so make our pecuniary contributions that every one of them will be “laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life.” Money is always unworthily used, when made the means of gratifying “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.” Alas! How many use money for no other purpose!

No man uses money aright who does not make it the instrument of doing good in the world. To use it for purposes purely selfish is criminal; for no one is at liberty to make self the center and circumference of the circle in which he moves. Such a man is like the desert sands that receive and absorb the showers of heaven, but give back no fruits, no flowers, not a solitary shrub, in recognition of those showers.

That man may last, but never lives,
Who, much receives, but nothing gives,
Whom none can love, whom none can thank,
Creation's blot, creation's blank.

A third proposition connected with this subject is that *Christians should give to the cause of God, as he prospers them*. The apostolic rule is as follows: “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him.” This is the only equitable rule that could be established. We can only give as the Lord prospers us, and we ought to give to this extent. Then a small degree of

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prosperity will require a small contribution to the cause of God, while great prosperity will require a large contribution. The equity of this arrangement commends itself to every man's conscience.

The rule laid down by the apostle embraces every church member—“*Let every one of you,*” &c.

It is greatly to be deplored that few comparatively of our church members bear all pecuniary responsibilities. They are expected to give all that is given, while the great body of their brethren does nothing. *Every one* is to give—every brother, every sister—whether rich or poor. A church of poor members, by acting on this principle, will, in the course of a few years, give a large amount.

Finally, the apostle's rule requires a frequent recognition of the hand of God in our prosperity. “Upon the first day of the week,” &c. A weekly acknowledgment of our dependence on God and our indebtedness to him would be most salutary in its influence.



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NUMBER 19: THE ENDURANCE OF AFFLICTION

While Christians are in the enjoyment of health—able to engage actively in the service of God—it is their duty to glorify him by *doing his will*. But when the days of affliction come, and they are laid aside from the activities of life, it is no less their duty to glorify him by *suffering his will*. I, therefore, think it proper in this series of Numbers to call attention to *the endurance of affliction*.

I need not say to the people of God that affliction is a part of their earthly heritage. “In the world,” says Jesus, “you will have tribulation.” An apostle informs us that “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” Of the redeemed before the throne it is said, “These are they that came out of great tribulation;” and why should the saints on earth expect to go to heaven, and encounter no affliction on the way?

In the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, every Christian is thus addressed:

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chastens not? But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence: will we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days

chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Here we are taught to endure affliction with *humble submission to the will of God*. We are to be in subjection to the Father of spirits. Submission, uncomplaining submission becomes us. We must learn to say from the heart, "The will of the Lord be done." It is easy to say this when the heavens are bright above us—when the sun of prosperity shines radiantly upon us—when all is cheerful and joyous around us—but to say it when the heavens are dark and lowering—when the storms of adversity howl around our tabernacles—when we are on beds of languishing—when the Providences of God are full of mystery and gloom—then, truly, it is difficult to feed a reverential resignation to the Divine will. However, it is not impossible, and we must cherish the spirit of submission. We must go to Gethsemane and learn the lesson to be acquired there. Who can measure the depth of the Savior's anguish when he said, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death!" Who can conceive the bitterness of the cup of which he said, with "strong crying and tears," let it "pass from me, if it be possible!" And yet he immediately added those words of submission—"not my will, but thine be done." Go, Christians, into the garden and see resignation to the Divine will perfectly exemplified. Learn there to suffer submissively and uncomplainingly.

In the verses already quoted from Hebrews, several considerations are presented, which show that Christians ought to endure affliction with patience and resignation.

1. *God is the author of their afflictions.*

"Despise not the chastening of the Lord, or faint when you are rebuked of him." The chastening is of the Lord—it is he that rebukes. "Affliction comes not from the dust," nor does it come by chance. An infinitely wise God presides over the universe. This world is under his omnipotent control. Kingdoms rise and fall at his bidding. The hairs of his people's heads are all numbered. If this be so, can afflictions come upon them without his permission? Certainly not. The

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“chastening” of the Hebrews seem to have embraced the persecutions to which they were exposed—yet it was of the Lord. Joseph suffered affliction in Egypt—yet God sent him thither, and was, in one sense, the author of his affliction, though not in such a sense as to exculpate his wicked brothers or the wicked Egyptians from censure. Well, if God chastens his people they should endure it without a murmur. He is too wise to err. He never makes a mistake. All his proceedings are right. This is the case even when “clouds and darkness surround him.” There are in the infinitely perfect character of God ample reasons for the cordial resignation of his children to all he does. Remember, afflicted Christians, *it is God who chastens you.*

2. *Their afflictions are proofs of God’s love.*

“Whom the Lord *loves* he chastens and scourges every son whom he receives.” Scourging is a severe process and God takes his children through it. It is a mystery to the world and to the nominal Christian, too, that God shows his love to his people by chastening them. And perhaps I ought to say that the real Christian, in moments of despondency, when oppressed with the burden of affliction, sometimes cries out: “If the Lord loves me, why does he deal thus with me?” John the Baptist, as it seems to me, became gloomy in prison and thought within himself, “If Jesus is, indeed, the Messiah why does he let me languish in this prison? Why does he not rescue me from the hand of Herod,” & c.? And beginning to doubt he “sent two of his disciples,” &c. It may be said that afflictions, abstractly considered, are not proofs of God’s love. This may be, but the afflictions of Christians, contemplated in connection with their designed effect, are conclusive evidences of the love of God. He is training them for the skies—educating them for heaven—and he subjects them to a process of discipline of which *chastening* is an important part. The object he has in view shows his love to those he chastens as also does the effect of the chastening. If afflictions are proofs of God’s love to us we ought to prize them more highly than gold. They are blessings in disguise, and are worth infinitely more to the Christian than

kingdoms and empires would be. How patiently, then, and even cheerfully should we endure affliction!

3. *God afflicts his people for their profit.*

He does not afflict willingly. He chastens with a paternal reluctance, and is, if I may so say, constrained to do so for the spiritual advantage of his children. He has in view their conformity to his moral image. He intends that they will be holy, and chastens them that they may be partakers of his holiness—that is, that they may be holy as he is holy. Now, all affliction is in one sense, the result of sin. And experience of affliction, therefore, impresses the people of God with the *evil of sin*; and whatever does this promotes their holiness. Affliction, then, is spiritually advantageous as a means of sanctification.

The chastening of the Lord also shows the vanity of all sublunary things, and, by consequence, the value and preciousness of heavenly things. Whatever weakens earthly attachments—severs the ties that bind to the world—and causes a higher appreciation of celestial glory—must be of spiritual benefit. In view of these considerations, Christians may well afford to bear submissively and even joyfully all the afflictions that come upon them. They ought, like Paul, “to glory in tribulation;” for they have the assurance that their “light” affliction, which is but for a moment, works for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”



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NUMBER 20: THE PROSPECT OF DEATH AND HEAVEN

Christians are strangers and pilgrims on earth. Here they have no abiding place—no continuing city. This world is not their home. Their citizenship is in heaven, and their treasure is there also. To take possession of their inheritance above, the saints must pass through the gate of death. This gate stands between earth and heaven. Without passing through it none of the redeemed, with two exceptions, has entered the celestial mansions. Is death before the people of God? Is it inevitable? Is heaven beyond death? Then there are duties incumbent on Christians in prospect of death and heaven.

What are some of these duties?

1. A calm reliance on Christ the conqueror of death.

Faith in the Redeemer is indispensable to union with him. Its first exercise avails to the justification of the soul, and the justified live by faith on the Son of God. It is their duty and privilege to renew day by day their acts of faith, trusting at all times in the atoning blood through whose merits they first obtained peace with God. Faith appreciates the mediatorial excellences of Christ and appropriates to its possessor the benefits of his mediation. It is through the Lord Jesus alone that believers are pardoned, reconciled, adopted, sanctified, and saved. It is through him they are supplied with the grace they need during their earthly pilgrimage; and on him they are dependent for support and consolation in death. The great enemy of the human race is death. This enemy is powerful and formidable. A contest with him would be

hopeless on the part of man had not Jesus died. The sting of death is sin, and the Savior died to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. A removal of sin in its guilt and pollution is the extraction of the sting of death. This is done through Christ, who is, therefore, the conqueror of death. What then is more manifestly the duty of Christians in prospect of death than a calm reliance on Christ? It will not do for them to confide in works of righteousness which they have done. Alas, all those works are polluted with iniquity and cannot be the ground of acceptance with a holy God. Christ alone meets the necessities, and answers the purposes of a dying hour. He alone enables his followers to meet death with composure and joy. Hence, in view of death they should calmly rely on him. All their contemplations of death should be connected with trust in Christ. They should feel that they are safe in his hands, and that death can do them no real injury.

2. *Christians ought, in prospect of death and heaven, to engage more actively and zealously in the work of the Lord.*

They all have something to do. Jesus said just before his death: "Father, I have finished the work you gave me to do." Christ as mediator had a work appointed him by the Father. All Christians have a work appointed them. And this work must be performed before they die and go to heaven. The interests of the cause of Christ are entrusted in a very important sense to his disciples. They are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Their agency is brought into requisition in the advancement of truth and righteousness. What soul is saved independently of Christian instrumentality? Doubtless Saul of Tarsus was converted in answer to the last prayer of the dying Stephen, and the probability is that all conversions that have occurred since, have taken place in answer to the prayers of Christians. So far as we know the people of God can do more while on earth to promote his cause than they will be able to accomplish in heaven. Doubtless they will be actively employed in heaven, but the sphere of action will be different. There will be no prayers offered in heaven for the salvation of sinners—there will be no personal effort for their conversion. There will be

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in heaven none of the poor and needy with wants to be supplied. There will be no pecuniary contributions to the cause of Christ. There are duties devolving on Christians now which cannot be performed in heaven. If performed at all, they must be done in this life. And it must be remembered that there are obligations resting on every individual Christian. These obligations are un-transferable. One Christian cannot perform the duty of another Christian. An angel cannot act in the room of a man. How much have Christians to do! And how little time in which to do it! Death and heaven are just before them. In view of this fact how actively should they be employed in the service of God! How zealously should they labor! How can they bear the thought that death should come and find them idle in the vineyard of their Master? Who would not rather go to heaven after a life of holy activity than after a life of inglorious ease? O Christian, see to it that when your Lord calls you away, he may call you from labor to rest, from exertion to repose, from prayers to praise, from tears to rapture, from conflict to victory.

3. *Christians should in prospect of death think much about heaven.*

To think much about heaven implies a great deal. It implies indifference to the things of the world, and superiority to earthly objects. How insignificant appears every sublunary interest to the man whose treasure and heart are in heaven! The first Christians rejoiced much more in hope of the glory to be revealed than do modern ones. They "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had a better and an enduring substance." But for their hope of glory they would have been the most miserable of men.

This world has few attractions for the people of God. There is really nothing worth living for apart from the interests of God's cause. But how superlative are the attractions of heaven! What a place it must be! The select locality of all the localities of unmeasured space. Heaven is the residence of God. There he displays his glory and fills with rapture all who behold it. There dwells Jesus the Lamb that was slain, the object of universal adoration and love. There are to be

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found the various orders of celestial beings, angels, cherubim, seraphim, principalities and powers. There the redeemed from the earth have found a home, and there they swell the rapture of salvation's immortal song. Free from sin and sorrow they are ever with the Lord. Their tears are all wiped away and the music of their hallelujahs God himself delights to hear.

O Christian, this heaven is before you. Its glories you will see. Its songs you will hear. Its joys you will feel. A crown of righteousness is in reserve for you. A robe of spotless purity made white in the blood of the Lamb will ere long adorn you. Soon will you be able to say: "I am in heaven. After all my doubts and fears I have reached the city of God. The wandering exile has found a home. The pilgrim traveler has come to the end of his journey. The storm-tossed mariner has reached a peaceful shore. The scarred soldier has obtained the victory."

O Christian, think much of heaven and rejoice in hope of that glory of God. Know for your comfort that when your "earthly tabernacle is dissolved, you have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." In closing these thoughts I invoke on all who have read them the love of the Father, the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

THOUGHTS ON GIVING



BY

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THOUGHTS ON GIVING

NUMBER 1: MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE

It was said by the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." This means there is more happiness in giving than in receiving. This is true of all who are effectually delivered from the dominion of the selfish principle. But how many of the professed friends of Christ do not believe his memorable declaration as repeated by Paul? The doctrine exemplified in them is that it is more blessed to *receive* than to give. Unhappily for them they seem not to be free from the operation of the spirit of covetousness. Hence, they furnish evidence of a fixed determination to augment their worldly possessions, and render their pecuniary resources subservient to their own gratification, rather than to the advancement of the Redeemer's cause. They now and then cast an insignificant pittance into the treasury of the Lord; but in so doing, they are prompted more by impulse than by principle. They give a small portion of what they can *conveniently* spare; but it cannot be said of them that they "honor the Lord with their substance and the first fruits of their increase."

Far be it from me to depreciate the pecuniary beneficence of the present age. Compared with preceding ages it is distinguished for its liberality. At no previous period has philanthropy originated so many enterprises and prosecuted them with so much vigor. Never before have copies of the Bible been so multiplied, or so widely circulated; for

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Dialects unheard at Babel, or at Jewish Pentecost,
Now first articulate divinest sounds,
And swell the universal anthem.

Since the apostolic times such exertions have not been made to execute the commission of the ascending Savior, "Go you into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Multitudes who once sat in the region and shadow of death now bask in the light of the Son of Righteousness. The knowledge of salvation is spreading, and Christian hope is looking out for still greater things.

Some of the signs of the times are suspicious so that we may thank God and take courage. Let every concession be made which truth and justice demand.

Still it may be affirmed that Christians generally are doing little in the cause of God. This fact forces itself upon us when we institute a comparison between what they do and the full measure of their duty. We rejoice that we find here and there "devout men," who do honor to the Christian name. They "live not to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again." They are deeply penetrated with the sentiment that they are the Lord's, and that all pertaining to them is his also. Acting under this impression, their contributions to the cause of benevolence are conscientiously proportioned to their ability. Such men are stars of the first magnitude in the moral heavens. Their names are recorded in the annals of beneficence, and there they will remain; for their benefactions have destined them to an earthly immortality. They have made for themselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, and will ere long be received into everlasting habitations.

But can it be said of a large majority of professors of religion that they live habitually in the belief that they belong to God? Do they practically recognize the fact that they are bought with a price? Does the love of Christ constrain them? Do they consider themselves identified with his cause? Do they regard themselves as stewards of God? Is the truth deeply engraved on their hearts that their property is lent to

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them by the Supreme Proprietor of all things? And that they are required to use it for his glory? Do they view it as a talent committed to them which honesty and fidelity forbid their laying up in a napkin, or spending in such a manner as to gratify the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life? Alas for the churches that these questions cannot be answered in the affirmative. That they cannot be, is proof positive that modern piety is less thorough than that of the apostolic age. Primitive Christians gave themselves unreservedly to the Lord, and acting out that spirit of benevolence which is always involved in entire consecration to God they sold houses and lands, laying the proceeds at the apostles' feet. It does not appear that it was made obligatory on them to sell their possessions. The presumption clearly is that the matter was optional with them. But this fact strikingly illustrates the strength of Christian benevolence in its spontaneous action.

It is a mortifying circumstance that multitudes who are called by the name of Christ, feel so little interest in the prosperity of His kingdom, that they do not make regular pecuniary contributions to promote its enlargement. They seem to forget that it is written, "To Him—the Messiah—that is to the advancement of his cause—will be given of the gold of Sheba." They overlook the fact that the value of money arises from its susceptibility of application to religious purposes. They do not understand the heavenly art of inscribing on every article of property they possess, "Holiness to the Lord." Hence, many of them give nothing to the cause of God, and others are altogether irregular in their donations. Their contributions are made under the promptings of transient feeling, and to expect them to be systematic would betray an utter ignorance of the philosophy of impulses.



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NUMBER 2: HOW MUCH DO YOU OWE THE LORD?

Many professed Christians do not act from principle in giving. The question, "How much do you owe to my Lord?" they have never settled on their knees, in their closets. No certain calculations can be made on them. Our benevolent societies know not what to expect from them. It is to be feared that these statements are applicable to four-fifths of the Baptists of the South. Indeed, it is very doubtful whether as many as one-fifth manage their property with a sacred regard to the glory of God. Be thus as it may, the state of things among our churches is such as to render it proper to present for their consideration, some thoughts on pecuniary beneficence. This will be attempted in this series of articles.

Beneficence is *doing good*—benevolence is *wishing well*, and there is much more of the latter than the former. It is much easier to wish well than to do well. As money is prominent among the means by which good is accomplished, the term beneficence is now generally used to denote doing good by means of pecuniary contributions. Systematic beneficence implies the adoption of some regular plan of doing good. It requires methodical arrangement in opposition to fitful impulse. It involves a course of action prompted by deeply-seated principle in contradistinction from occasional acts elicited by the effervescence of feeling. It secures periodical donations to the cause of God. It may be considered a stream which flows, not always in large volume, but with ceaseless constancy into the treasury of the Lord. Those who are beneficent according to system wait not for appeals to be made to them by the Agents of benevolent societies, but, as

an Apostle expresses it, are ready of themselves. They know full well that their obligations are not affected by the presence or absence of Agents. The question of duty is not, in their judgment, a question dependent on such considerations; and hence, their contributions are not extorted by urgent solicitation, but are given whether applied for or not. They are systematically beneficent—they act in pursuance of a plan.

It should be remembered, however, that there is a difference between *systematic* donations to the cause of benevolence and donations *proportionate* to the ability of contributors. A man may cast his offerings into the Lord's treasury with the utmost regularity, and yet those offerings may bear no adequate proportion to his pecuniary resources. He may avail himself of the advantages of system, and at the same time deprive himself of those advantages which result from donations corresponding with the means at his command. Christians, while they practice systematic beneficence, should faithfully adjust their expenditures in the cause of God to their income. Their ability is the means of their obligation. The Apostle Paul establishes this doctrine. It is worthy of remark, too, that he does it in an argument on the subject of pecuniary liberality. His language is, "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." It is evident from the apostle's reasoning that "a willing mind," or a readiness to give, is indispensable to an acceptable offering to the Lord. Where there is a willing mind the offering is accepted, provided it corresponds with what a man hath. Neither the largeness nor the smallness of the offering interferes in the least with its acceptance. The large contribution of a rich man is accepted, and the small contribution of a poor man is likewise accepted. Over the treasury of the Lord it is written in glowing capitals, "ACCORDING TO THAT A MAN HATH." The parable of the talents may be referred to in illustration of this sentiment. The servant who received five talents was held responsible for the advantageous use of five talents. He who received two was expected to employ only the capital with which he was

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furnished, while he who received one was required to improve that one, and would, had he done so, have heard the eulogium, "Well done good and faithful servant." The approbation with which the Savior spoke of the poor widow who threw two mites into the treasury is illustrative of the same principle. What said he of her offering? "Verily I say to you, that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they who have cast into the treasury." The amount was not greater. Her two mites made a farthing, an insignificant amount in itself considered. Many that were rich cast in much. But in proportion to her ability she made a more liberal offering than all the rich. Let the poor copy her example.

The probability is that there never has been, and that there never will be perfect equality in the worldly prosperity of the members of any church. If then there be inequality in prosperity, there must be inequality in pecuniary contributions; for every one is required to give as the Lord has prospered him. The fact that Timothy was directed by Paul to charge the rich to do good, to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, proves that they are under obligation to do more than the poor, and more than those who possess only a competency. God surely does not require physical impossibilities. He does not, therefore, make it incumbent on those who have only a moderate portion of this world's goods to do as much for his cause as the wealthy; nor does he demand of the poor as much as those who have the means of a comfortable subsistence. Much is required where much is given, and where little is given little is required. There is, in the administration of the divine government, no deviation from this principle; for the moral law itself, while it demands for the Creator the love of the creature, adjusts the requisition to the capacity of the agent. "You will love the Lord your God with *all* your strength." Whether there be much or little strength is immaterial to the argument. It is all to be consecrated to the love and service of God. And the regulation which requires us to give our property to the cause of Christ is only an amplification of the moral law which requires us to give ourselves to the Lord. If

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it is true that Christians themselves belong to God, it is equally true that their property is his. It would be absurd to argue that although they are the Lord's what they acquire by their exertions is not his; for they receive from him the ability to make their acquisitions.



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NUMBER 3: GOD IS THE SOVEREIGN PROPRIETOR

Jehovah is the sovereign Proprietor of all things. The teachings of the Bible are plain on this point as is evident from the following passages:

“Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord’s your God, the earth also, with all that therein is.” “Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine.” “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein.” “For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you: for the world is mine and the fullness thereof.” The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the Lord of hosts.”

Creation is God’s work, and his ownership of the world, growing out of the fact that he created it, he has never relinquished. His claim to that which he has made is indisputable. He made all things; therefore all things are his.

The ability requisite to acquire property is the gift of God. The farmer who tills the soil and obeys the injunction: “In the morning sow your seed and in the evening withhold not your hand,” receives from on high the strength which he exerts in the cultivation of his fields. And when a rich harvest repays his toil, he is indebted for it to Him who makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust.

The mechanic, who by daily, physical labor acquires property, derives from God the health and vigor essential to

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its acquisition. Any skill he may possess that renders his labor more than ordinarily valuable is to be classed with the endowment of the Creator.

The merchant, who has sagacity and foresight, and who is enabled thereby to arrange his plans advantageously so as to secure the benefit of any favorable change which may occur in the commercial world, is indebted to his Maker for these qualities. If when he richly freights his ship and spreads his canvass to the breezes of heaven, he makes a prosperous voyage, it is because the Being who has all things under his omnipotent control holds the winds in his fists, and suffers them not to spend their fury on the noble vessel which "walks the water like a thing of life." David, referring to the seafaring men, says that God brings them into the desired heaven.

The lawyer, who by application to the business of his profession in amassing wealth, has received from the Author of his existence those powers of mind which enable him to comprehend the principles of law and apply them to the almost infinite diversity of cases which may occur in his practice. The art of reasoning by which he convinces, and the art of persuasion by which he sways a jury at pleasure, are both gifts of heaven. He is under obligation to God for the mental and moral qualifications which give him a reputation that brings him business to his office and renders lucrative the labors of his profession.

The physician whose vocation requires him to eradicate the maladies of the body is indebted to his Creator for the intellectual endowments which adopt him to his profession. Indeed the very remedies he employs are furnished by the God of providence. He has deposited in various substances remedial virtues of which the physician avails himself in healing the diseases to which flesh is heir. It is God who raises up the sick from their beds of languishing; but in so doing he is pleased to smile on medical agency and render it effectual.

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Those whose lives are consecrated to the educational interests of the country are qualified for their stations as teachers because God has given them minds susceptible of improvement, and has placed them in circumstances favorable to mental culture and the acquisition of knowledge. But for his goodness to them in times past they would be totally incapacitated for the positions they occupy.

All classes of society and all individuals composing those classes are under obligation to God for whatever ability they have to acquire worldly possessions. In him they live and move, and have their being, while they gain such possessions. Their health is in the hands of God and it will depend on his option when they draw their last breath. It is he who commissions death to arrest the beatings of the pulse—the throbbing of the heart—and to abstract the vital principle. While, therefore, they draw the breath of life they are beneficiaries of his bounty, and derive their daily supplies from his hand. With propriety then may the language of Scripture be adopted: “For all things come of you, and of your own have we given you.” We can give nothing to God which he has not first given to us. All things are originally and of right his; and when he lends anything to his creatures it is upon condition that they return it when he calls for it, and in the manner he specifies.

That the views now presented are sustained by the divine word is evident from such passages as the following: Moses, anticipating a great increase in the wealth of the children of Israel, admonished the Israelite not to say in his prosperity, “My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth. But you will remember the Lord your God: for it is he that gives you power to get wealth.” (Deut 8:17–18) “The blessings of the Lord, it makes rich; and he adds no sorrow with it.” (Prov 10:22) “For she did not know I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold which they prepared for Baal.” (Hosea 2:8) From these quotations it is plain that divine agency is requisite to the production of wealth—that the Lord gives power to get wealth—that his blessings make rich—and that it is his prerogative to multiply silver and gold. If, then, God overrules the destinies

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of his people and so superintends their secular interests as to enable them to acquire pecuniary ability to do good, it will surely be admitted that it devolves on them to consecrate their ability to his service. They are stewards of God, and it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.



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NUMBER 4: SYSTEMATIC GIVING

Fidelity is one of the most prominent duties involved in Christian stewardship; nor is our God a hard master. His demands are infinitely reasonable. He asks of us nothing but his own. His claim to that which he requires can never be invalidated. The lapse of days, and months, and years, strengthens it. We may disregard this claim and thereby incur guilt; but we cannot nullify it so as to exempt ourselves from the obligation it creates.

The position having, as I think, been established that we are the Lord's, and that all we have is his also, it accords with my purpose in these articles to present some considerations on *systematic giving as the Lord prospers us*.

It is unquestionably true that the love of money increases with the increase of property. The poor are anxious to acquire a competency—those who have a competency are desirous to become rich—and the rich are solicitous to augment their stores. The man of moderate fortune imagines that if he was placed in what the world calls independent circumstances he would be satisfied; but let his wishes be realized, and he sees a point before him, far in the distance, at which he supposes the advantages of wealth may be enjoyed. That point, it is true, is invested with a delusive luster, but he forgets that it is delusive. Let him reach it, and he is destined to feel the bitterness of disappointment. He finds that “distance leads disenchantment to the view.” Tormented with the restlessness of ungratified desire—feeling that the possession of thousands does not render him

happy, but only increases his love of money—his next object is to accumulate millions, and if he gains his object he becomes almost insanely anxious to multiply those millions. Wretched man! He is in urgent pursuit of happiness. He believes that happiness and gold long since allied themselves in eternal union. He therefore seeks gold, and as he seeks, inquires where is happiness? Where? Echo, as if to mock his vain pursuit, answers, where?—but he is still enamored of the shining metal and considers himself miserable only because he has not secured that amount of it which is essential in the production of happiness. Such a man illustrates at every step in the journey of life the truth of Solomon's declaration: "He that loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loves abundance with increase." This saying has been verified in every generation. It is a sad thought that so many have lived and died under the influence of covetousness, and now feel the intensity of that anguish which arises from a consciousness that their acquisitive propensities must remain ungratified forever.

But it may be thought that these remarks apply only to men of the world who have their portion in this life. Would they were not applicable to multitudes in the Church! Would that the Church on earth was more like the Church in heaven! Judas, Ananias, and Sapphira, Simon Magus and Demas were professed friends of Christ. Many Church-members have spent less time in counting the cost of the Christian profession than in counting their pecuniary gains. It is a solemn reflection that professors of religion are in peculiar danger of becoming covetous. The reason is, as Andrew Fuller well expresses it, because covetousness is almost the only crime which can be indulged and a profession of religion at the same time supported. Christians should take care lest they love money inordinately. The love of money increases with the increase of property. This will be the case with saint as well as sinner, unless pecuniary beneficence is systematically practiced. Let the point be settled by Christians that a certain proportion of their income will be regularly appropriated to the cause of the benevolence, and they will not be likely to love money extravagantly. They will

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see that the chief value of money arises from the fact that it may be employed in accomplishing God's purposes of grace in reference to our guilty race—that it may be made promotive of the world-wide enlargement of the kingdom of Christ. No man who, in estimating the worth of money, makes its utility in advancing the Redeemer's cause the basis of his calculation, can make gold his idol. He cannot become a miser. He is incapable of the miser's feelings. He values money not because it can minister to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, but because it may be used in doing good. Doing good is the object aimed at, and money is the means of its accomplishment.

Here then is a method by which professors of religion may effectually guard against that love of money which is the root of all evil. Let them give according to system, and the love of money will not increase with the love of property. I have sometimes thought that employments, honorable in themselves, are suffered to betray men into covetousness. This may be reasonably expected unless a course of systematic beneficence is adopted. For example, professedly Christian fathers engage in honorable vocations and God smiles upon them. He gives success to their business exertions—they amass property—and they feel that they ought to do more for the cause of God than they are accustomed to do. Their consciences testify that their donations for benevolent objects should increase with the increase of their property. They find it difficult to sever the idea of augmented responsibility from that of augmented pecuniary resources. But they rest not till they invent some method of tranquilizing the remonstrance of conscience. They avail themselves of a species of logic by which they are led to the conclusion that their pecuniary benefactions are sufficiently liberal. They think of their children and easily persuade themselves of the superiority of filial claims. They speak fluently of the strength of parental obligation, and when they are reminded of the declaration of our Lord, "He that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me"—they neutralize its influence by referring to the language of Paul, "The children ought not to lay up for their

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parents, but the parents for their children." Thus conscience is stupefied, and the deluded father applies himself more diligently to the accumulation of wealth, "laying the flattering unction to his soul," that he is providing for his offspring, and that in so doing he is obeying God. Thus he vainly supposes that the performance of one duty releases from obligation to perform another. This is strange theology, but it is the theology of multitudes. Does not the most superficial observer perceive that in this case the principle of covetousness is actively at work? Who does not see that the father, under pretence of providing for his children is indulging his love of money? In nine instances out of ten if such fathers were left childless they would invent other excuses in justification of their penuriousness. Ah, how possible it is for those engaged in pursuits, in themselves laudable, to be betrayed into covetousness. But there is a way of preventing this. Let pecuniary offerings, equal to the ability of the one offering, be cast regularly into the treasury of the Lord, and the inordinate love of money is precluded.



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NUMBER 5: DO NOT WAIT TO GIVE

It frequently happens that those who have the pecuniary means of doing good, fail to employ them, because they persuade themselves it is better to keep all they have, so as to make more, that at some future period they may have it in their power to give liberally to the cause of God. Whatever such persons may say about their *future* beneficence, they may well apprehend they are under the influence of covetousness, if they give nothing *at present* for purposes of benevolence. If they are unwilling to consecrate their property to the service of God *to-day*, their unwillingness will probably continue to the close of life. For there must be some cause which so operates on them as to produce this unwillingness; and it may be reasonably inferred that cause will operate just as powerfully in time to come, as it does now. How improbable, then, the supposition that those will be beneficent in future who are not beneficent at present. Persons who indulge this supposition deceive themselves, and the spirit of covetousness has possession of them. I mean to say that the man who is worth a thousand dollars, and gives nothing to objects of benevolence, vainly flatters himself that he would give provided he was worth ten thousand. And the man who is worth ten thousand, but gives nothing, deceives himself in supposing he would give if he had at his disposal a hundred thousand. If such men desire to expel the spirit of covetousness, they must begin at once to pursue a course of systematic beneficence.

There are some who have informed the purpose to make, as they think, liberal provision for the cause of Christ by “last

will and testament,” and this purpose, in their judgment, exempts them from obligation to be beneficent while they live. It is to be feared that such persons are more or less influenced by a spirit of covetousness. They intend to bequeath their “property, or a portion of it rather, to the cause of benevolence. They virtually say when we can enjoy it no longer we will give it to the Lord. This looks as if the posthumous beneficence was intended as a kind of expiatory apology for a penurious life. There are doubtless cases in which the truly benevolent are justifiable in making testamentary bequests to the cause of God. The circumstances in which they are placed do not allow them to be their own executors. They are, however, liberal while they live. Their posthumous beneficence is only a perpetuation of their living beneficence. But where there are no offerings cast into the treasury of the Lord during life, and the first surrender of property is simultaneous with the exit of the soul from the body, there is much reason to fear the operation of the covetous principle.

I have thought that young persons greatly overlook the danger of becoming covetous in after life. Their warm hearts beat with feelings of benevolence. Even in their childhood they learn to speak contemptuously of the miser; for his avarice excites their scorn. Should it be intimated that they may, at some point in the future, become parsimonious, they would perhaps feel somewhat as did Hazeal when told of the evil he would perpetuate on his accession to the throne of Syria. How indignantly he said, “Is your servant a dog that he should do this great thing?” Alas, Hazeal did just what the prophet said he would do.

Insidious are the operations of a covetous spirit—many are the disguises under which it exerts its influence. In proof of this, it may be said that those persons who are guilty, most manifestly guilty, of the sin of covetousness, are by no means willing to admit the fact.—Nor is this all—they really do not believe it. They consider themselves slandered when it is alleged that they love money inordinately.—How many persons, after entering upon the theater of life, and becoming immersed in secular cares, have exemplified the spirit of

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covetousness, though in their earlier years they may have been free from such a propensity.—How many noble youths have in this way made shipwreck of a good conscience!—Though their sun has risen in brightness, it has gone down in clouds of darkness. Facts innumerable bear witness to the danger of becoming covetous. The young overlook the danger, but it is not on this account the less imminent. The position they occupy is a perilous one; and if they would escape the sin and the disgrace of covetousness, they ought at once to adopt the plan of systematic giving. Their means, however scanty, ought to be considered the Lord's, and a suitable proportion of them should be consecrated to his service. Would it not be well for the teachers in Sabbath Schools to impress the minds of their scholars with the importance of pecuniary liberality? If they were trained in the way in which they should go, when old, they would not depart from it. That the young should be trained in beneficent habits is all-important to the future prosperity of the cause of benevolence. Soon will the fathers and mothers in the churches rest from their labors. Soon will their bodies lie motionless in the grave, and their spirits mingle with the spirits of just men made perfect. Who, then, will fill their places? The young must be their successors. Whether pecuniary contributions will in future be so abundant as to fill the treasury of the Lord, is materially dependent on the adoption by the young of correct principles of action. O you who are in the spring-time of life, remember the words of the Lord Jesus how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Be beneficent according to system—give to the cause of God in proportion to your ability, and you will avoid covetousness, which is idolatry.



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NUMBER 6: DO NOT WAIT TO GIVE (CONT.)

If some system of pecuniary beneficence is not adopted by professors of religion, the consequence is that when they amass property they fail to comply with a tithe of the obligations God imposes on them. Everyone knows something about the influence of habit. The prophet recognizes its power when he says, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" Then may you also do good who are *accustomed* to do evil. If the young grow up to manhood and womanhood without adopting some regular plan of making appropriations to the cause of God, they will almost invariably fail to perform the augmented obligations which an increase of property brings along with it. This is doubtless one prominent reason why there are so many in the churches who do comparatively nothing for the cause of benevolence. They have been trained unfortunately, if, indeed, they have been trained at all. They know not the alphabet of pecuniary liberality. They are ignorant of the first principles of Christian beneficence. Owing to the infelicitous circumstances surrounding them when their religious habits were forming, they are, in a great degree, disqualified for usefulness as church members. With the increase of their worldly possessions they adopt a more extravagant style of living—they consult the "lust of the eye and the pride of life"—but that it is their duty to "honor the Lord with their substance and with their first fruits of their increase," seems entirely remote from their thoughts. "This is a lamentation and will be for a lamentation."—If all such professors of religion as these were excluded from our churches, what material changes would be made in the statistical tables of

our denomination! What a diminution of numbers! Aye, would there not be a decrease of the ministry? Does the question arise, "Why exists this deplorable state of things among us?" The answer is, because there are multitudes belonging to our churches who, if they are beneficent at all, have no system in their beneficence. They have never adopted the plan of making to the cause of God contributions proportionate to their ability. They overlook the fact that they should lay by in store for objects of benevolence as God prospers them. And as long as this fact is overlooked, though they may rapidly accumulate wealth—and though their obligations to be beneficent will be graduated by their ability to give—it is morally certain that they will not comply with a tithe of those obligations which an increase of property creates.

I have thought that the systematic and constant calls made by the Mosaic law for the surrender of property were designed, among other things, as a preventive of covetousness. These regular demands reminded the Israelites of their obligations to God and their dependence on him. The Mosaic economy was a very expensive one. Those who have not looked narrowly into its arrangements would perhaps be surprised to know the extent of the expenditures necessary to its maintenance.

God claimed as his own the first-born both of man and beast. His language is, "Sanctify unto me all the first-born. Every firstling among the cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male is mine. But the firstling of an ass you will redeem with a lamb. All the first-born of your sons you will redeem. And none will appear before me empty." (Ex 13:2, 34:19–20)

The first fruits of the ground were offered to God. The Israelite was thus addressed, "You will not delay to offer the first of your ripe fruits. Every man will give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given you. The first-fruit of your corn, of your wine, and of your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep will you give him." (Ex 22:29) (Deut 16:17, 18:4) What amount of the first-fruits was to be given in this way is not specified. The donor,

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under the promptings of gratitude to the Author of every blessing, was to give according to his ability.

The children of Israel were also required to consecrate to God the tithes of their income. Before the introduction of the Mosaic dispensation it was no doubt customary for the people of God to pay tithes. Hence it is said Abraham “gave tithes to Melchisedec, the priest of the most high God.” (Gen 14:18–20) Jacob’s vow is confirmatory of this view of the subject. “And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then will the Lord be my God: And this stone which I have set for a pillar, will be God’s house and of all that you will give me, I will surely give the *tenth* unto you.” 19:20–22.

Though the custom of paying tithes did not originate with Moses, it was incorporated by him into the regulations of the Jewish theocracy, as is evident from the following language: “And all the tithe of the land whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s: it is holy unto the Lord. And concerning the tithe of the herd or of the flock, even of whatsoever passes under the rod, the tenth will be holy unto the Lord.” 27:30–32.

The Levites after receiving tithes from the people gave a tenth to the Lord. “Thus speak unto the Levites and say unto them, when you take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then will you offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe.” (Num 18:26)



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NUMBER 7: JEWISH SACRIFICIAL REQUIREMENTS

In connection with the first-fruits and tithes let the multiplicity of Jewish sacrifices be taken into account. There were daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly sacrifices. Two lambs were offered every day—one in the morning, and the other in the evening. With each lamb was offered about half a pint of wine, half a pint of beaten oil, and three pints of flour.—The weekly sacrifice was offered every Sabbath-day, and was about the same as the daily sacrifices, but additional to it. The monthly sacrifice was offered at the beginning of every month. It consisted of two young bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year, together with meat offerings and drink offerings. (See Numbers 28) The yearly sacrifices were offered at the great festivals of the nation, and on the Day of Atonement. In addition to the regular sacrifices there were many occasional ones, the offering of which depended on various contingencies. Let all this be taken into consideration, and does it not appear that the Mosaic economy was an expensive one? How great the number of animals slain with the sacrificial knife! How constantly were Jewish altars deluged with blood! How regular the calls made for the surrender of property!

The males of the nation were required to attend the annual feasts. In compliance with this requisition, they were obliged to leave their homes three times a year. Their secular pursuits must therefore have been very frequently suspended during the six years they were permitted to labor; and on every seventh year they were neither to “sow their fields, nor prune their vineyards.” Now, while these regulations were

well adapted to impress the Israelites with a sense of their dependence on God, they were equally well adapted to prevent covetousness. The Jew saw that a tenth of his income was to be consecrated to the Lord—that this was not to be an occasional, but a regular thing—and it was therefore natural he should adopt the sentiment that his property was valuable chiefly in its application to the objects of the Mosaic economy. If the affections of his heart began at any time to cling to his possessions—if the largeness of his income began to gratify his feelings of selfishness—he would think at once of the demands of the law—and the tenacity of his grasp would be broken, while feelings of selfishness would be displayed by those of liberality. It would be difficult to conceive of a system better adapted to prevent the indulgence of the covetous propensities of depraved human nature. It may therefore be argued that the arrangements of the Mosaic dispensation indicate it is the will of God that a plan of systematic beneficence be adopted as a preventive of covetousness. So much for the Jewish economy.

God under the gospel dispensation requires pecuniary appropriations to his cause, but there are no regulations as specific as those of the Mosaic law. After what has been said in the regard to the consecration of property to the cause of benevolence, it is needless to enter into a labored argument to prove that it is the duty of Christians to honor the Lord with their substance. Let the following quotations from the Epistles of Paul suffice—“Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. Charge them that are rich to this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life—But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well please.” 2 Cor 9:7; 1 Tim 6:17–19; Heb 13:16.

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There is under the gospel economy no formal demand of the tenth of our income. How much Christians will give to the Lord's cause, is left to their own decision. They act voluntarily. They are to give as the Lord prospers them. The people of God are supposed by the writers of the New Testament to live near the cross, to take their stand on Calvary, to contemplate with deepest interest the scene of the crucifixion, to see love stronger than death exhibited in tears, to hear the words, "It is finished," sounding in their ears, to behold their suffering Lord as he bows his head and gives up the ghost, while the rocks rend, the earth quakes, the sun is darkened, and all nature is thrown into sympathetic convulsions. Who, after all this, would think it necessary to prescribe any specific amount of pecuniary contribution to the cause of God?



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NUMBER 8: AS GOD PROSPERS YOU

Who, in contemplating the bloody phenomena of Calvary, would not think it safe to confide the cause of benevolence to the expansive liberality of the redeemed followers of the Lamb—liberality inspired by a display of love which language was not invented to describe! Who would not regard this as a sure basis of beneficence? Who would not expect a sight of the cross to expel covetousness from every heart, and create feelings of benevolence as immortal as the soul? Who might not reasonably calculate that a contemplation of the Redeemer's death would prompt every Christian to adopt a course of systematic beneficence to be pursued with unwearied zeal? And, were it possible for his zeal at any time to abate, who would suppose anything necessary to rekindle it but a remembrance of the Apostle's language: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might be rich."

In view of this superlative epitome of the gospel, how absurd to think of determining by arithmetical calculation the portion of his property which the disciple should give to the cause of his Master! Will there not be difficulty in keeping him from giving his all?—Will he not say, I am infinitely indebted to my dying Lord—I am under obligations to him that can never be cancelled—I am involved in eternal bankruptcy—I give myself away, I can do no more. Had I a thousand hearts I would give them all to such a Savior, were ten thousand crowns placed on my head I would cast them all

at his feet saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and glory, and honor, and blessing." Would it be necessary to urge the Christian who feels thus to make pecuniary appropriations to the Redeemer's cause? Ask if it would be necessary to urge the flame, into which oil is poured, to burn? Ask if it would be necessary, to urge an angel to execute the commands of the God of heaven. Can the Christian, after giving himself to the Lord refuse to give his property? Can he think more of his property than of himself? Surely not. And while his Lord kindly allows him to appropriate from his income a sufficiency for purposes of food and raiment, will he not give all he can to the cause of Christ, and regret that he has not a thousand times more to give? Will not such a man be systematically liberal? Will he not consider money valuable for the sole reason that the cause of God may be promoted by its use?

The direction to "lay by in store as God has prospered us" is the best possible method of laying a foundation of systematic giving—This method of making contributions for benevolent purposes was not only recommended, but authoritatively presented by the Apostle Paul for the observance of the Corinthian church. He spoke as he was moved by the Holy Spirit. It may be assume therefore as a fact that it is as incumbent on modern Christians to obey this command as any other command of the divine word. The Apostle was advocating the cause of beneficence. He spoke of a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem. He had given orders to the churches of Galatia on the same subject. In his epistle to the Romans he says, "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution to the poor saints who are at Jerusalem." The saints in Judea and especially in Jerusalem were in necessitous circumstances. It was important for their wants to be supplied. Their brethren, who possessed the ability, were required to make the necessary appropriations to this object, and the Apostle decides as to the manner of raising the collection. Upon the first day of the week, &c. This day was observed as the Christian Sabbath. It was considered a memorial of the Redeemer's resurrection

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from the dead. It was the day set apart for the public worship of God. On this day the Corinthian Christians were to lay by in store. There may have been wealthy members in the church at Corinth, and there were doubtless poor ones, but the direction is, Let *every one* of you lay by him in store, &c. The language could not be more specific—every one of you. The Apostle assumed every one would have something to lay by in store. Some probably were able to lay by only small sums, but they were not too proud to give even a little. They were glad it was in their power to gratify, to a partial extent, their feelings of benevolence. It may be reasonably inferred that the widow's mites were laid by in store, on which the Savior looked as approvingly as he did in the days of his flesh at Jerusalem.

Every one was to lay by him in store *as God prospered him*. All the members of the church were to make a weekly examination into their pecuniary circumstances that they might ascertain what degree of prosperity God had bestowed on them in their respective secular avocations. They were to decide the point as in thought of the Omniscient One, and having settled it, they were to act accordingly. The philosophy of beneficence as understood by the Apostle, required pecuniary donations to the cause of God, scrupulously adjusted to the ability of the donor. Hence he said to the Corinthian Church, "Upon this first day of the week let everyone one of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him." This is evidently the best plan of making contributions to the cause of benevolence. Its advantages are many. A few of them I will mention in my next.



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NUMBER 9: WEEKLY CONTRIBUTIONS

In laying by in store on the first day of the week as God has prospered us, there is a frequent recognition of his hand in our prosperity. There is a practical acknowledgement of the fact that success in business comes from him. And this is in the exact accordance with the truth of the case. It comports entirely with the teachings of the Bible. If God clothes the grass of the field, he surely superintends the worldly interests of his people. If he feeds sparrows, he certainly furnishes his children with the means of subsistence. If his care of those who trust in him is so special, that the hairs of their heads are all numbered, it is altogether credible the he blesses them "in their basket and in their store." He knows what things they need, and while they "seek first his kingdom and righteousness," all necessary temporal blessings "will be added to them." "Trust in the Lord and do good," is a divine command; while the promise annexed is, "so will you dwell in the land, and verily will you be fed." The agency of a superintending Providence is too much overlooked in these degenerate times. Some would almost ostracize Jehovah from the world he has made; and others would suffer him to perform no operation in it, except in some peculiar exigency. It would no doubt be productive of happy consequences if Christian everywhere practically recognized, once in every week, their obligations to God for the prosperity that crowns their exertions. By such recognition God would be glorified as the Providential Governor of the world; for it would involve a consciousness of dependence on Him as the Father of Lights from whom comes every good and perfect gift."

Again, if the method of making weekly contributions to the promotion of benevolent objects were adopted, these would be in much deeper interest felt in those objects—This will be denied by no one who understands the philosophy of the moral beings. Such is our organization that we are especially interest in those enterprises for the advancement of which we do *something*. If a man would excite his solicitude in favor of any undertaking, let him invest a portion of his capital in it. His thoughts and loyalties will be where his investment is. So if Christians would have their feelings deeply enlisted in behalf of Missionary operations, Bible societies, Sabbath Schools, Publication and Tract Societies, &c., let them give liberally to the important objects. Their interest will increase with the increase of their donations. Casting their offerings periodically into the treasury of the Lord; they will cherish an ardent solicitude for the accomplishment of those purposes to which the resources of that treasury are applied. Nor is this all. The interest referred to, which systematic giving will keep constantly alive, will excite a spirit of prayer. Christians will pray for the success of those enterprises in which they feel interested. And this is what the churches need—"the spirit of grace and supplication"—such a sense of their dependence on God as will keep them by day and by night at the mercy-seat, earnestly imploring help from on high—importunately interceding for a world that lies in wickedness. "Prayer moves the arm that moves the world," and God's people must give him no rest till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. They must offer the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous, which avails much. If then the plan of making pecuniary contributions to the cause of God, which the Apostle Paul prescribes, is happily adapted to excite an interest in the benevolent enterprises of the age, and if that interest is equally well adapted to excite a spirit of prayer, how evident the propriety of adopting that plan!

Once more: if Christian were to proceed with the direction given by the Apostles to the Corinthian Church, the treasury of the Lord would be full to overflowing. The universal adoption of this method of raising funds to sustain the

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philanthropic enterprises of the churches would mark the brightest epoch in the annals of beneficence. The rich would then give of their abundance; for they would feel that their wealth created a solemn responsibility. Acting under this impression they would be "rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." Those to whom God gives neither poverty nor riches, but a competency, would conscientiously consult their ability and regulate their donations according; while the poor would not overlook the obligation growing out of the possession of these resources, but would make even their "poverty abound unto the riches of their liberty."¹ No longer would be it be necessary to send agents North, South, East or West, to plead the cause of God and solicit contributions for its support. All such agents, if ministers, might become pastors. Every one in our American Israel, laying by him in store as God prospers him, there would be abundant means to sustain missionaries in every clime, and send the Bible to men of every dialect. Then might the bread of life, so far as pecuniary means have to do with the matter, be especially distributed to earth's famishing millions, and the invitation, "Whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely," be sounded in the ears of every child of Adam. These are some of the happy results which would follow were Christians to lay by in store on the first day of the week as the Lord, prospers them.

¹ The next three lines were unreadable. However, the main thought of the document is not substantially harmed by this omission.



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NUMBER 10: ON MONTHLY OR ANNUAL GIVING

There are doubtless some Christians so situated that it suits them much better to make annual, or even monthly donations to the cause of God than weekly ones. When it is out of their power “to lay by in store on the first day of the week,” they must of course adopt the most practicable plan. Monthly contributions are greatly preferable to those which are annual. It may be considered a singular fact, that persons, whose beneficent donations are annual, give less than those who contribute every month, or every week, though there may be equality as to income. The man whose income is a hundred dollars a year, is less apt to give twelve dollars at the end of the year than a dollar a month, and less likely to give a dollar a month than twenty-five cents a week. He whose income is a thousand dollars a year may be more easily induced to contribute ten dollars a month than a hundred and twenty dollars at the close of the year. He whose annual income is ten thousand dollars may be prevailed on to give twenty-five dollars a week or a hundred dollars a month, but how difficult would it be to secure twelve hundred dollars at the expiration of the year? Whether these facts can be accounted for or not, it is useless to dispute them. But it is possible to account for them. The longer the intervals between pecuniary donations, the more tenaciously the hand grasps the purse strings, and the more ample are the opportunities afforded the spirit of covetousness to invest none at all. The covetous spirit presents many objections to every method of doing good by pecuniary instrumentalities, and the best way to obviate

these objections is to give with suitable frequency to the cause of God. Every contribution weakens the power of the covetous principle and makes it easier to give. The man who is tempted to love money adopts the plan of giving away. There is no hope for him if he does not permit his feelings of pecuniary liberality to counteract his penurious propensities. And there are men who were once addicted to covetousness, who by their frequent donations to the causes of benevolence, have effectually conquered the love of money and are not patterns of pecuniary beneficence. Hence we see the consummate wisdom of the Apostle's plan. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as the Lord hath prospered him." This systematic arrangement of weekly contributions is almost an infallible preventive of covetousness. Who that gives every Lord's day to the cause of Christ can be a covetous man? If his donations at all correspond with his ability he cannot be covetous. Here again we see the importance of instructing the young to adopt a course of systematic beneficence. Let them in the morning of life learn to lay by in stores as the Lord prospers them, and they will not forget the lesson when they reach three score years and ten.

To those whose pecuniary donations can only be annual, I would say let them *be* annual. Let not the circumstances which necessarily preclude weekly and monthly offerings to the Lord, preclude, without necessity, annual offerings. Let all do the best in their power, acting under a solemn sense of responsibility to God, and his approving smile will rest upon them. Ah, this is the thing—to act with a view to please God.

What portion of their worldly substance should Christians give to the cause of the Redeemer is a question worthy of consideration. Neither reason nor religion requires that they should give all. While in the flesh they have wants—wants of periodical recurrence—and therefore must be periodically supplied. These wants are not miraculously provided for. Hence the people of God are dependent for the means of support on the income which he in his Providence may furnish them. While they are not to torment themselves with solicitude, saying, what will we eat? What will we drink? And

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wherewithal will we be clothed? They are to remember, for their comfort that their Heavenly Father knows they have need of all these things, and that it is his prerogative to bestow them.

As to the portion of their property which Christians should consecrate to purposes of benevolence, the presumption is that no rule can be given which will apply to all cases. Even where there is equality of income, yet, owing the inequality in other respects, one man often has it in his power to make larger appropriations than another. He who has a family of children to support and educate cannot reasonably be expected to cast as much into the treasury of the Lord as he who has no children—that is to say, provided their incomes are equal. Two ministers receiving the same compensation for their labors—the one living in a city and the other in the country—cannot make equal contributions to religious objects. The city minister's donations ought not to be as large as the country minister's owing to the greater expensiveness of living in a city. The question, how much must I give to the cause of God? Every Christian must decide for himself. Some cannot with propriety sell property and give the proceeds; for if their capital were diminished it would seriously interfere with their means of subsistence. There are others who may dispose of large portions of property without subjecting themselves to inconvenience.



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NUMBER 11: HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU GIVE?

Tevery one should think much and pray much before he determines what he will lay by him in store for purposes of beneficence. The inquiry, “Lord, what wilt you have me to do?” must be proposed in all honesty, and with its searching individuality of application. There must be a sincere desire to do that which will secure the divine approbation. What portion of his worldly substance the Christian should surrender to the Lord must be adjusted with conscientious accuracy. Reflections on death, judgment, eternity, the love of Christ, the responsibilities of his followers, and the necessities of the world should have much to do with the adjustment.

In deciding what portion of their income they should give to the cause of God, Christians may find the following suggestions of some value.

See to it that you do not determine to give *only* as much as do your fellow Christians. They may faithfully perform their duty, or they may not. You may be able to give more than they. You may enjoy greater prosperity. However, this may be the question, “What is your duty?,” may be decided irrespectively of what they do. Your obligations to be beneficent are neither created by their fidelity, nor canceled by their unfaithfulness. You are personally responsible to God. You can never decide correctly what proportion of your income should be holy to the Lord, if you make what others do the basis of the decision.

In determining how much you will give to the Redeemer's cause, you must resolve to retrench every extravagance, every needless expenditure. The propriety of retrenchment is suggested by a glance at the luxurious tables, expensive wardrobes, costly parlor furniture, and magnificent buildings, of many who profess to be followers of Him who had not where to lay his head. On this subject the prophet's language may be adopted: "Is it time, to dwell in ceiled houses, while the house of the Lord lies waste? Thus says the Lord, consider your ways." If the churches would cut off the excrescences of their wealth, it would greatly promote their spirituality, even if the world was not benefited. It is a disgrace to the Christian name, that so many wear it who know nothing practically about the curtailment of useless extravagances, and sinful expenditures. They will never give an adequate portion of their income to objects of benevolence till there is, in this respect, a reformation.

In deciding how much of your income will be consecrated to the Lord, you must determine to give until you *feel* it. As long as you fix on an amount that you can give with perfect convenience, you will not give enough. The amount must be increased. Self-denial is one of the initial regulations of the Kingdom of Christ. How can Christians fill the measure of their duty in contributing to the advancement of the Redeemer's cause, unless they give until they find it necessary to practice self-denial to enable them to give? But unfortunately for them, and for the world, they know but little about the import of the term self-denial. How few deny themselves any of the luxuries of life, that they may thereby augment the offerings which they cast into the treasury of the Lord! Some say, "We are in debt, and can give nothing." How did you become involved in debt? Perhaps by your folly. If so, your inability to give does not excuse you. Others, owing to indolent habits, have nothing to give. To each one of this unenviable class, the Apostle's language is applicable: "Let him labor with his hands, the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needs." If, by habits of idleness, professors of religion render themselves unable to give, their inability involves them in criminality. It has been induced by

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a course of conduct at war with the arrangements of Heaven, and must therefore be sinful. It would be the essence of absurdity to argue that inability, created by disobedience, is disconnected from guilt.

In determining how much they give to the cause of Christ, parents should be careful not to fix on too large an amount of property to bequeath to their children. There are many able to give their children hundreds and thousands, but they wish to give them tens of thousands. And yet it is a notorious fact, that children, who inherit large fortunes, are generally less useful members of society than those who have only a competency. Why is this? Evidently because they are disposed to rely on wealth rather than personal merit, as the basis of respectability. Christian parents should love their children, but they should love the cause of God more. To this cause, they should give their warmest affections, and it should be first in their thoughts on occasions of pecuniary distribution. Let them honor the Lord with their substance, and with the first fruits of their increase. Let them provide comfortably, but not extravagantly for their children. Let them, in their testamentary regulations, remember the words of the Lord Jesus: "He that loves son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." Ah, how many professedly Christian parents are not worthy of Christ, because they love their children more than they love him! This is a subject that claims parental investigation.



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NUMBER 12: REASONS TO GIVE

 few motives to Systematic Beneficence may be appropriately presented here.

1. A regard for their own interest and happiness should prompt Christians to a course of this kind. No man serves God without receiving a reward. This reward, it is true, is “of grace and not of debt”—still it is a reward. Every act of obedience to the divine commands results beneficially to the actor.

It is not a romantic hypothesis that God takes special care of the temporal interests of those who are liberal in their contributions to his cause. What romance is there in the following quotation? “There is that scatters and yet increases; and there is that withholds more than is meet, but it tends to poverty. The liberal soul will be made fat, and he that waters will be watered also himself.” It is, however, to the spiritual interests of Christians that I more particularly refer.

It has been shown that systematic giving is a divine requirement. If, then, Christians would promote their own spiritual welfare, they must comply with this requirement. Every beneficent act will weaken their attachment to their earthly possessions—elevate their affections to celestial objects—and remind them that the way to “use this world as not abusing it,” is, during their sojourn in it, to “lay up treasure in heaven.” If he who gives to a disciple a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, will not lose his reward, it is surely a reasonable inference that every act of pecuniary

beneficence which proceeds from a proper motive, will rebound to the spiritual benefit of him who performs it. "Whatsoever a man sows that will he also reap." "He that sows bountifully will reap also bountifully."

A regard for their own happiness should likewise render Christians systematically beneficent. That is a memorable saying of the Lord Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." It is a compendious definition of the philosophy of happiness. The meaning of the expression manifestly is, there is more happiness in giving than in receiving. Doing good is essential to happiness. The most beneficent persons are the most happy. Who is miserable, if not the man that considers it the great business of his life to accumulate wealth—to hoard up his bags of gold and silver—and who gives nothing to supply the wants of suffering humanity? Such a man is a stranger to happiness, and must necessarily be, as long as his feelings of avarice predominate over those of benevolence. There is a happiness in doing good, known only to the beneficent. The remembrance of every act of beneficence is productive of pleasure. Who can describe the satisfaction enjoyed by Job, even in his affliction, when in referring to the course he pursued in the days of his prosperity, he said, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not I searched out." Who would not rather feel the emotions excited by such a retrospect than to sit on a Monarch's throne and wear a Monarch's crown? The idea is not visionary that there is a luxury in doing good. It is sober reality. The very regard, therefore, which Christians have for their own interest and happiness should render them systematically beneficent.

2. The desire they feel to glorify God, and to be conformed to his image, should excite in Christians a spirit of beneficence.

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To do good is the injunction both of the Old Testament and the New. It is involved in the requisition. "You will love your neighbor as yourself." If then God requires all men, and especially his people, to do good, or to be beneficent, it follows that when the command is disregarded, he is dishonored. His authority as Lawgiver is trampled under foot, and an insult is offered to his majesty. If God is dishonored by disobedience, he is glorified by obedience. Hence the desire Christians feel to glorify God, should render them beneficent, for beneficence is promotive of his glory. But this is not all. God himself is beneficent. "He does good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." He is the Supreme Benefactor of the world. "He makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust." To be like God is to be beneficent. Man's true dignity and glory consists in the resemblance he bears to his Maker. He approximates perfection as he approximates conformity to the divine image.

It is characteristic of Christians that they desire to be like God. Let them then be beneficent; for he is beneficent. Let them be systematic in their beneficence; for he acts upon a plan, and confers his benefits with the utmost regularity. "The eyes of all wait upon him, and he gives them their meat in due season. He opens his hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing."

3. The example of Christ is well adapted to promote a spirit of beneficence. He is the personification of beneficence. His *benevolence* embraced in its comprehensive grasp the ruined sons of men, and his *beneficence* is seen in the fact that he *did something* for their salvation. Benevolence of itself was not sufficient. It must lead to beneficence in order to man's redemption. And this was the case. The eternal Word became incarnate—laid aside the glory he had with the Father before the world was—relinquished his scepter and crown—gave up the hosannas of angels for the execrations of men—and exchanged the brightest throne in the universe for an ignominious cross. During his humiliation he ever went about doing good. I will have more to say of the Savior's beneficence in my next.



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NUMBER 13: REASONS TO GIVE (CONT.)

In illustration of the Savior's beneficence I may say that he fed the hungry—gave sight to the blind—hearing to the deaf—speech to the dumb—cleansed lepers—raised the dead—expelled demons—and as the crowning proof of his Messiahship, preached the gospel to the poor. When the hour came—the most memorable in the annals of time—in which he was nailed to the cross, he suffered not for himself, but for others. "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." By his atoning sacrifice he sustained the dignity of the divine law—vindicated its majesty—and harmonized justice and mercy in the salvation of men. That sacrifice is the foundation of human hope. The redeemed will through eternity ascribe their redemption to its infinite merit, and admire the beneficence exhibited in the amazing fact that their Deliverer became both the priest and the sacrifice. O, it is in the cross we see the wonders divine beneficence has done. And when the Redeemer rose from the dead, the damps of the sepulcher had not chilled the ardor of his love; for he sent forth his Apostles on the beneficent errand of preaching the "gospel to every creature." After he ascended to heaven and the Father, well pleased with what he had done, addressed him in majestic phraseology, saying, "Sit on my right hand till I make your enemies thy footstool"—he was still the beneficent Savior; for he shed forth the Holy Spirit in rich effusion on his infant church in Jerusalem. And from that day till now beneficence has been

enthroned in his person, knowing no change amid the lapse of ages and the revolutions of time.

With what moral power should the example of Christ operate on his followers! It should be the object of their anxious desire to be like him in doing good. "He has left them an example that they should follow his steps." They should copy him in all his imitable excellences, and in his beneficence he may be imitated. To be like him! What a distinction! What an honor! An honor before which all earthly glories fade away. Is it not a great absurdity to profess discipleship to Christ, and have no portion of that spirit that brought him from his throne to Bethlehem—thence to Gethsemane—and thence to Calvary. Be assured, Christian, that the example of Christ does not exert its legitimate influence over you unless it prompts you to give to the cause of God in proportion to your ability.

4. The responsibility of the churches of the saints in relation to a world lying in wickedness furnishes a powerful motive to pecuniary beneficence.

This world belongs to God. It is a province of his vast empire. His claim to its allegiance, the combined powers of earth and hell can never invalidate. He who sets up a counter claim is guilty of dishonesty and usurpation. This has been done by Satan. Jehovah's most prominent and most implacable antagonist. So extensive is the usurped jurisdiction which he exercises the inspiration has termed him "the prince, the god of this world." He has a kingdom—the kingdom of darkness. He sways a mighty scepter, the power of which obedient millions acknowledge. All his subjects cordially co-operate with him in the accomplishment of the objects of his tyrannical reign; for their depravity creates sympathy for those objects. The revenue of the Satanic kingdom is immense. Its treasury receives supplies from the North, the South, the East, and the West. The gold and silver after ages of desecration are still made subservient to the interests of this kingdom. Indeed, it has had such immemorial control of the wealth of the world that many of the professed subjects of *another kingdom* practically say wealthy should now be

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appropriated as it has ever been. Infidelity, idolatry, superstition, Paganism, Mohammedanism, Popery, the carnal formalism of Protestant lands, a licentious press, and a corrupting literature, are all combining their influence to increase the power of the usurper king.

But this world is to be brought back to its Rightful Sovereign. Our alienated planet, after centuries of lawless wandering, is to come into its proper orbit, and perform its harmonious revolutions around the Sun of Righteousness. The titles, "the prince of this world," "the god of this world," are to lose their applicability to Satan. His scepter is to be broken—his throne demolished—his kingdom overthrown. The shout is to be heard in heaven, "the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ." Earth is to become vocal with the praises of the Lamb that was slain—his name is to be music in the ears of all people—and the efficacy of his blood is to be felt in every clime.

It is delightful to contemplate through the medium of prophecy, the subjugation of the world to the Messiah. David, under the promptings of inspiration, said, "His dominion will be from sea to sea." "All the ends of the world will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindred of the earth will worship before you." And even when the sweet singer of Israel was about to close his eyes in death, enraptured with the anticipation of the Redeemer's peaceful reign, he cried out, "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory." Isaiah, whose lips were touched with fire from the altar of God, uttered this prediction: "The mountain of the Lord's house will be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and all nations will flow unto it." Daniel, who maintained his integrity amid the temptations of a licentious court, prophesied that "the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands should become great and fill the earth." Looking through the long vista of years to the expiration of "a time and timely end the dividing of a time," he said, "And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions will serve and obey him." How cheering are these prophetic

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declarations! How well adapted to inspire with sacred
animation the hosts of Zion!



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NUMBER 14: REACHING THE WORLD FOR CHRIST

Whatever views Christians may entertain in regard to the Millennium, it is unquestionably their duty to see that the gospel is preached in all the world, to every creature. Those who believe that Christ will reign personally on earth during the millennial era should be diligently engaged in preparing for his coming. Let them instrumentally accomplish the salvation of as many sinners as possible. Peter intimates that the coming of the Lord is apparently deferred because he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; and in the same connection Christians are exhorted to look for and hasten the coming of the day of God. "Hastening unto," &c., is the reading of the common version, but is not, I think, justified by the original. The learned Trench is of opinion that Christians are called on (the Spirit of God speaking after the manner of men,) to expedite the coming of Christ by doing those things which, in the divine economy, are to be accomplished before he comes. This, however, is not the place for biblical criticism. What I mean to say is that a belief in the personal reign of Christ during the Millennium, and in the nearness of the day of his coming, cannot legitimately extinguish missionary zeal, but must kindle it into a flame, and induce a liberal consecration of money to the cause of missions.

On the other hand, those who believe, as a large majority of Christians probably do, that the reign of Christ, during the Millennium, will be spiritual, and that his personal coming will be deferred till the millennial glory will have been

succeeded by Satan's last effort to restore the ruined fortunes of his kingdom, must also believe that a mighty work is to be accomplished through the agency of the saints. For, before truth and righteousness prevail throughout the earth, the strongholds of infidelity must be demolished; Jewish prejudices against the crucified Nazarene must be subdued; the fatal spell with which the Arabian imposter has bound millions of our race, must be broken; the multiform systems of Pagan superstition must be overthrown; ten thousand times ten thousand idols must be cast to the "moles and the bats;" numberless customs, originating in the depths of antiquity, must be abolished; and "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth," must fall to rise no more. All this must be done; and is not this a great work? And while Omnipotent energy is requisite to its accomplishment, the churches of the saints have much to do.

It is indispensable to the conversion of the world that the Bible be given to the nations, and that missionaries of the cross be sent to every land. Bibles are not miraculously translated, printed, and circulated. The world will not be furnished with the word of life by miracle. Nor are missionaries fed by ravens. So far as mortals know, God has but two ways of accomplishing an object. The one is by miracle—the other by the use of means. If, then, the day of miracles is past, the conclusion is irresistible that instrumentality must be employed in supplying the nations with the Bible and the living ministry. And what instrumentality is to be brought into requisition? Evidently that of the churches of Jesus Christ. They have in their possession the bread of life—the perishing heathen need it—must have it—and who but the churches will give them that bread? The wells of salvation contain inexhaustible supplies of the water of life, but who, except the churches, will draw and convey that water in refreshing rivulets as "far as the curse is found"? The world is in darkness. How is that darkness to be dissipated, unless the churches assume such a moral position as will enable them advantageously to reflect the light they receive from the Sun of Righteousness? Heaven, earth, and hell are looking on to see what the

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churches will do. The welfare of the world is, under God, suspended on their action. As, then, a responsibility so transcendent devolves on the churches, how is it to be met, unless there be a spirit of beneficence among church members? Can it be met without a consecration of the pecuniary resources of the friends of Christ? Never, never. "To him"—the Messiah—"will be given of the gold of Sheba." The churches must be so overwhelmed with the magnitude of the object before them—the world's salvation—as to be thoroughly imbued with the sentiment that money cannot be so judiciously employed as in the accomplishment of the object. Let Christians live under this impression, and they will give systematically to the Lord's cause. Their offerings will be cast regularly into his treasury.

Christian reader, in closing this series of articles, I ask, what say you? Will you not lay by in store as the Lord *prosper* you? As he *has* prospered you? As he *will* prosper you? Will you not in the fear of God, and in view of the cross on which your Savior died, determine to set apart a liberal portion of your income, and write upon it, "Holiness to the Lord"? Will you not pray more fervently for the arrival of that period when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of God, and when the Redeemer will be enthroned in the affections of a regenerated world? Come quickly, you blessed day of the Lord! Interposing months and years fly with electric rapidity away, and let our eyes behold it! Usher it in, you Prince of Peace!

And added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy! It was thine
By ancient covenant ere Nature's birth;
And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with thy blood.

**A
PLEA FOR THOROUGH
FEMALE EDUCATION**



BY

JAMES MADISON PENDLETON



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A PLEA FOR THOROUGH FEMALE EDUCATION

(AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF
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22, 1856.)



R. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Nothing is more tyrannical than custom. Its influence is seen and felt everywhere. Its power is restricted to no class of society, but is operative among all classes. An injurious custom is difficult of counteraction. Interwoven in the very framework of society—familiar to the thoughts of the people—acquiring strength by the lapse of years—it sets itself in array against every effort to arrest and destroy its formidable energy. What reformer, whether directing his exertions to changes in the physical, the intellectual or the moral world, has not found this statement sadly verified? We need not at present employ ourselves in the consideration of evil customs in general. Their name is legion, and the humiliating fact forces itself upon us that they have either a direct or remote connection with human nature. One reprehensible custom may properly engage our attention—*the neglect of female education*. The importance of educating the male sex has long been a conceded fact. Hence seminaries, colleges, and universities have sprung up as if by magic in the old world and in the new. The pilgrim fathers very soon after their settlement in New England, laid the foundation of a system of education which has received improvement after improvement, till it has become one of the glories of our

country. It has extended its influence from the bleak mountains of the north to the distant regions of the sunny south, and the fertile prairies of the west, so that the same sun that shines on Harvard, and Yale, and Brown, pours his light on the Virginia, the Mercer, and your own Union University, and then cheers with his departing beams the rising temples of science in Wisconsin and Minnesota. But what has been the object in the establishment of the various seats of learning throughout this goodly land? It has been, with few exceptions, the literary training of boys and young men. They have been the favorites, whether individuals or states have acted in the enterprise of education. Woman has been neglected, destined to literary inferiority, not because of inferiority in intellect, but on account of the cruel partiality and injustice of the system of education. How many a noble girl, unable to repress her desire for knowledge, has imagined college halls as beauteous as the blue heavens, and, alas for her, as difficult of approach. She has sighed and wept, finding her only consolation in that religion which teaches the essential equality of the sexes, and conducts its votaries to a world in which the intellect will be expanded to angel size.

Let us rejoice, however, that the power of inveterate custom can be broken. It may be difficult, but it is not impossible. The custom of neglecting female education will, must pass away. Is it not, like the Mohammedan power in the east, becoming weaker? Do we not see the twilight dawning of a better and brighter day? Is there not much to inspire hope? The history of the last few years, if faithfully written, would record favorable changes in public sentiment and public action. Among the auspicious signs of the times may be mentioned the establishment of this college. Hither come the daughters of the land in quest of knowledge. They are here from different States of the union to receive assistance in ascending the hill of science. They are here to discipline their minds by a study of mathematics and languages. They are here for two objects—to acquire knowledge, and to receive intellectual training. Important as is the former of these objects, the latter is more so. This is evident from the

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fact that mental discipline enables us to acquire knowledge which without it would be unattainable.

It is to the friends of female education a matter of rejoicing that the course of study is, in this institution, so thorough. They are glad that young ladies are to go forth from these halls, not *accomplished* in the common acceptance of the term, but *really educated*. They hope that the name of Mary Sharp College will ever suggest the idea of the solid rather than the showy, the substantial rather than the ornamental. Alas! How credulous parents and guardians have been imposed on by many female boarding schools! The ornamental branches of education have not been made incidental, but essential; so that a young lady on her day of graduation has been able to make sweet music on the piano, and has failed through embarrassment, or for some other cause, to define a triangle. The sweetness of the music, however, has atoned for the triangular forgetfulness, and the uneducated father or guardian has gone home exulting in the proficiency of the child or ward.

But all this may be considered desultory and out of place. Perhaps it is. I now proceed more specially to the object I have in view on this occasion, which is to present, as well as I can, A PLEA FOR A THOROUGH FEMALE EDUCATION.

There are multitudes of persons who profess to be the friends of female education, but they deny the necessity of thorough mental training. They concede that so far as the male sex is concerned no intellectual discipline can be too complete; but they suppose that for the other sex to be able to "read, write, and cipher to the single rule of three" is amply sufficient. Some deprecate female intellect, and deem it incapable of any great improvement. Others think that the comparatively obscure positions occupied by the daughters of Eve furnish an argument against liberal culture. And others still (I refer to ungallant men) wish to retain their fancied superiority, and are jealous of any invasion of their proscriptive rights. That is to say, they are unwilling for the embargo which custom has placed on the cultivation of feminine intellect to be removed, lest, in its removal, their

superiority should become equality, and their prescriptive rights appear to be prescriptive injustice. This is a contemptible jealousy, and no man whose mother was a woman should indulge it. It is a reflection on her who gave him birth. In support of the position that female education should be thorough—as thorough as that of males—I submit the following considerations:

1. *The Creator in giving to woman intellectual powers lays her under obligation to improve, as thoroughly as possible, those powers.*

It is needless to prove that God has given to both sexes mental faculties. This is too plain to require proof; and, indeed, it is as illogical to prove what ought to be taken for granted as to take for granted what ought to be proved. The omniscient God does not act without purpose. None of his doings are objectless. What, then, was his design in the creation of female intellect? Will it be said that he deemed mind necessary to woman in her sphere of action, but did not intend that her mental faculties should be improved? But this view cannot be sustained; for the mind without improvement is a mere blank. I use in this connection the term improvement to denote the result of the influences exerted on the infant intellect in the cradle, and when youth has succeeded to infancy. The mind is not formed as Minerva was fabulously asserted to have sprung perfect and armed from the brain of Jupiter. No, in its first connection with the human body its weakness is analogous to that of the body. There are no manifestations of strength. The intellectual faculties are there, but they are enveloped in a mysterious obscurity. Without training, without improvement, they would remain undeveloped. They may, it is true, resemble gold, but it is gold in the mines, useless for all practical purposes. They may be like the diamond, but it is the diamond under a superincumbent mass of rubbish. The mines must be opened—the rubbish must be removed.

The question, then, is not whether the female intellect ought to be improved, but to what extent the improvement should go. There is, there must be improvement in all who become

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qualified, in the most imperfect degree, to act their part on the theater of life. Consider this fact: Here is the idiot irresponsible to the government whose protection he enjoys. Why? Because his intellect, whether owing to some intrinsic defect in itself or to a disastrous conjunction with the body, I will not inquire, has not been sufficiently developed to render him a moral agent. And who, without mental improvement, would be superior to the idiot? No one. The absence of this improvement, to whatever cause attributable, would in its results, be the same. All that makes the overwhelming majority of the human race superior to idiots, is mental improvement. I repeat, therefore, that the question is not whether the female intellect ought to be improved, but to what extent the improvement will go.

Now I argue that God in giving to woman intellectual powers lays her under obligation to improve them as thoroughly as possible. Why else are they given? And why are they so susceptible of improvement? These facts are surely significant and suggestive. If the female mind ought to be improved at all, should it not be improved as thoroughly as possible? What argument in favor of its partial expansion may not be employed in favor of as full an expansion as circumstances will allow? Who is authorized to say to the intellect of woman in its intense pursuit of knowledge, "To this point will you come, but no farther?" Who will dare to lock the temple of science at her approach? Who will say that the treasures of dead languages will be buried out of her sight? Who will affirm that "a little learning" is enough for the gentler sex? Let the daughters of America be worthy of their country and of their age. Let them aspire to intellectual advancement, and they may remember if they please, that a well-regulated mind can be occupied alternately with things great and small. It is one of the proofs of the greatness of the Divine mind that it takes within the range of its contemplations objects minute as well as objects vast—objects of microscopic littleness and of telescopic magnitude. Some have been prejudiced against female education because it has occasionally happened that educated women have been perfectly unfitted for the

domestic sphere. But this, surely, is not one of the legitimate tendencies of education, and it does not follow that all uneducated women are adapted to the home circle. The objection to female education now referred to pre-supposes that ignorance is the best qualification for a good housekeeper. In the name of all that portion of humanity represented in the fair sex, I repudiate and denounce this sentiment. Is it a logical sequence that because a lady understands natural philosophy she does not know how to arrange the furniture of her house—that if she is acquainted with metaphysics she does not know how to make a good biscuit—that her knowledge of moral science disqualifies her for making a respectable pie—that her study of chemistry will keep her out of the secret of making soap—that attention to geometrical figures will unfit her for cutting out bed-quilt pieces—that her mathematical demonstrations will insure bad coffee—that knowing how to conjugate the Latin *amo, to love*, will make her a simpleton—that running the Greek *tupto, to strike*, through the synopsis, will suggest the idea of striking her husband—and that her historical information will induce a forgetfulness of the necessity of training her children properly? I ask, “Do these things result from education?” Far from it. They have no necessary connection with it. Uncultivated women sometimes have bad butter—are unfortunate in fitting their dresses—wash cups and saucers with too little particularity—practically oppose hydropathy among small children—put too much soda in bread—too many onions in beef-steak—and suffer Shanghai chickens, with their long legs and defective breasts, to come to the table half-cooked. Am I speaking disrespectfully of uneducated ladies? By no means. I am only showing that even if it were true that education unfits for domestic responsibilities, the want of it does not qualify for their assumption. What I contend for is, that the right kind of education, acquired under the right kind of teachers, prepares a young lady for acting most advantageously her part in that hallowed circle called HOME. It fits her for a performance of the duties growing out of the domestic relations; for it teaches the philosophy of these relations. Home is the place which woman adorns, and education

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adorns woman. This being the case, by what epithet will I describe that cruelty which would doom females to comparative ignorance, requiring them to "live, move, and have their being" among cackling hens, quacking ducks, hissing geese, with their minds occupied with seams and selvedges, gussets, and hems, bows and flounces, tucks and jewelry, and leaving neither time nor taste for intellectual pursuits? The female mind was given for higher, nobler, holier, purposes. It must not grovel among little things, and expend its energies on trifles. Let it soar upward, and let education supply it with wings that it may soar. God in giving to woman intellectual powers lays her under obligation to improve them. And there is something wrong in the organic structure of that society which makes no provision for female education. Such a structure of society is at war with common sense—at war with the Bible—at war with the best interest of the world. God has not created that jewel, the female mind, that it may be obscured by the rust of ignorance, but that, polished by the appliances of knowledge, it may shine in serene glory, flashing its soft light on all who come within the circumference of its rays. I stand here today pleading for the polishing of this jewel, that its light may shine, and, enthusiastic as some will doubtless consider me, I hesitate not to say that my object contemplates interests more vital to the welfare of the human race, than are the consultations of cabinets and the forms of diplomacy. But more of this in another place.

Let no one say that in protesting against female ignorance I have reflected on the position of women of preceding generations. I beg to have no such construction placed on my language. Our mothers did well. Many of them had none of the advantages now enjoyed. "Dilworth's Spelling Book," the "Psalter of the Church of England," and the Bible, it may be, were all their books. How disadvantageous the circumstances surrounding them! But they struggled against these adverse circumstances. They displayed buoyancy of spirit. They exemplified that elasticity of mind which shows that a noble intellect will, if it comes within the limits of possibility, throw off the oppressions which would keep it down—rise

up—and look around on a wider horizon. Admirable women! Pioneers in western civilization and improvement! The most of you have left this sublunary scene. A few still remain. How you toiled and exerted yourselves by day and by night that your children might enjoy advantages never enjoyed by you! Noble women! When I think of you, and remember that I had a mother among you, I hope it is not unmanly for the heart to palpitate with deep emotion. If it is, I am unmanly. I hope it is not a weakness for the eyes to fill with tears. If it is, I am weak and glory in it.

The difference between this generation and preceding generations in intellectual advantages is as great as in physical advantages. Formerly the boatmen of Tennessee and Kentucky conveyed the produce of the country to New Orleans in flat boats, and walked home through necessity. But now, when floating palaces are carried up and down the Mississippi by steam, it would be idiotic to walk from Orleans to this place. Formerly dirt roads were traveled—then turnpikes—now we have railways, which seem almost magically to bring remote points together. It would surely now be consummate folly to travel on a dirt road or turnpike in preference to a railroad. As are steamboats when compared with flat boats—as are railroads when compared with turnpikes—so are the present literary advantages of the country as compared with former advantages. This is emphatically true of female schools, seminaries, and colleges. If, therefore, the young ladies of this age do not make greater attainments in knowledge than those of past ages, it will be as if the cars on a railroad kept pace with a wagon on a turnpike. I trust that the students of this institution will allow no such incongruity to be exhibited. Let your advancement be in proportion to your facilities of progress.

2. *The female mind is in all essential respects equal to that of the other sex, and this fact furnishes a strong argument for as thorough female as male education.*

Will any one deny the truth of this proposition in whole or in part? Let it be remembered that woman was originally given to man as a companion. This, it is true, was before the fall;

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but companionship is since the fall the prominent idea in the conjugal alliance. Is it not a significant fact that Adam, when he came from the hands of his maker, crowned with glory, still lacked something? When he was in the blooming garden of Eden, every breeze, as it rustled through the trees of the garden, wafted music and fragrance—every bird caroled its sweetest notes—a bright sun enlivened the day—a serene moon cheered the night—every beast and fowl by the very law of its creation was required to subservise his happiness, and had then none of the repulsive peculiarities induced by the fall. What a lovely place was this earth ere sin invaded it! All lovely, and Eden specially and preeminently so. And yet Adam felt a solitude which excited the pity of his God, and called forth the expression, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a help-meet for him.” What? Alone! Among animals of every beauteous form, and birds of brightest plumage and sweetest voice! Alone, amid thornless flowers and richest fruits! Alone, amid shady bowers and limpid waters! Yes, alone. And why? Because woman was not there. There was a vacuum which neither the inanimate nor the animate creation could fill. Man could snuff the odorous breezes of paradise—stroke the lion’s mane—look into the soft eye of the gazelle—hear sweeter than nightingale songs, and eat the most delicious fruits, but something was wanting.

Still slowly passed the melancholy day,
And still the stranger wist not where to stray –
The world was sad!—the garden was a wild!
And man, the hermit, sighed—till woman smiled!

Be not vain, you daughters of Eve, that paradisiacal bliss was incomplete till your mother made her appearance in the garden. But let the fact inspire you with suitable self-respect, for it unquestionably proves your worth. Who, in view of this fact, will depreciate woman?

It is well said by Matthew Henry, “The woman was *made of a rib out of the side of Adam*; not out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled on by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near

his heart to be beloved." She was to be his companion, his "help-meet." And how could she be a suitable companion without an intellect substantially equal to that of her husband? Why did not beasts and birds furnish the requisite companionship for man? They had physical excellence and beauty. But they had not intellect. Man, surrounded by them, was, in an important sense to him, *alone*. He needed not merely a physical, but intellectual and moral companionship. And I say again, that since the expulsion from Paradise, as before, the prominent idea in the conjugal alliance is companionship. If this is true, it follows, as I am attempting to show, that the female mind is, in all essential respects, equal to that of the other sex. If not, how can there be high intellectual communion between husband and wife? How can the religious elements in their nature and coalesce, and by their coalescence promote their mutual spiritual improvement? It cannot be. Physical companionship is the lowest order of companionship. Wherein does it exalt man above the brutes that perish? The companionship which dignifies him is one of mind—it is a union of soul. And this kind of companionship involves the intellectual equality of the sexes. Very well. If the sexes are equal in intellect, who can give a good reason why systems of education should be partial to the masculine, and forgetful of the feminine gender? If there is a native mental equality, this equality must be preserved by no education or by equal education. Let any plan of education be adopted which confers greater advantages on one sex than the other, and then the superiority of that sex and the consequent inferiority of the other, will at once appear. If, as I have aimed to show, God in giving females intellectual powers lays them under obligation to improve those powers, then in giving them minds, in all essential respects, equal to those of males, he indicates thereby that the two sexes should have equal opportunities of mental culture. How can we reason in any other way? It will not do to say that God in giving to males intellect requires that intellect to be improved, and that in bestowing on females intellect does not make the same requisition. It will not do to say that equality of intellect does not call for equality of cultivation. For this would be a

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burlesque on logic. If minds originally equal deserve any culture at all, they are entitled to equal culture. This is my argument, and I defy any one to show that there is the slightest fallacy in it. Some, however, may deny the native equality of male and female intellect, but this will involve them in difficulty; for the denial is at war with that elevated companionship for which the sexes were manifestly created. What Paley said of human testimony may, with a little modification, be said of human intellect: "The usual character of human testimony is substantial truth under circumstantial variety." I take it upon myself to say that the usual character of male and female intellect is substantial sameness under circumstantial variety. And I insist that the substantial sameness, and not the circumstantial variety, should regulate the manner and the extent of its culture.

3. *What Christianity does for women furnishes an argument of thorough female education.*

And what does Christianity do? In answering this question, let us refer to woman's condition in those lands where the gospel is not known.

Is she recognized as man's equal? By no means. She is regarded as his slave. He looks down upon her with indifference, not to say contempt, and scorns the idea of her companionship with him.

Go to any country unenlightened by the gospel of Christ, and you will be reminded of an ancient philosopher who "thanked God that he was born a man and not a woman." In how many portions of Europe are females degraded!

In Siberia it is not uncommon for husbands to sell their wives, and "a little train oil" is often the consideration paid for them. In Italy and Spain the education of girls is almost entirely neglected. There Romanism, the most outrageous perversion of Christianity, prevails.

In Asia, the condition of women is wretched. In Tartary husbands dismiss their wives at pleasure. In China compulsory marriages are common, and women, who by

marriage become the slave of their husbands, are not permitted to choose their masters. In Burma the evidence of women is "undervalued in judicial proceedings." In Persia "women are not allowed to join in the public prayers of the Mosques. They are directed to offer up their devotions at home, or if they attend the place of public worship, it must be at a period when the male sex is not there. This practice is founded upon the authority of the traditional sayings of the prophet, and is calculated to confirm that inferiority and seclusion, to which the female sex are doomed by the laws of Mohammed." In some Asiatic countries female infanticide was formerly no strange thing whatever may be the case now. And why this horrid practice? The birth of a daughter was considered a misfortune.

Among the savage Indian tribes of America "the women cook the victuals, but though of the highest rank, they are never permitted to partake, till all the males, even the servants, have eaten what they think proper."

In Africa female degradation is complete. "The poorest and meanest negro, even though he is a slave, is generally waited upon by his wife as a subordinate being, on her knees. On their knees the negro women are obliged to present to their husbands tobacco and drink; on their knees they salute them when they return from hunting or any other expedition. Lastly, on their knees they drive away the flies from their lords and masters while they sleep." For most of the facts here stated, I am indebted to an Essay of F.A. Cox, late of London, prefixed to the second volume of his "Female Scripture Biography." No doubt in some of the countries he mentions favorable changes have been going on since he wrote, but this is owing either to the direct or indirect influence of Christianity. The general fact is unquestionable, that where the light of Divine revelation shines not, woman is degraded. Her condition physically, intellectually and morally, might well move the hardest heart and draw tears from eyes unaccustomed to weep.

Why, I may ask the ladies who are present today, are you here, with cheerful countenances and buoyant spirits? Why

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are you permitted to be here? Why is your presence tolerated? Why are you inclined to be here? Ah, why is there a Mary Sharp College, or a College of any name for the education of the daughters of America? It is owing to the meliorating influence of Christianity on the condition of your sex. The Bible assigns you your proper place and elevates you to your appropriate position. It recognizes you equally with the other sex as the recipients of salvation through Jesus Christ, and excites your aspirations after a glorious immortality. Christianity takes hold of woman in her degradation, and raises her up, and in so doing condemns the almost world-wide inferiority in which absurd custom has placed her. It makes her the equal and the associate of man. Its prominent object is the bestowal of the blessings of redemption—the guidance of its votaries to the skies, but in its triumphant career heavenward it incidentally scatters along its way the advantages of civilization and education. Hence wherever the religion of Jesus Christ prevails will be found an enlightened civilization and the means of educational training.

My argument is that as Christianity does so much for woman, this fact furnishes a valid reason for female education. In conferring the blessings of salvation on females it provides for their mental improvement. In bestowing the greater favor it does not withhold the less. Indeed the truths of Christianity have an expansive and strengthening influence on the intellect. It would be absurd, therefore, to consider the religion of the Bible the foe of intellectual culture, the object of which is the enlargement and invigoration of the mind.

You, ladies, are infinitely indebted both to the direct and the indirect influences of Christianity. You are indebted for what you are and for all you can hope to be. Without its holy light you would be mantled in darkness this day. Without its elevating power you would be in barbarian degradation. Without its assertion of your rights, the stronger sex would have monopolized all rights. Without the freedom, “wherewith Christ makes free,” you would be the slaves of men. Your fathers, husbands, and brothers would tyrannize

over you, and thus illustrate a depravity as natural as disgusting. Human nature loves power, and power will be inordinately exercised unless its exercise is restrained. Christianity imposes wholesome restraints on power. Christianity is, therefore, woman's friend; and woman ought to be the friend of Christianity. Regarding it as the source of her blessings, she should enshrine its truths in her affections and exemplify its precepts in her life.

4. I observe, lastly, *that woman's influence on the world's interests supplies a strong argument in favor of female education.*

The power and the extent of female influence are too much overlooked. We all know that it is the province of mothers to make the first impressions on their children. These impressions date from the period when the helpless infant begins to recognize the maternal smile. They are deepened in childhood—they become deeper in youth and they continue through life. Who will say that Washington of the Revolution would have been *the* Washington of the Revolution but for his mother's influence in the formation of his character? He felt that influence in the seven year's struggle for liberty through which he passed. How operative became the lessons of patriotism he had learned in his boyhood from his mother? How they animated his heart and nerved his arm for deeds of valor in those days of fire and blood? Who can tell how much his mother had to do in inspiring him with love of his country? Who knows but the flame of patriotism that burned so brightly on the altar of his heart was kindled by the mother he loved so well? Elevated to the Presidency of the nation, he still felt the power of maternal influence. Her hand was invisibly at work in the cabinet as it had been in the field. A mother's influence dies not. It may be gentle, but it is powerful. It emanates from her teachings and from her examples. When life is about to end, it goes forth from her dying bed, and then the grave gives it new power. Many a wayward boy has been melted by the love of a mother's heart, when that heart has ceased to beat.

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It is evidently the design of Providence, that men are the actors in the management of the world's affairs, but who can tell to what extent their action is influenced by the other sex? In the romantic days of chivalry, female influence was fully recognized, but it was as real before, and has been as real since as it was then. Men may go forth and fight battles, and, it may be, the influence of their mothers decides what kind of soldiers they make. The unknown influence of a mother may elect the Captain, the Major, the Colonel, and the General. And the mediocrity of their mothers may have much to do in assigning to the mass of soldiers their undistinguished places. They rise not from those places; it may be, because their mothers never felt the impulses of an honorable ambition.

How materially is the destiny of nations often affected by diplomatic negotiations! And the diplomatists are probably, without knowing it, influenced by the principles which their mothers taught them in boyhood and youth. Men are the ostensible and conspicuous actors, but female influence is at work in all they do. The mother, in the person of her son, often electrifies Senates with her eloquence, and maternal influence lives on the thrones of monarchs.

But look from Senates and Thrones to that State prison, where so many of the sons of crime are expiating their offences by hard labor. Why are they there? Do you not know that many of them are there because their mothers were not qualified to train them mentally or morally? If those mothers had been thoroughly educated, and, also, under the dominion of Christian principle, who knows but some of the inmates of that prison might have sat in the national councils or proclaimed the gospel of the Son of God? The influence of a mother is powerful for good or powerful for evil.

Ordinarily the conversion of children is traceable to the influence of pious mothers rather than godly fathers. This may be owing to the fact that mothers not only make the first impressions, but have constant opportunities of renewing those impressions. Or it may be because there is something

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more tender in a mother's love—something more melting in the tones of a mother's voice—something more irresistible in a mother's tears—something more sympathetic in a mother's heart—something more efficacious in a mother's prayers. However the fact is to be accounted for, it must be conceded. And this brings up the subject of female responsibility. How great is this responsibility? Its greatness is seen in its connection with the salvation of immortal souls. The value of the soul defies all calculation. There is no means by which its worth can be computed. When the science of numbers is bankrupted, the problem still remains unsolved. What is the value of the soul? And it must not be forgotten that during this short life, the question of the soul's salvation is to be settled. Interests of infinite magnitude are connected with man's earthly existence. The soul, in leaving the body, goes into the realms of eternal light, or into the regions of eternal darkness. It goes up to shine as a gem in the mediatorial crown of Jesus Christ, through endless ages, or down to perdition to feel that anguish which it is not the province of language to describe. Now what I say is that maternal influence has much to do with the happy or miserable destiny of immortal souls. I know of but one class of human beings, who occupy a more responsible position than mothers, and they are ministers of the gospel. It is their special business to labor for the salvation of souls.

My argument is, that as the responsibilities of woman are so great—as these responsibilities are inseparable from the best interests of this world—as they are connected with the welfare of deathless spirits and the retributions of an eternal state; female education should be thorough, that woman may exert as effective an influence as possible. Let no one say that intellectual culture is incompatible with piety. It is not. One of the best of English poets has said as truly, as beautifully,

Piety has found friends in the friends of science;
And true prayer has flowed from lips
Wet with Castalian dews.

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There is not, indeed, a necessary connection between piety and liberal mental culture, nor is there such a connection between ignorance and piety. I endorse the sentiment, that "educated mind rules the world," and, therefore, education is an important means of influence and usefulness. The educated woman is, through her mental training, better prepared to meet her responsibilities; and if pious, as she ought certainly to be, better prepared to do good in the world by her gentle but decided recommendation of the religion of Jesus Christ. And then, too, she has resources of enjoyment on which to draw at all times. She can endure "a rainy day." It is not necessary to her happiness to be always in company. She loves books and holds high intellectual fellowship with the mighty dead and the distinguished living. Look at her eye. It beams with intelligence, and when she opens her lips she says something worthy of remembrance. She may pass through adversity—poverty with all its inconveniences may be hers—but she has a treasure that cannot be taken from her—and amid surrounding gloom and darkness she shines beautiful as a bright star in the diadem of night.

Mr. President, I trust that you and your associates will long have the opportunity of showing here what thorough female education is. I hope you will be spared the pain and the vexation of having your pupils go forth with only *Sophomoric* attainments. Let thorough female education be the motto of this Institution, and let a Diploma given here be no ordinary proof of scholarship. May it be said of many a young lady in years to come, "She must be a good scholar, for she is a graduate of Mary Sharp College." Mr. President, may great success attend your arduous labors, and may you have the high satisfaction of knowing that you have done your part in elevating the too long depressed standard of female education.

Young ladies, a few words to you. Take the full course of study here. Ask your fathers to gratify your thirst for knowledge. Or if you hesitate to do this, you have only to get your mothers to plead your cause. They will succeed, and by their success prove the truth of what I have attempted to show—the influence of woman. I hope none of you will say,

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“What is the advantage of Latin or Greek? What is the value of Mathematics? What is the utility of Metaphysical studies?” I do not disparage your intellects, young ladies, when I say that you cannot adequately appreciate any branch of knowledge till you become acquainted with it. And I, also, say that there is no species of knowledge in the wide realm of literature and science which may not be useful to you.

Young ladies, you will be going forth year by year from this Institution, to mingle in the busy world. Some of you go forth to-day, and others will do so a year hence. You have formed attachments here which will, I trust, be lasting as life. You will ever rejoice to hear of one another’s happiness and prosperity. After many eventful years of your lives will have passed away, some of you, not all, may meet again. Providence will have dispersed you, and death will have thrown his darts among you. And those of you who come together will sing, if the emotions of your bursting hearts will allow:

We are scattered, we are scattered,
Though a joyous band were we,
Some sleep beneath the grave sod,
And some are o’er the sea;
And time hath wrought his changes,
On the few who yet remain,
O, the joyous band that once we were,
We’ll never be again.

Young ladies, while looking upon the scene of youth and beauty before me today, I have felt an involuntary regret that you are mortal. May Heaven forgive the regret. I have felt sad in thinking that those sparkling eyes must be closed in death—those blooming cheeks bereft of their roses—those lovely forms prostrate beneath the stroke of mortality. But so it must be. The grave is before you. There is no escape from death. How important, young ladies, that you be Christians! Then death can do you no harm. The stroke of mortality that sends your bodies to the grave will send your souls to Paradise. Nor will the grave retain perpetual

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possession of your bodies. The resurrection day will come. How triumphantly will you then leave your mansions in the dust. Mortality will then put on immortality. In your glorified bodies you will stand in the presence of God and raise high your hallelujahs to his name.

Young ladies, it is “my heart’s desire and prayer to God” that you may all share richly in the blessings of redemption through Jesus Christ.

**IN OBEYING THE
DICTATES OF CONSCIENCE
DO WE NECESSARILY DO
RIGHT?**



**BY
JAMES MADISON PENDLETON**



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IN OBEYING THE DICTATES OF CONSCIENCE

DO WE NECESSARILY DO RIGHT?

What is conscience?" is a question to which various answers have been given. By Webster, the prince of lexicographers, it is defined to be "internal or self-knowledge, or judgment of right and wrong; or the faculty, power or principle within us, which decides on the lawfulness and unlawfulness of our own actions and affections, and instantly approves or condemns them."

Wayland, in his "Moral Science," says: "By conscience, or the moral sense, is meant that faculty by which we discern the moral quality of actions, and by which we are capable of certain affections in respect to this quality."

John Dick, in his "Lectures on Theology," referring to conscience, uses this language: "It is that faculty which perceives right and wrong in actions, approves or disapproves of them, anticipates their consequences under the moral administration of God, and is thus the cause of peace or disquietude of mind."

It would be unbecoming in the writer of this article to deny the correctness of these definitions, but he entertains some doubt as to their perfect accuracy. Whether conscience is a "judgment of right and wrong"—whether it "*decides* on the lawfulness or unlawfulness of our own actions and affections;" whether it "*discerns* the moral quality of actions"—whether it "*perceives* right and wrong in actions"—

may be questioned. It is not perfectly certain that conscience is a judging, deciding, discerning, perceiving faculty. Man possesses understanding and judgment. The understanding furnishes the judgment with materials on which to act. It supplies facts for examination and adjudication. These facts are decided on by means of the light afforded by the understanding. Where and how the understanding gets this light, is a question not now to be discussed. There can be no action of the judgment without precious action of the understanding. There can be no judgment without understanding. Now, while the judgment is dependent on the understanding, the conscience is dependent on the judgment. The nature of its action results from the antecedent action of the judgment. Let the judgment, supplied with facts and light by the understanding, decide that a thing is right or wrong, and conscience approves or disapproves accordingly. This is its province. It approves or disapproves, and it is questionable whether it can perform any other operation. Those who make it perceive, discern and decide, make it, as it appears to the writer, an intruder in the domain of judgment. If conscience decides that a thing is right or wrong, what does judgment do? I insist that it is the province of judgment to decide. Whether its decisions are right or wrong is another matter. They may be wrong—they are often wrong—but when the judgment gives its decision that an act is right, though it may in truth be wrong, conscience utters its voice of approval. There is, therefore, no more infallibility of conscience than of judgment. The liability of the two faculties to err is precisely equal; and when the judgment errs the conscience endorses the error. This fact is susceptible of almost endless illustration. It has been often exemplified in the aborigines of this country. The sentiment prevails among them, in their savage state, that if a father is killed, it is the duty of his posterity to avenge his death. Let a son direct an arrow to the murderer's heart—let that arrow drink up the life's blood—and there is no compunction of conscience. On the other hand conscience approves the deed. The cruel descendant of the dead father felicitates himself on the performance of an act involving, as he supposes, considerations of filial duty. Why is this?

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Because the judgment, very scantily supplied with light by the understanding, has given a wrong decision; or rather, I should say, that the decision of successive generations from an immemorial period, (and consequently a part and parcel of Indian common law,) is that a son ought to avenge a father's death. This is considered the proper rule of action, and conscience approves whatever is done in accordance with it. Where the gospel has been introduced among the Indians, the law of revenge, in its savage mode of operation, has been repealed. Superior light has shown its objectionable features. The judgment, illuminated with spiritual knowledge, decides that there is a different standard of right, and conscience condemns what it approved before.

The time was when infanticide prevailed to a great extent in the East Indies. The sentiment was popular that it was right, in certain circumstances, at least, for mothers to put their infant children to death. How this sentiment originated is not material to enquire. It was an expression of the judgment of the people relative to this point. Their rule of right required it. And doubtless there was many a conflict between maternal feeling and conscience. The poor mother, dreading the accusations or conscience, suppressed and sacrificed her feelings of love for the child of her bosom, and deprived of life the infant to which she had recently given birth. Conscience spoke in tones of approbation, and in this way the lacerated heart was made whole. Very different views of infanticide now prevail in the East Indies. This is owing to the introduction of the gospel and the consequent diffusion of the elements of true civilization among the people. Conscience now protests against that which, years ago, would have secured its approval. Why? A different standard of right is recognized. Conscience can now approve that alone which comes up to this standard.

Saul of Tarsus was a conscientious man—perhaps not less so than Paul the Apostle. Referring to the period when he was so prominent a persecutor of the saints, he says “I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison,

having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.” This was the highest order of conscientiousness. “I verily thought, etc.” Saul supposed that Judaism was the true religion, and that Christianity, if it prevailed, would supersede it, and render it obsolete. Hence the suppression, and even the extermination of Christianity, was to him matters of great importance. Believing these objects could be most effectually accomplished by persecution, he engaged in the diabolical work—shut up the saints in prison—and voted against them when they were put to death. He was present at the death of Stephen, and when the holy martyr fell asleep, Saul perhaps thought, if he did not say, “A good day’s work has been done. An important duty has been performed. A calumniator of Moses and Mosaic institutions has received the due reward of his deeds.” Saul’s conscience approved the mobocratic proceedings on the occasion. In him was fulfilled the prediction of the Savior: The time comes when whosoever kills you will think that he does God service.” Some will perhaps inquire, “How could any one think so?” The answer is, the understanding was darkened through the depravity and prejudice of the heart; the judgment was consequently perverted in its exercise, and gave a wrong decision, which, when executed in the martyrdom of the disciples, conscience approved. For the murders of the first Christians to secure the sanction of their own consciences, it was only necessary for them to settle the question that it was right to put the followers of Christ to death. Every man’s conscience approves what he believes is right. This results from his moral organization and the fact can be traced no farther. It is so because God has been pleased thus to constitute every moral agent.

The history of Saul of Tarsus—afterwards Paul the Apostle—gives a negative answer to the question at the head of this article. We do not of necessity do right in obeying the dictates of conscience. Hence Paul in referring to the fact that he was, before his conversion, “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious,” adds, “but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” His ignorance

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palliated in some degree, the atrocity of his crimes, but it neither excused nor justified them. This is seen in the fact that he obtained *mercy*. He would not have needed mercy if his course had been justifiable. Even in his old age Paul said, "I am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." Ah! That work of persecution! It was Paul's most painful reminiscence. He even thought of it with shame and mortification. So far from justifying himself, his self-reproach was most bitter. After his conversion his conscience condemned that which it had before approved, and approved that which it had before condemned. He has new views of Christianity—new views of Judaism—new light in his understanding—new facts and principles to guide his judgment—he had a new heart—all things had become new—and consequently conscience acted as it had never done before. The Apostle before his conversion was a conscientious sinner, and after it a conscientious saint. At the two periods of his life he exemplified what he calls an "evil conscience" and a "good conscience." And he was all the while a man of unsophisticated sincerity, honestly believing he was right when he was wrong.

Here it may be asked, for it has been often asked, "Can it be right to act in opposition to the dictates of conscience?" The answer is, No. For such an action is necessarily believed to be wrong, whether it is wrong in itself or not. It cannot be right for a man to do what he believes is wrong. And just here originates a practical fallacy, the influence of which is very extensive and injurious. If it cannot be right to do what is believed to be wrong, the conclusions with thousands is, that it cannot be wrong to do what is believed to be right. Thus, in the so-called religious world, sincerity is the "boat in which is embarked as motley a crew as Charon ever ferried across the river Styx." The sentiment is so preposterous as to call for the *reduction ad absurdum* process of reasoning. Suppose a thousand men think it right to do a thousand different things, it makes all those things right! Who can believe it? The things conflict and antagonize and how can they all be right? There can never be antagonism between

things that are right. Does a belief in the authority of tradition make it right to act according to the teachings of tradition? If so why did Jesus tell the Pharisees that they “transgressed the commandment of God *through the tradition* of the elders”? Sincerity never yet sanctified erroneous belief. The more sincerely an error is believed, the more pernicious is its operation. For example, there are hundreds of impenitent sinners who sincerely believe that they are in no great danger of losing their souls. They are, however, in great danger. If they believed it they would seek salvation. The more sincere they are in the belief that they are not in any great danger; the more certain will be their neglect of salvation. It follows, therefore, that their sincerity is ruinous in proportion to its intensity.

But the capital objection to the sentiment I am opposing is that it nullifies the Bible. A dozen persons may believe that a dozen different courses of action are right, and all these courses may be at variance with the Bible and according to the doctrine under consideration, they are all right! If so, the Bible is reduced to a perfect cipher. No sentiment can lay claim to truth which nullifies the word of the living God.

There are thousands in Pedobaptist societies who, no doubt, sincerely believe that the baptismal, or, rather, *rantismal*, waters applied to them in infancy, supersedes the necessity of baptism upon a profession of faith in Christ. They sincerely believe that pouring or sprinkling is the baptismal action, because the Holy Spirit is said to be poured out, and the blood of Christ is said to be sprinkled. Many among Pedobaptists, it is true, are not so certain of these things. Still, let perfect sincerity be accorded to the masses of them. Does their belief that it is right to baptize an infant make it right? Does their belief that infant baptism should supplant believers' baptism make it right that it should? Does their belief that it is right to pour or sprinkle water rather than immerse in it make it right? All these questions must receive a negative answer. Some one will possibly say, “Does a belief that immersion is right make it right?” I answer, no. If it is not enjoined in the word of God, though its propriety was universally acquiesced in, it would not make it right.

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The Bible is the supreme standard of right. What accords with its teachings is right, and no belief of men or devils can make it wrong. Whatever conflicts with its teachings is wrong, and the most conscientious and energetic espousal of it can never make it right. There is no process by which wrong can be transmuted into right.

A question of great practical importance may be presented as appropriate here as in any other connection. It is this: If it is always wrong to act in opposition to the dictates of conscience, how can it ever be wrong to act in accordance with its dictates? I answer that the criminality of the action in the latter case arises more from previous failure to enlighten the conscience than from any other cause. Perhaps I can explain what I mean by saying that a drunken man is less to blame for being in a *state of drunkenness* than for drinking the pernicious liquor which induces that state. Indeed, some have supposed that while there is deep criminality in drinking the intoxicating cup, there is no criminality in *being drunk*—the drunkenness resulting necessarily from the drinking. The laws of the land, however, do not excuse the acts of a drunken man. He is not regarded an irresponsible agent, but is held accountable for his deeds.

There are two kinds of ignorance—the one voluntary, and therefore criminal—the other involuntary, and consequently excusable. There are thousands in our own country who scarcely have a correct idea of the way of salvation through Christ. Why? Because on this subject they prefer ignorance to the knowledge. They are willingly and perversely ignorant. They will be held accountable for the ignorance on the last day. They have access to the Holy Scriptures which are able to make wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. But they read not the sacred volume. They might hear, but will not hear the gospel preached. Who does not see that their ignorance is willful, and therefore, culpable? So far as the benighted heathen are concerned, having never heard of Christ, their ignorance of the way of salvation through him is involuntary, and therefore, they will never be condemned for rejecting the gospel, however certain and

however righteous their condemnation will be on other accounts. Where ignorance prevails the understanding is darkened. And where ignorance is criminal the darkness of the understanding is criminal. There are passages of Scripture which refer to a want of understanding as involving guilt and to the attainment of knowledge as the most excellent acquisition. It has been shown already that the judgment is dependent in its action on the light which the understanding supplies. If, therefore, there is so much darkness in the understanding that it cannot supply sufficient light, the decisions of the judgment will be wrong. At any rate, they can only be accidentally right.

Another fact is to be taken into account. The depraved affections of the heart exert an unfavorable influence on the judgment. Depravity has to do directly with the heart, rather than the intellect. The intellect, however, like the body, cannot escape the effects of depravity, because it cannot escape the influence of the heart. A depraved heart has biased the judgment ten thousand times. On this principle, judges are forbidden in scripture to receive gifts. Bribes are supposed to divest judicial action of impartiality and fairness. Now, if the judgment is, on moral subjects, under the influence of the heart—and if it can be shown that we are responsible for the state of the heart—it follows that we are responsible for the decisions of the judgment, because they are induced by the disposition of the heart. The idea of holding man accountable for the disposition of his heart has been ridiculed, but there is no argument in ridicule. Human governments hold their subjects responsible for the state of their hearts, provided it is indicated by word or deed. Hence in suits of slander, and in trials for murder, there is always a special effort to prove malice. The object is to show the state of the heart as clearly as possible. And if it is proved that the state of the heart was such that malice dwelt there and prompted the words or acts, a verdict is returned accordingly. The whole matter turns on the state of the heart. In the administration of human government no one denies the strict rectitude of this principle, and there can be no good reason for questioning its justice in the divine government. God

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looks at the heart. He knows its disposition. He understands its purposes and feelings, whether they are developed in words and actions or not. The first and great commandment of the law is, "You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." Man is then, manifestly, under obligation to love God. If so, he sins in not loving him, for he violates the obligation. He is responsible for its violation, and is, therefore, responsible for the disposition of his heart; for his failure to love God is traceable to the disposition of his heart, and inseparable therefrom. There is no difficulty in loving God, except that which arises from the depraved state of the heart. The moral quality of all external acts of obedience is determined by the motives which prompt those acts. In other words, it is determined by the disposition of the heart, which imparts purity or contamination to the motives. So that it is evident that if man is not responsible for the state of his heart, he is not responsible for his motives; and if irresponsible for his motives, irresponsible for the words and deeds proceeding therefrom—consequently, responsible for nothing, and released from all allegiance to the God of heaven. These results must certainly follow the denial of man's responsibility for the state of his heart.

Nor is this all: There is in sin a hardening influence. Simple habits grow in strength, and are confirmed as the disposition becomes more and more alienated from God and holiness. If when man feels no disposition to love God he is not responsible for it, but excusable on the ground of indisposition, it follows that the stronger his indisposition the farther he is removed from responsibility. So that the less inclination he feels to love and serve God, the less guilty he becomes, which is absurd.

Man is responsible for the disposition of his heart—and if the state of his heart influences his judgment, he is responsible for the decisions of his judgment—and if his judgment controls the action of his conscience, he is under obligation to possess such a conscience as approves whatever is right, and condemns whatever is wrong—God's word being the

standard by which right and wrong are to be determined. It will be seen, therefore, that persons may sincerely follow the dictates of their consciences, and at the same time sin against God. Conscience is not sufficiently enlightened, because the judgment has given wrong decisions—and those decisions are to be traced either to imperfect facts furnished by the understanding to be adjudicated upon, or to the biasing influence of a depraved heart. If the understanding is not adequately illuminated, it is because the light of divine truth has not been allowed to pour its full splendor upon it—so that the partial darkness is criminal darkness. If the state of the heart is such that its depravity exerts a pernicious influence over the judgment, that influence, through the judgment, reaches the conscience and vitiates its operations. When this is the case, it is sinful to do what the conscience approves, because it approves what is really wrong, though the judgment has decided that it is right.

A second reference may here be made to Saul of Tarsus. In the plenitude of his conscientiousness, he “verily thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” Why did he think so? Because he had not given the prophecies relative to the Messiah an unprejudiced and impartial examination. His investigations were conducted under the controlling influence of a wrong state of heart. In consequence of his depravity and carnality, he was enamored of the idea of a magnificent worldly kingdom, and this false view excited his antipathy to “the man of sorrows”—the humbled and crucified Jesus of Nazareth. He overlooked the prophecies pertaining to the Messiah’s humiliation, and concentrated his attention exclusively on those descriptive of his glory. This course was induced by the disposition of his heart—his judgment was warped—and his conscience approved the wrong. He, therefore, thought that he “ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” Who does not see that he came to this conclusion because the disposition of his heart precluded a proper examination of the Old Testament scriptures? This being the case, he sinned in doing what his conscience approved. He himself, after his conversion, was

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so well satisfied of this fact that he deemed himself unworthy “to be called an apostle *because he persecuted the church of God.*” He saw that he had been the chief of sinners, even though no man in the land of Judea could boast a loftier conscientiousness. Paul’s history shows that in obeying the dictates of conscience, we do not necessarily do right.

The position maintained in this article, enables us to account for the many false doctrines and practices that prevail in the religious world.

Some sects deny the divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ. Why? Because these doctrines are not taught in the word of God? By no means: but because the scriptures teaching them are unfairly and unfaithfully interpreted. Prejudice, it may be, acts a prominent part in the interpretation. Hereditary prepossessions may exert their influence. Above all, the pride of the carnal heart is called in exercise. This pride prompts its possessor to say, “I will believe no doctrine which I cannot comprehend. I cannot see how Jesus is both God and man. I, therefore, reject his divinity.” Nor is this all: Any man can see that if the doctrine of the atonement is true, he is a lost, helpless, guilty sinner, and that salvation is of grace. But salvation by grace implies the justice of man’s condemnation. For if his condemnation were not just, he might claim release from it as a matter of debt and not of grace. Now this feature of the gospel salvation—its gratuitousness—is peculiarly offensive to the proud, carnal heart. It is positively repulsive until the heart is humbled. How easy, then, to see that the prejudice and pride of the heart control the judgment, and that the judgment controls the conscience! And who will say that those who repudiate the divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ, for the reasons suggested, are guiltless? They are intensely culpable.

Some persons entertain very disparaging views of the works of the Holy Spirit in regeneration; and others discard the necessity of regeneration altogether. Can this be accounted for? Most certainly. The self-satisfaction of the natural heart has much to do in the matter. It is evident that if the Holy Spirit in regenerating the heart performs a work so

radical and marvelous that it may be called "a new creation," the heart itself must be fearfully depraved. Self-love is unwilling to make this admission. The heart, under the influence of self-flattery, protests against it, and if the Holy Spirit's agency in regeneration is recognized, the recognition is nominal rather than real. When the necessity of a change of heart is denied, it is of course assumed that the heart is right. This assumption is the offspring of pride. Hence it is manifest that the disposition of the heart leads, through the perversion of the judgment and conscience, to the espousal of these false sentiments.

There are many who deny the future punishment of the wicked. Why is this? They will not listen to all that God says. They magnify as they think, the benevolence of God, and at the same time cast a shade on his veracity, and depress the rectitude of his administration. They say that God is too good to punish his creatures, and are strangely forgetful of the fact that he is too good to lie. They flatter themselves that he will not punish sin because they wish to live in sin. Men are so constituted that they very often believe what they wish to believe. This sentiment is as old as the days of Julius Caesar. God is represented in one passage of Scripture, as "sending men strong delusion that they may believe a lie"—that is, he permits them to be deluded. In every such case men no doubt wish to believe, and try to believe, the particular lie which God finally suffers them to believe. The wickedness of their hearts originates the process by which they are led, through the corruption of the judgment and the contamination of the conscience, to believe a falsehood. I see not, in this case, why they may not be perfectly sincere in their belief. I can easily imagine them the subjects of a conscientiousness worthy of a belief of the truth. I can readily conceive how such men can "die with a lie in their right hand." But who will say they are blameless? Who will assert that they are not culpable, though they have reached a point at which to believe the truth is a perfect moral impossibility? How have they reached that point? is the question. Every step they have taken has involved them in criminality, and now, in the position they occupy, there is

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a concentration of all the criminality of the successive steps in their progress. They sincerely believe a life, and are *tremendously* blamable for it.

There are various Pedobaptist sects. They are distinguished, of course, for the baptism of infants. In the composition of their churches, improperly so called, the element of infant membership is not only tolerated, but in most cases is the predominant element. They seem not to see that this arrangement is subversive of the fundamental principles of New Testament church organization. They are sincere, many of them, no doubt. Their consciences approve when they have their children baptized, and would condemn them were the ceremony omitted. Why are they sincere in their faith and practice? Because they look through the Abrahamic mazes of the covenant of circumcision in deciding who are entitled to a New Testament ordinance. There can never be a sensible settlement of the question in this way. Are Pedobaptists without fault before God in this matter? They cannot be. They may be sincerely honest, but they are blamable. Every man under the sun, who goes to the Old Testament to ascertain who are proper subjects of New Testament ordinances, is emphatically reprehensible. There is surely nothing in religion which requires the principles of common sense to be trampled under foot. Pedobaptists are to blame because they lay down what may be called *Jewish premises*, and attempt to draw *Christian conclusions* from them. Such a course will ever vitiate their reasoning. They will never become evangelic logicians in this way. It is their duty to take the word of God and interpret it without prejudice or partiality. Let them do this, and their consciences will as certainly condemn infant baptism as they now approve it.

As to what is termed the mode of baptism, a few things may be said, in conclusion. It is the strangest of strange things that there has ever been any controversy on the subject. Olinthus Gregory once remarked, "It is the only subject in the whole range of theology which has all the evidence on one side." The baptismal action is certainly immersion. No unprejudiced person would ever come to any other conclusion

from reading the New Testament. The arguments in favor of Socinianism, Pelagianism and Universalism, are much more plausible than those in favor of the substitution of pouring and sprinkling for baptism. The man who can, from the New Testament, prove pouring and sprinkling to be baptism need not stop there. By the same logic he can prove that every one of the doctrines of the gospel is false. He can show that the whole scene of crucifixion on Calvary was a phantom, and thus take from the world its cross and its hope. He can demonstrate that immortality is a dream, and that heaven and hell are fables. He can enable atheism to say with greater confidence, "There is no God."

Why do Pedobaptists attempt a thing infinitely impracticable? How can they be sincere in their views of baptism? Some say, "Jewish Analogy" favors sprinkling; and others say that pouring is required to represent the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. Many admit that though *baptize* in classic Greek means immerse, it has a different meaning in the New Testament. They seem to forget that if this is true, the scriptures, so far as baptism is concerned, are not a revelation from God. What is the great difficulty with Pedobaptists on the mode of baptism? They are unwilling to apply the plain principles of interpretation to the term *baptizo*. They have inherited from their fathers partialities for their views and practices. The pride of consistency keeps many of them from embracing the truth. Others remain where they are, because they do not consider Baptists as belonging to the aristocracy of the age. Various influences are at work. Let Pedobaptists take the word of God as their only guide. Let them no longer reverence "Confessions of Faith," "Disciplines," "Prayer Books," and "Traditions." Let them hearken to the voice of the living God in his holy oracles. Let them open their minds and hearts to the reception of truth. Let them go wherever truth leads them. Let them "buy the truth and sell it not"—buy it at any price and sell it at no price. Then their consciences, enlightened by the infallible word of God, will approve what is really right, and condemn what is really wrong. But while they suffer any thing to prevent an honest and impartial

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investigation of the holy Scriptures—however sincerely they may adhere to their present errors—the adherence is sinful. They may follow the dictates of their consciences, but they are culpable in doing so. For it is not, of necessity, right to obey the dictates of conscience. Here I cannot resist my inclination to quote from Dr. A. Alexander's "Moral Science," in confirmation of the position I have attempted to establish. He says, "It is true, if a man's conscience dictates a certain action, he is morally bound to obey; but if that action is in itself wrong, he commits sin in performing it, nevertheless. He who is under fundamental error, is in a sad dilemma. Do what he will, he sins. If he disobeys conscience, he knowingly sins; doing what he believes to be wrong; and a man never can be justified for doing what he believes to be wrong, even though it should turn out to be right. And if he obeys conscience, performing an act which is in itself wrong, he sins; because he complies not with the law under which he is placed. It may be asked, 'How can a man be responsible in such circumstances, when he is under a necessity of doing wrong?' We are responsible for suffering ourselves to be brought into such a state; we are responsible for our ignorance of the truth. Hence, we see how important the duty of seeking after the truth with untiring diligence, and honest impartiality. The same necessity is found to arise from forming bad habits and cherishing evil passions. The heart in which envy to another has been indulged until it has become habitual, cannot exercise kind and brotherly affections to that person; but this is no excuse. The fault may be traced far back, but guilt is attached to every act of envy, however inveterate the habit. If this were not so, the greater the sinner, the less his responsibility.

"The objection to making a man responsible for his opinions is that his belief does not depend upon his will, but results necessarily from the evidence existing before the mind at any moment. This is true; but we may turn our minds away from the evidence which would have produced a conviction of the truth. And this is not all; there may be such a state of mind, that evidence of a certain kind cannot be perceived. Depravity produces blindness of mind, in regard to the

beauty and excellence of moral objects. But every man ought to be free from such a state or temper of mind as produces distorted or erroneous views. Surely moral depravity cannot be an excuse for erroneous opinions. All actions proceed from certain principles. If, therefore, the action is wrong, because of the corrupt principle, the burden of culpability must be rolled back upon the principle, or state of the soul, which sends forth evil acts, as a poisoned fountain sends forth deleterious streams. Metaphysical reasoning, however, rather perplexes and obscures, than elucidates such points. Let us hold fast by the plain principles of common sense, and appeal to the common judgment of mankind; and the decision will be, that ignorance of error, which might have been avoided, never excuses from blame.

“The same is true of all evil habits and inveterate passions, which have been voluntarily or heedlessly contracted. The whole course of a moral agent must be taken together; his moral acts are complicated and intimately connected. They are a web in which one thread is connected with another, and one serves to give strength to another. If we honestly consult our conscience, we feel guilty when we have done wrong, even though we did it ignorantly; because we ought not to have been in ignorance.

“Two things, therefore, are necessary, in order to determine that an action is right: First, that the state of mind of the agent be such as it ought to be; and secondly, that the action be in conformity with the law under which we are placed; for the very idea of morality supposes us to be under a moral law.

“While, then, we cannot do better than obey conscience, yet if conscience is erroneous, we do not fulfill our duty by such obedience, but may commit grievous sin. For, following the dictates of conscience is only one circumstance essential to a good action. When we do wrong while obeying the dictates of conscience, the error does not consist in that obedience, but in not following the right rule, with which rule the accountable moral agent should be acquainted.” (Moral Science, 69–72)

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Dr. Alexander was one of the great men of his generation, and the views so lucidly and forcibly expressed in the foregoing extract, shows conclusively that in obeying the dictates of conscience, we do not necessarily do right. There is a practical importance attached to this subject, of which, it is painful to say, thousands have no adequate conception.

**THE ATONEMENT
OF
CHRIST**



BY

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THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST

What God has sent his Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins is the capital fact of the gospel and the wonder of the universe. It is a fact of the possibility of which no finite mind would, without a divine intimation, have ever conceived. When man sinned, his redemption by the incarnation and death of the eternal Word suggested itself to no angel before the throne. Angels had seen their fellows who kept not their first estate cast down to hell, and how could they anticipate for man a different destiny? They doubtless expected the curse of God to follow in the footsteps of transgression. Who could have supposed that while rebellious angels were left to suffer the consequences of their fall, provision would be made for guilty man's recovery from the ruin of his fall, and for his final elevation to the enjoyment of a glory far surpassing that of Eden? Who can explain the philosophy of these facts in the divine administration?

Not Gabriel asks the reason why,
Nor God the reason gives.

These proceedings, in which are mysteriously combined the elements of the awful and glorious, remind us that it is Jehovah who says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." In what God does there should be, on the part of his creatures, a reverential acquiescence. The language that becomes them is, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in your sight."

The term redemption is applicable to fallen men, not to fallen angels. The gospel announces "good will to men." The cross was erected that sinners of Adam's race might be saved; and that cross stands in isolated grandeur, invested with a glory all its own. It attracts the attention and excites the admiration of all holy beings. It is the exponent of the divine character—the vindicator of the divine attributes. It is the sinner's only refuge—his only hope. Every redeemed soul may well say with Paul. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The atonement of Christ is a subject of profound interest—too copious to be exhausted in time or in eternity—and intimately connected with the glory of God and the salvation of men.

Our object in this article is to present a few thoughts, in a plain manner, on the atonement of Christ. We notice

THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT

The term *atonement* is used once in the New Testament. It is found Rom 5:11, "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the *atonement*." This passage, according to the present meaning of atonement, teaches a theological error. We, that is Christians, are represented as receiving the atonement. This is not strictly true. We receive the benefits of the atonement, but the Lawgiver receives the atonement. The original word ought to have been translated *reconciliation*, and, in Heb 2:17, the phrase "to make reconciliation for," ought to have been, "to atone for, or expiate the sins of the people." To have rendered the original active verb *to reconcile* would have startled the translators. To *reconcile the sins* of the people would not do. Hence the translators employed the phrase, "to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." The term atonement was used by Shakespeare to signify reconciliation, and it is probable King James' translators intended to employ it in this sense, Rom 5:11. And yet it seems that in the Old Testament they used it to denote expiation as in the following passages: "To make an atonement for your souls."

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“And Aaron will bring the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself and will make an atonement for himself, and for his house, &c.” Take a censer, and put fire therein from the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them; for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun.” See Ex 30:16, Lev 16:11, Num 16:46.

In these, and in similar forms of expression, the idea seems to be that an atonement, an expiatory expedient, was resorted to as the means of effecting reconciliation. In the passage last quoted, we are informed that wrath had gone out from the Lord. This wrath was excited by the sins of the people, and before God could be consistently propitious to those who have sinned, an atonement must be made to justify the cessation of wrath and the exercise of mercy.

Though the word atonement was sometimes used two hundred years ago to signify reconciliation, this meaning has become obsolete, and it now denotes expiation, satisfaction, reparation of injury, &c. “Junius,” in his inimitable “Letters,” says, “The ministry not *atoned* for their former conduct by any wise or popular measure, &c.” Robertson, in his Charles V., says, “The life of a slave was deemed to be of so little value, that a very slight compensation *atoned* for taking it away.” Dr. Johnson inquires, “By what propitiation will I *atone* for my former gravity?” Pope says, “The murderer fell and blood *atoned* for blood.” These extracts from standard authors show that an atonement is that which repairs an injury, gives satisfaction, makes amends, &c. With this view of the import of the term let us consider the atonement of Christ. What is it? *It is the expiation of sin through the perceptive obedience and penal sufferings of the Lord Jesus.* A distinguished writer¹ has given this definition: “An atonement is any provision introduced into the administration of a government, instead of the infliction of the punishment of an offender—any expedient that will justify a government in suspending the literal execution of the penalty threatened—any consideration that fills the

¹Jenkyn on the Atonement, 1–2.

place of punishment and answers the purposes of government as effectually, as the infliction of the penalty on the offender himself would; and thus supplies to the government just, safe, and honorable grounds for offering and dispensing pardon to the offender.

This definition or description may be more concisely expressed thus: ATONEMENT is an expedient substituted in the place of the literal infliction of the threatened penalty, so as to supply to the government just and good grounds for dispensing favors to an offender.”

To this definition, in its application to the atonement of Christ, we see no objection. The atonement of Christ is certainly a provision introduced into the administration of the divine government instead of the infliction of merited punishment on personal offenders. It is an expedient which justifies the suspension of the literal execution of the penalty threatened. It is a consideration that fills the place of the personal punishment of transgressors and answers the purposes of the divine government as fully as would the infliction of the curse of the law on offenders themselves. The atonement, therefore, furnishes a just and honorable basis for the exercise of pardoning mercy. Though intended to satisfy the claims of law the atonement of Christ was a measure above law—we will not say contrary to it—but obviously above it. The law contemplated no atonement and anticipated no reparation of its dishonor and injury apart from the punishment of personal transgressors. This must have been so; for if the law had held out the idea of some expedient substitution for the personal punishment of the guilty, instead of deterring from sin, it would have encouraged its commission. The hope of escaping the consequences of sin would have been presented to every one disposed to transgress. Such a hope would have been almost a bribe to sin. The law of God being holy, just, and good could neither directly nor indirectly countenance the commission of sin; for this would have been equivalent to a defeat of the object of its own enactment. In view of these, and kindred considerations which might be presented, it is

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manifest that the atonement of Christ is a measure above law.

This atonement, as we have affirmed, is the expiation of sin through the perceptive obedience and penal sufferings of the Lord Jesus. Man's ruin was brought on him by a violation of the divine law, and his recovery from that ruin, if affected at all, must take place in a manner consistent with the law. Hence, "God in the fullness of the time sent forth his Son made of a woman, *made under the law*, that he might redeem them that were under the law." Christ was made under the law that he might render the perceptive obedience and endure the penal sufferings referred to. Man in sinning had treated the law with contempt and indignity. He had cast dishonor upon it. He had virtually said, "It is not a good law and I will not obey it—will not be governed by it." When Jesus came in the flesh, he magnified the law and made it honorable. He, by his obedience and death, removed the contempt, the indignity and the dishonor which rested on the law, and showed to the universe that it is a good law. He invested it with a moral grandeur more sublime than it possessed before its violation. He exalted it to a dignity as glorious as a full vindication of its claims could give it. The Savior said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." And an apostle teaches us that "faith does not make void, but establishes the law."

That the atonement of Christ is an expiation of sin we think clear from the following Scriptures: "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

"This is the blood of the New Testament shed for the remission of sins." "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past... that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in

Jesus." "Once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree." "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

We might multiply the passages which teach the doctrine of atonement, but it is needless. He who is not convinced by these "will not be persuaded though one should rise from the dead," and bear testimony to the expiatory nature of the death of Christ. Jesus suffered for sins—bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He had assumed our legal responsibilities. Hence, his obedience and sufferings on our account. It is worthy of remark that though Jesus suffered for sins he suffered *the just for the unjust*. There was, there could be no mutual transfer of moral character so as for Christ, while he suffered, to be *the unjust*, and those for whom he suffered, *the just*. We say this with the strongest emphasis, though as great a man as Martin Luther teaches the contrary in his commentary on Galatians. He there says that Christ became "the greatest transgressor... that ever was or could be in the world"—that he "was accursed, and of all sinners, the greatest." This is absolutely horrible, and no blind veneration for Luther's character should prevent a world-wide denunciation of so odious, not to say of so blasphemous a sentiment. When Jesus suffered God laid on him the iniquity of us all; but our iniquity was not so laid upon him as to make him a sinner. He was as holy when he hung on the cross as before he left the throne of glory. "To bear his iniquity" is a phrase of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament. It means "to suffer the consequences of his iniquity." So when our iniquity was laid on Christ he suffered the consequences of our iniquity. He was not personally *guilty*. Andrew Fuller convinced us years since that the epithet *guilty* can with no propriety be applied to Christ. The true meaning of the word suggests the idea of a

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personal crime. Is not this the understanding of everybody when a jury brings in a verdict of *guilty*? Most assuredly.

Jesus suffered in the room of sinners, but he did not become a sinner. Had he become a sinner he could not have been a propitiation for sin—could have made no expiation of sin. But he has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. His obedience and death have sustained the dignity of the divine throne—vindicated the rectitude of the divine administration—honored the perceptive and penal claims of the divine law—and opened a channel for the consistent exercise of mercy to guilty sinners. Some have supposed that the atonement of Christ was designed to exert its influence *alone* on men. This is a mistake. It exerts a sublimely important influence on the throne of God, so as to make the Occupant of the throne “just and the justifier of the believer in Jesus.” See what words the atonement puts into juxtaposition—*just as the justifier*! Without an atonement we would have heard of God as *just and the condemner*—with it we heard of him as *just and the justifier*. He justifies through the atonement the very persons whom, had there been no expiation of sin, he would have condemned forever. We refer to . . .

THE NECESSITY OF THE ATONEMENT

On this point we are not to be understood as intimating that God was under obligation to provide an atonement, or that there was any absolute necessity for guilty men to be saved. There was a perfect exemption from obligation as seen in the fact that *grace* reigned gloriously in furnishing the atoning sacrifice. The necessity of salvation was not absolute; for men, like fallen angels, might have been left to the consequences of their rebellion. Had they been so left, the eternal throne would have remained bright with the awful glory of its rectitude, and no suspicion of injustice would have attached to the divine administration. But in speaking of the necessity of the atonement of Christ we mean that it was indispensable to a consistent extension of mercy to the guilty, and, therefore, without it, there would have been no salvation for ruined man. It would be impertinent for finite

creatures to say that God, in the exhaustless resources of his infinite wisdom, might not have devised some other scheme of salvation; but if so, it is to us happily inconceivable. This is emphatically so in view of the Redeemer's prayer in Gethsemane. Oppressed with anguish and covered with bloody sweat he said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not my will but your will be done." The Savior seems for the time being to have recoiled from the awful scene of suffering before him. He prayed that the cup might pass from him, if it were possible; but he prayed submissively. We understand the agonizing Jesus to have meant this: "Father, if it be possible for your glory to be illustrated in the salvation of sinners without my death let this cup pass from me." And, as the "Father hears the Son always," we argue that if there had been any other way in which sinners could have been saved consistently with law and justice, the response to that prayer of Christ would have developed that way to the admiring view of all holy beings. The intelligences of heaven would have "shouted aloud for joy" in seeing their Lord and Master extricated from that awful scene of suffering, and agony, and blood, and death. But the cup did not pass from Christ. An angel was sent from heaven to strengthen him, but not to remove the cup from him. He drank that cup—exhausted it of all its bitterness. The evangelical conclusion from those premises is that there is salvation in Christ alone.

In referring to the atonement of our Lord it is proper to say that it was not necessary to excite the love of God to man. The atonement is the effect and not the cause of God's love to the world. Hence we read, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The love of God was, therefore, the originating cause of atonement. Jesus would not have been given up to perform the world of expiation if the divine benevolence had not first fixed its regards on our apostate race. There was love in the divine bosom—there was compassion for lost men. But without an atonement

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that love could not, consistently with law and justice, express itself in the salvation of sinners; that compassion could have no development. It is incorrect, therefore, to say that the atonement rendered God propitious to man; but it is strictly true to say that it rendered him propitious *according to law and justice*. It follows, then, that the necessity of atonement originated in the obstacles interposed by the law and justice of God to the salvation of guilty sinners. To make the matter plain: When man sinned there were two species of obstacles that opposed his salvation—*legal* and *moral*. The legal obstacles were created by the claims of the law and justice of God; the moral obstacles arose from the opposition to the heart of God. The former grew out of man's guilt and condemnation; the latter out of his depravity. But with the latter we have nothing to do in this article. The atonement contemplated the removal of the *legal* obstacles out of the way of man's salvation. It is to be remembered that the divine law has a penalty annexed to its violation. If without a penalty it would be no law. The law having been transgressed demanded the execution of its penalty, and justice concurred in the demand. The law being holy, and just, and good, holiness, justice, and goodness all combined and required the infliction of its curse. Here, then, we see that the law having been violated rose up in its terrible majesty—laid an embargo on the exercise of divine love in man's salvation—and called for the execution of its penalty. At this point the necessity of atonement clearly appears. In order to the salvation of sinners an expiatory measure must be introduced into the divine government to meet the claims of the law by preserving its honor and vindicating its penal sanctions. Justice required the introduction of such a measure, or the literal execution of the penalty of the law on personal transgressors. The atonement of Christ was the expedient adopted. It rendered satisfaction to the law and justice of God and removed the embargo from the exercise of divine love to man. It harmonized the divine perfections in the salvation of sinners. This is the glory of redemption through the cross. "Mercy and truth meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other." There is a cordial co-operation, a concurring harmony of all the divine

attributes in the salvation of the guilty. Mercy triumphs in all its glory—justice shines forth in all its majesty—holiness appears in all its beauty—while wisdom, in devising the wondrous plan, exhibits itself to infinite advantage.

And here we may say that there was a necessity for the atonement of Christ, that the character of God might be suitably developed. “Who by searching can find out God? Or know the Almighty to perfection?” These questions intimate the impossibility of a perfect knowledge of God. We may, however, learn something of him from creation and providence; but if we would know as much as the divine character as can be known, we must contemplate the atoning sacrifice of Calvary. We must look to the cross to learn about God. The man under dominion of carnal views would sooner look to the sun in his glory—to the moon in her brightness—to the stars as they sparkle in the diadem of night—to the towering mountain—to the majestic river—to the variegated landscape—to the mighty continent—or to the restless ocean to learn about God. It will not do. There are lessons to be acquired at the cross which we can learn nowhere else. God, if we may so say, unveils his character in the atonement of Jesus—he lets the universe see what is in his heart—he presides at the demonstration of the most sublime of all propositions—GOD IS LOVE. Where else have we such a view of the perfections and excellences that enter into the composition of his character? Where else are we so impressed with his veracity, his wisdom, his holiness, his justice, and his mercy? Say not that the influence of the atonement is confined to this world. All worlds, we doubt not, learn from it more of God than they ever knew before. What wonders are involved in the atoning work of Jesus of Nazareth! Had there been no sin there would have been no atonement. Had there been no atonement, we would have known less of every divine attribute than we now know, and consequently much less of the divine character. And thus it appears that the existence of sin has been so overruled as to give the universe more sublime and more exalted views of God! What a wonder is this! We are lost in its contemplation. Oppressed with its greatness, and wearied

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with the delight its glory affords, we call our thoughts from it.

THE VALUE OF THE ATONEMENT

There must be, on this point, a selection of arguments for the very good reason that only a few out of many can be presented.

The value of Christ's atoning sacrifice may be argued from the fact that it was *the antitype and consummation of all sacrifices*.

The sacrificial rite was observed for many centuries—even for four thousand years. There has been some controversy as to the origin of sacrifices. The weighty arguments are certainly on the side of their divine appointment. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive how it could without a divine communication enter into the mind of man that animal sacrifices would be acceptable to God. Man's unaided reasoning would have led him to the opposite conclusion. He would have dwelt with horror on the destruction of life. The presumption is that God immediately after the fall instituted sacrifices; for he clothed our first parents with the skins of animals. These animals, we know, were not killed for purposes of food, because animal food was not allowed till after the flood. The probability, therefore, amounting almost to certainty, is that the animals were slain for sacrifice. Abel, we are informed, offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. He brought to the sacrificial altar one of the first-lings of his flock. He approached God by means of blood. Abraham offered sacrifices, and Job, supposed by many to have lived in the days of Jacob, did the same thing. At Mount Sinai there was an enlargement of the sacrificial system—many additions were made to it—and provision was made for greater regularity and solemnity in its offerings. Now all the sacrifices of the patriarchal and Jewish age prefigured the one sacrifice. The many victims pointed to *one victim*. The rivers of blood shed typified Immanuel's blood. There must have been this anticipative reference to the atoning death of Christ; for otherwise all sacrificial

regulations would have been unmeaning. With this reference there was in them an expressive significance. Now we argue the value of Christ's atonement from the fact that for four thousand years God in his wisdom caused typical atonements, effected by animal sacrifices, to be made, and thus directed attention to the death of his own Son. It cannot be supposed that preparation so expensive, and continued for forty centuries, was made for an unimportant transaction; and therefore the atonement of Christ is possessed of great value.

Another argument in favor of the worth of the atonement we derive from *the appointment of God*. While it would be a departure from truth to affirm that the value of Christ's atonement arises exclusively or chiefly from divine appointment, (and here we think Mr. McKnight and others have fallen into serious error) it is true that such appointment conduces materially to its value. This is evident because no expiatory offering could be recognized in the divine administration as possessed of requisite worth unless endorsed by divine approbation. God's anger toward sinners is to be turned away, and it is his prerogative to decide how this is to be done. Christ's atonement is divinely appointed. He is "the *Lamb of God* that takes away the sin of the world." He is the Lamb that God provided. "Him has God the Father *sealed*." History informs us that it was the custom among certain nations of antiquity to place a seal on every animal selected for sacrifice. Wherever the seal was seen it was known that the animal was destined to the sacrificial altar. God the Father sealed his Son—designated him as the Messiah—conspicuously distinguished him as Mediator—"set him forth as a propitiation." Jesus in coming into the world is represented as saying to the Father, "a body you have *prepared* me." He is also referred to as offering himself "a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor"—language which implies the acceptableness and the consequent value of the sacrifice. It is manifest from these portions of Scripture that the atonement of Christ possesses whatever value divine appointment can confer. In relying on

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this atonement, we rely on God's constituted and approved medium of salvation.

An additional argument, and decidedly the strongest, in proof of the value of Christ's atonement is furnished by *the dignity of his person*. Every sacrifice is, according to Scriptural logic, materially affected by the character of its victim. This is Paul's argument in the Epistle to the Hebrews. "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." Why? Such sacrifices were divinely appointed. We see, therefore, that divine appointment does not *of itself* give value to a sacrifice. But why could not animal sacrifices take away sins? There was a want of dignity and worth in the victims sacrificed. Hence the inefficacy of their blood. But behold the victim slain once for all. Let the intelligent universe contemplate him. Who is he? The eternal Word made flesh! The brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person! He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. He had occupied the throne of his glory from eternity. His praises began with the creation of celestial intelligences. He spoke suns, and stars, and worlds into being. With infinite ease he formed man out of the dusty of the earth. Yet, O mysterious condescension! Boundless love! He divested himself of all the insignia of heavenly glory and became the babe of the manger—the man of sorrows—the despised Galilean—the calumniated Jesus of Nazareth. He took degraded humanity into union with his supreme divinity. He is God-man, Mediator. Here is a victim of infinite dignity to be offered in sacrifice. Stupendous occurrence! No wonder it had been pointed to for four thousand years. Yes, this is a victim of suitable dignity and worth. A victim and a priest too! He offers himself without spot to God. His divinity serves as an altar and this humanity is sacrificed thereon. According to his own teaching it is the altar that sanctifies the gift, and not the gift the altar. What a scene! The Lord of glory crucified! The Sun of Righteousness in eclipse! The Mediator tasting death for every man! The Jews said that Jesus was not the Son of God. The darkened sun—the rending rocks—the opening graves—the trembling earth

spoke a different language. Nature's sympathies were intensely excited; for the dignity of the bleeding dying victim awakened those sympathies. It was the Lamb of God who died.

Now the fact that the Redeemer was divine qualified him for the work of substitution. If he had been a created being, of ever so exalted a grade, he would have been bound by the law of creation to serve God on his own account. All the services a creature can perform are *personally* due to the Creator. Had Jesus been a creature his creatureship would have imposed on him personal obligations and would have rendered it impossible for him to assume the place of others. But it is the glory of Christianity that its Author is divine. He could, therefore, place himself under a law enacted for the government of others and render satisfaction to the demands of that law. This he did, and on this fact rest the hope of our fallen race. It will be seen, therefore, that the value of Christ's atonement arises chiefly from the dignity of his character, and his dignity grows out of his divinity and is inseparable from it. Who, then, can set limits to the value of the atonement when divinity is concerned in the creation of that value?

Once more: The value of Christ's atonement is indicated by his *resurrection from the dead*.

Having assumed our place in law he surrendered himself into the hands of divine justice. Justice laid hold of him and he was held answerable for our responsibilities. In meeting those responsibilities, he must satisfy the claims of the law, in doing which he fell a victim to death. If his atoning death had not answered the demands of the law, it is morally certain that justice, instead of permitting his resurrection, would have protested against it forever. He would have been retained a perpetual captive in the realms of death. But behold him rise! He bursts asunder the fetters of mortality and comes forth from the sepulcher. Why? Because the law had been satisfied and justice laid no embargo on his resurrection. The value of his atonement is seen in his resumption of the life he laid down. When he rose God the

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Father, the Lawgiver, not only recognized his Messiahship, but openly, in the face of the universe, endorsed the validity and the value of his atonement. The triumphant Mediator ascended to heaven and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High. Hence, says Paul, "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." The resurrection of Jesus, therefore, which was preliminary to his ascension and glorification, conclusively proves the value of his atoning sacrifice. And here we may dismiss this part of the subject.

THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT

This topic, if considered in all its amplitude, would embrace the atonement in its relations to the universe. That it sustains such relations we entertain no doubt. That it has made a moral impression which has gone abroad into all worlds inhabited by intelligent beings we think it reasonable to admit. True, our utterances on this point ought not to be positive. We reason in this way: The death of Christ is the most important event that ever took place in the universe. His bleeding cross is invested with a moral sublimity to be seen no where else in the domain of boundless space. This view is certainly entertained in heaven; for "to principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the church [its redemption] the manifold wisdom of God." Angels are intense students of the mysteries of salvation. Now if the atonement of Christ is the greatest and most sublime of all transactions—if it is perfectly unique—if no analogous transaction has occurred in any world—then it cannot be unreasonable to suppose that the influence of the atonement has gone forth wherever there are intellectual and moral beings to be impressed by the exhibition it gives of the character of God, the majesty of his law, the glory of his government, the evil of sin, etc. etc.

But we will not dwell on matters which our readers may consider as involving unjustifiable speculation. The atonement in its relation to God and man more especially concerns us. And here the question of the extent of the atonement becomes intensely personal and, according to the

view of some, painfully so. The atonement has been often presented as a kind of commercial transaction—proceeding on the principal of creditor and debtor—involving so much suffering on the part of the Atoner for salvation of so many. This hypothesis implies that if it had been the divine purpose to save a smaller number than will be saved the Redeemer would have suffered less—and if to save a greater number he would have suffered more. And thus a great governmental measure worthy of God is degraded by an attempt to make it the literal payment of a debt. Analogies, like figures, must not be pressed too far. Sin can be considered a *debt* only in a figurative sense. If the atonement of Christ is a commercial expedient, which recognizes the principle of *commutative* justice, then we deny that there is any grace in releasing those for whom he died from the penalty of the law. There is no grace in their justification. How can there be? We will illustrate: If A owes B a large sum of money, which he is unable to pay, and C pays it for him, does B exercise any grace in releasing A from his pecuniary obligation? Surely not. The debt is paid and this cancels the obligation. If the atonement of Christ proceeded on strictly pecuniary principles, God displays no grace in salvation. Those for whom the debt was paid may claim, on the ground of justice, and not of grace, release from obligation. Or if there be grace at all it is the grace of the Son and not of the Father—the grace of the Savior, and not of the Lawgiver. And this shows that there must be something wrong in this view of the matter; for according to the grace of the Father, as well as of the Son and the Holy Spirit, is conspicuously displayed in salvation. There was not only grace in providing the atonement, but there is grace in releasing from condemnation through the atonement. Aye more: Though the atonement was made more than eighteen hundred years ago, those who become the recipients of its saving benefits are under guilt and condemnation till they believe in the great Atoner. We submit that this fact is not reconcilable with the doctrine of a commercial atonement. But let the atonement of Christ be contemplated as a great moral, governmental transaction which supplies an honorable basis for the consistent exercise of mercy, and all is plain. Then

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grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. The advocates of commercial atonement will, at this point, utter their protest; for they seem to consider themselves the special friends of the doctrines of grace. We think they "frustrate the grace of God," as already indicated.

The extent of the atonement has, in our judgment, an important bearing on the mediatorial constitution of the divine government. It will be admitted that this world (it is not now necessary to refer to other worlds) is under the rule of the Mediator. "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hands." "The Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son." "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." All men, the righteous and the wicked, owe their allegiance to Christ, the King in Zion. His government is, therefore, universal, and why universal? Because his mediatorial interposition in behalf of man on which his government is based had reference to the human race. It contemplated the family of Adam. Hence all men are subjects of gospel address. Hence "as in Adam all die, so in Christ will all be made alive"—that is raised from the dead. Hence all men must stand before the judgment seat of Christ and hear from his lips, "Come, you blessed," or "Depart, you cursed." And if there by any portion of our race to which the atonement has no reference that portion, we imagine, will never rise from the dead—will never be judged by him who made the atonement. We say this because we regard the atonement on the basis of Christ's mediatorial administration of the divine government.

It will be inferred that we take an enlarged view of the extent of the atonement. This will be a correct inference. As to the sufficiency of its provisions for the salvation of the whole world we entertain no doubt. On this point there should be no controversy. If, as we have attempted to show, the value of the atonement arises chiefly from the dignity of the Redeemer's character, and if his dignity results by a sublime necessity from his divinity, how impertinent to limit its sufficiency! So far as the claims of law and justice are concerned the atonement has obviated every difficulty in the

way of any sinner's salvation. In supplying an honorable basis for the exercise of mercy in one instance it supplies a basis for the exercise of mercy in innumerable instances. It places the world, to use the language of Robert Hall, "in a salvable state." It makes justification an attainable object. And this is probably Paul's meaning when he teaches us that as through the obedience of Adam "judgment came upon all men to condemnation," so through the obedience of Christ "the free gift came upon all men to justification of life." The sufficiency of the provisions of the atonement for the world's salvation is the only basis on which can consistently rest the universality of gospel invitations. Here we cannot express our views better than Andrew Fuller has done in the following language:

"It is a fact that the Scriptures rest the general invitations of the gospel upon the atonement of Christ. But if there were not a sufficiency in the atonement for the salvation of sinners without distinction, how could the ambassadors of Christ beseech them to be reconciled to God, and that from the consideration of his having been made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him? What would you think of the fallen angels being invited to be reconciled to God, from consideration of an atonement having been made for fallen *men*? You would say, "It is inviting them to partake of a benefit which *has no existence*, the obtaining of which, therefore, is *naturally impossible*." Upon the supposition of the atonement being insufficient for the salvation of any more than are actually saved by it, the non-elect, however, with respect to a being reconciled to God through it, are in the same state as the fallen angels; that is, the thing is not only morally, but *naturally impossible*. But if there be an objective fullness in the atonement of Christ, sufficient for any number of sinners, were they to believe in him; there is no other impossibility in the way of any man's salvation, to whom the gospel comes at least, than what arises from the state of his own mind." Again, "We must either acknowledge an objective fullness in Christ's atonement, sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, were the world to believe in him; or, in opposition to

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Scripture and common sense, confine our invitations to believe to such persons as have believed already.”²

The Bible represents the provisions of the atonement as universal. We quote a few passages: “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” The “all” here are the “all” who like sheep had gone astray; and the entire race had gone astray. “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” It will not do to say that what some call the “elect world” is referred to; for then it would follow, in opposition to their own views, that some of the “elect world” may refuse to believe and finally perish. “If one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all that they who live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him who died for them and rose again.” That he by the grace of God should “taste death for every man.” “And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” These passages are too plain to require comment. And in perfect consistency with such passages the offer of salvation is made to every creature. It is only necessary to refer to the commission of Christ to the Apostles: “Go you into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature: He that believeth and is baptized will be saved; but he that believeth not, will be damned.” According to this commission salvation is unquestionably to be offered to the whole race of Adam. Language could neither be more comprehensive nor more specific:—“into all the world”—“to every creature.” But the dreadful intimation is that some will not believe and by unbelief secure to themselves damnation. It must then be the duty of all to believe. Believe what? The gospel. And what is it to believe the gospel? It is so to credit its facts and truths as to rely on Christ’s atonement for salvation. Faith is said to be “in his blood”—that is, it involves trust in the atonement made by his blood. If then it is the duty of all men to believe, and if faith involves reliance on the atonement, and if the

² Fuller’s Works. American Baptist Publication Society’s Edition, Vol. 2, 691–92.

atonement was made for only a part of the race, then it follows that it is the duty of those for whom no atonement was made to rely on that which has no existence. This is an absurdity. Again, in believing in Christ we not only believe that he died for sinners, but that he died for us as included among sinners. We would not make this latter idea prominent in faith, but it is certainly essential to a joyous appropriation of the blessings of the gospel. And thus it appears that if Christ did not die for all—and if it is the duty of all to believe in him—it is the duty of some to believe a falsehood! This also reduces the matter to an absurdity.

Nor will it do to say as some have said, that “as ministers do not know who the elect are they must offer salvation to all that the elect may be reached.” But it is *God* who offers salvation through his ministers, and *he* offers it to *all*. If then the atonement was not made for all—if, as Fuller would have expressed himself, it is “*naturally impossible*” for all to whom the offer of salvation is made to be saved—then how to avoid charging God with insincerity—how to so show that he does not tantalize his creatures—how to vindicate his character—we do not know.

THE RESULTS OF THE ATONEMENT

As to these there has been a necessary anticipation of some of them. It is well, however, that they be more distinctly referred to.

The atonement gives *a glorious exhibition of the character of God*. Without it any thing like an adequate conception of the excellence of that character would have been impossible. If man had been left to perish, the veracity, the holiness, and the justice of God, would have shone forth with tremendous glory; but there would have been no display of his mercy. How could it then have been known that Jehovah is merciful and gracious? If, on the other hand, man had been saved without an atonement, the divine mercy would have been signally manifested; but what would have become of the divine veracity, holiness and justice? Would not mercy in that case have been a partiality for man—a partiality

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involving a disregard of the best interests of the universe at large? And what argument could have been employed in vindication of the truth of God when eternal death had been threatened as the wages of sin? What could have been said in proof of the immaculate purity of the divine nature if sin had been connived at? What defense of the inflexibility of divine justice could have been made if the claims of justice had been not only held in abeyance, but positively dishonored? Would not the salvation of man without an atonement have obscured the glory of the divine character and shaken the divine throne to its foundations? But the atonement of Christ places the character of God in its proper light. Every attribute is developed in greater glory than if all the world had perished without an atonement, or had been saved without an atonement. The divine veracity appears in its unimpeachable excellence—the divine holiness in its unsullied beauty—the divine justice in its awful grandeur—the divine mercy in its exuberant fullness—and the divine wisdom in its transcendent greatness. The cross develops the character of God in symmetrical glory. No one perfection obscures another, but all shine forth with united and immortal splendor. The atonement gives such an exhibition of the divine character as will employ the devout contemplations of all holy beings forever.

The atonement maintains *the dignity of the divine law*. It is the wonder of the universe that the very expedient by which the penalty of the law is remitted, in the justification of sinners, preserves the majesty of the law. Who sees any thing analogous to this in the administration of human governments?

The atonement of Jesus furnishes a more striking proof of the excellence of the law and the terribleness of its penal sanctions than does the damnation of the impenitent. The law is so perfect that it could not abate its claims in one iota when the incarnation, obedience, sufferings and death of Christ, were necessary to honor those claims. No creature can now expect to violate the law with impunity. If it did not relax its demands when Jesus died it will never relax them—never, never, never. The dignity of the law is fully vindicated

and the influence of the vindication will be eternal. The cross decides that "the law is holy, just, and good," nor will the revolutions of eternity disturb the decision. The question is so effectually settled that there is no possibility of its future agitation. The atonement has "magnified the law and made it honorable."

There results also from the atonement *a demonstration of the evil of sin*. Such a demonstration must have an important bearing on the best interests of the universe. Were the impression to prevail in all worlds that it is a trivial matter to sin against God, no finite mind could adequately conceive of the injurious effects of such an impression. The sanctions of the divine government would be materially weakened, and the consequences, in all their calamitous extent, could be known only to Omniscience. That sin is an evil we are taught by a sad variety of facts. Among these facts we may consider the expulsion of rebellious angels from heaven—the banishment of our first parents from paradise—the cursing of the earth for man's sake—the miseries that have afflicted humanity in every age—the wide-spread ravages of death in every clime—the tortures of the worm that never dies—the agonies of everlasting despair—these all, all prove the evil of sin. But if we would see proof infinitely strong and perfectly irresistible we need only look to the atonement of Jesus. With our eyes turned to Calvary we at once perceive that sin is too great an evil for God to look upon with allowance, even when it was charged by imputation to his beloved Son. When "the hour" came—the most momentous of all the hours of time—for Jesus to "bear our sins in his own body on the tree"—the Father said, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd." The Father in testimony of his infinite abhorrence of sin and displeasure against it forsook the Son of his love in whom his soul delighted. This awful desertion called forth the language, "My God, my God! Why have you forsaken me?" The atonement shows the "Exceeding sinfulness of sin," for without it sin could not be pardoned consistently with the honor of the divine government and the dignity of the law. Ah, what an evil must sin be when in order to its expiation and forgiveness it was requisite for the

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Lord of glory to be crucified! Let all intelligent beings behold in the cross the evil of sin and sensitively recoil from its commission.

Again, the atonement of Christ secures *the salvability of our race*, and justifies *the proclamation of the gospel to every creature*.

The salvability of all men does not of course mean that all men will be saved, but it denotes the possibility of the salvation of all men. And we affirm the existence of this possibility, and its existence leaves every sinner without excuse. Let no one say that without the agency of the Holy Spirit no sinner will be saved, etc. We admit it, but we have nothing to do with this matter now. We are not referring to the moral obstructions in the way of salvation, but to the legal obstructions, and these were removed by the atonement because the atonement satisfied the demands of the law. It can now be seen what we mean by the *salvability* of all men. The atonement which supplies reasons for the consistent exercise of mercy in the salvation of one sinner, furnishes a basis for its consistent exercise in the salvation of any number of sinners. And if all the world were to believe in Jesus, the great Atoner, all the world would be saved. There is a fullness of merit in the atonement amply sufficient for the whole world. That it is the atonement which justifies the proclamation of the gospel to every creature is evident from the following passage: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among *all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem." Here the sufferings and resurrection of Christ are referred to as the basis of the gospel proclamation. The sufferings of the Redeemer, which resulted in death and consummated the world of atonement, were succeeded by his resurrection. The resurrection, therefore, was a proof of the validity of the atonement, and in the absence of this proof the gospel would not have been commanded to be preached to every creature. It is, then, one of the glorious results of the atonement that it justifies the offer of salvation, in good faith, to every creature.

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Finally, the atonement secures *the actual salvation of innumerable myriads of the human race*. All who have been saved from the foundation of the world to the present time have been saved through the atonement. Old Testament saints anticipated and received its benefits by faith, and New Testament saints, looking back to the atonement as actually made, have relied on it for salvation. The millions of the race dying in infancy have doubtless been saved through the atonement without faith. How many of our race will yet be saved before the consummation of all things the science of numbers cannot compute. Earth is yet "to keep Jubilee a thousand years." We do not positively affirm, but we cannot deny, that the thousand years during which Satan is to be bound are prophetic, symbolic years. If so, every day denotes a year, and as Jewish years consisted of three hundred and sixty days, the thousand years denote three hundred and sixty thousand. Should this be the correct interpretation, through what long cycles of duration will truth and righteousness prevail in the earth! What millions and multiplied millions will bow to the scepter of the Redeemer and acknowledge him Lord of all! How extensively efficacious will be the merits of his blood! How will his atonement be appreciated, relied on, glorified in! How will his cross, now despised by multitudes, be regarded as the exponent of all that is great and sublime! Sweeter than music will be his name, and the world will be vocal with his praise. Then may it be said:

One song employs all nations, and all cry
Worthy the Lamb for he was slain for us;
The dwellers in the vales, and on the hills
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops,
From distant mountains, catch the flying joy,
Till nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.

If the symbolic interpretation of the "thousand years" is true, it may turn out, according to the views of some, that the proportion of the finally lost, as compared with the number of the finally saved, will be no greater than the proportion of

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executed criminals in a well governed Commonwealth, as compared with the number of virtuous citizens.

However this may be, there will be saved a multitude, which no man can number, out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. When this multitude will encircle the Eternal Throne, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands, and when, from all who compose it, one shout as loud as the sound of many waters will be heard—"Salvation to our God who sits on the Throne and to the Lamb"—how glorious will appear the results of the atonement! Memory will recur to the cross, and imagination will throw its joyous fancies into the future, anticipating every coming development of glory, while the actual development will far transcend the brightest picturing of the imagination. How immeasurably enlarged will then be the views of every redeemed soul in reference to the atonement of Christ—ITS NATURE—IT NECESSITY—ITS VALUE—ITS EXTENT—AND ITS RESULTS!³

³ Many works have been written on "Atonement." Some of them are valuable and others comparatively worthless. If the question were asked, "Which is the best work on Atonement?" various answers would no doubt be given. We would not hesitate to say, as did the late Dr. Sharp of Boston, "Jenkyn on Atonement is the best work on the subject extant." We are not to be understood as endorsing all the views of the Author; but we think no one can read his Book without profit. There is a rich magnificence in many of his conceptions; and those who follow him in his trains of thought will be more fully convinced than ever that the Atonement of Christ is the central fact of the gospel and the hope of the world. The volume is styled "The Extent of the Atonement in its relations to God and the Universe," and is published by Gould & Lincoln, Boston.

**CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES:
A COMPENDIUM OF
THEOLOGY**



BY

JAMES MADISON PENDLETON



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PREFACE

For several years I have thought that a small work treating theological topics in an abridged form would be useful, and have at last undertaken to prepare such a volume. My plan has been to present in a concise manner the chief subjects usually discussed at length in works on Systematic Theology.

The work lays no claim to originality. While a few ideas are my own, the substance of the volume is not new. The same ideas may be found in books written within the last three hundred years, and these ideas are expressed in my own words, except in extracts for which due credit has been given. No man who has made Theology a study for nearly half a century can possibly tell the measure of his indebtedness to the authors he has read. I can make nothing more than a general acknowledgment of my obligations.

But it has been my purpose to present the views of theologians so far only as those views accord with the teachings of the Scriptures. The Bible is the only authoritative standard in matters of faith and practice. The questions in the writing of every chapter have been, "What say the Scriptures?" "How do you read them?" Of course, the views here presented seem to me to be in accordance with the word of God, but, having had so many proofs of the fallibility of my opinions, it will not be surprising if it should be necessary to modify some of them.

Every page has been written in the interest of scriptural truth, and for its maintenance. I trust that it has not been written in vain, but that the blessing of God will go with the volume which is now sent forth.

J.M. PENDLETON

My days are passing away, and I will be soon numbered with the dead. I would not be entirely forgotten when I die. Still, my desire of posthumous fame comes with narrow limits: it amounts only to this—a wish that some, profited by the Compendium of Theology, may, when their kindness prompts them to go to my grave, thank God that I lived.

J.M.P

UPLAND, PA., April 15, 1878



CHAPTER 2

FROM CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

“THE BIBLE A REVELATION FROM GOD”

For many centuries there has been in the world a book claiming to be *The Bible*—that is, *The Book*. There is no book like to it. It has had, and still has, more earnest friends and more bitter enemies than any other. Multitudes have submitted to martyrdom rather than abjure its teachings, and have been cheered by its promises when earth has receded from their view. On the other hand, greater efforts have been made to destroy the Bible than were ever forth for the destruction of any other book. Its foes have persistently attempted to arrest its influence. Criticism has assailed it and ridicule has derided it. Science and philosophy have been invoked to discredit it. Astronomy in the disclosure of its heavenly wonders has been asked for some fact to disparage it, and geology in its researches in the earth has been importuned to throw suspicion on it.

The Bible, however, yet has a place in the world. There are more copies of it in circulation to-day than ever before. Written originally in Hebrew and Greek, it has been translated into hundreds of languages, so that poetry breathes historical truth in the words,

Dialects unheard at Babel or at Jewish Pentecost
Now first articulate divinest sounds,
And swell the universal anthem.

In view of these facts, whatever men may think of the Bible, it must be conceded that it is a wonderful book—wonderful in its effects and in its history. But different opinions are entertained as to the origin of the Bible. Some do not hesitate to assign to it a human origin. This is the position of Deists, who, as their designation denotes, believe in the existence of God. They believe also in his wisdom and goodness, but they suppose that the volume of Nature and the teachings of reason are sufficient, without such a revelation as Christians consider the Bible to be. This is a very weak point in Deism, for the system not only grants that God is good to men, but glories in it. If this be so, then it is surely reasonable to expect from him a supernatural revelation of his will. The reasonableness of this expectation grows out of the insufficiency of the light of Nature to teach men all that they need to know. The rational inference from the goodness of God is that he will not leave his creatures in comparative darkness. It is more accordant with his benevolence to believe that he has given his word to be “a lamp to their feet and a light to their path.”

It is scarcely necessary to make a distinction between Deists and Rationalists. The latter are so excessively addicted to the inculcations of reason, and attach so much importance thereto, that they reject the teachings of the Bible unless its doctrines accord with their Rationalistic views. Admitting, as some of them do, that God has spoken in his word, they, in the plenitude of their self-conceit, attempt to decide how much of what he has said harmonizes with reason. The attitude they assume is fatal to a fair and candid examination of the Bible.

In opposition to the views of Deists, Rationalists, and all kindred errorists, I maintain that the Bible is a superhuman production—that it is the book of God, properly so called, because it contains a revelation from him. Before attempting to show that the Bible is a revelation from God it may be well to refer to the necessity of such a revelation. The necessity, it may be argued, does not prove that the revelation has been given. Even so, but it creates an antecedent probability in favor of a revelation.

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The necessity of a divine revelation is suggested by such considerations as the following:

1. *Without it, there cannot be such knowledge of God as is essential to acceptable worship.* While it is true, as has been seen in the preceding chapter, that heathen nations are not ignorant of the existence of a Supreme Being, it cannot be maintained that they have sufficient knowledge of his character to render them intelligent and acceptable worshippers. The existence and the character of God are distinct from each other. His existence may be recognized when there is no satisfactory knowledge of his character. To know that God exists does not determine how he is to be worshipped. There must be knowledge of his character. His character is what he is, and we must know his character to render him acceptable service. Can his character be known without a revelation from himself? Let us see. As we may know something of what are called God's natural attributes from the proofs of his existence around us, it may be said that we are not ignorant of what may be termed his intellectual character. This is true, for we have conceptions of his wisdom, power, greatness, and of other natural attributes. But what can we say of his moral character, made up of his moral perfections? The light of Nature does not reveal it, and the deductions of man's reason do not disclose it. This, too, is the very point on which information is needed; for God, if worshipped at all, must be worshipped in his moral character. His natural perfections may excite our intellectual admiration, but cannot awaken our love. Love, however, is the central idea of worship, and there can be no true worship without it. The injunction "You will love the Lord your God," commends itself to every man's common sense. But those excellences of the divine character which excite love cannot be known without a divine revelation. Surely, then, the necessity of such a revelation cannot be denied.
2. *Without a revelation, it is impossible to fix the standard of moral right and wrong.* This point, considered in its relation to the foregoing, is too plain to need much

elaboration. Every one can see that ignorance of the moral character of God renders the adoption of a correct rule of morals impossible. What is right or what is wrong must ever depend on what God is. In his nature are found the elements of all that is right. The origin of right is traceable to the *nature* rather than to the *will* of God, though his will must be in accordance with his nature. What I mean to say is that things, strictly speaking, are not right because God wills them, but that he wills them because they are right. Whatever is in harmony with the moral character of God is right, and whatever is in conflict with it is wrong. Here, then, we see how the standard of duty is to be established among men, for their duties to one another grow out of their duties to God. The second commandment, "You will love your neighbor"—that is, thy fellow-creature—"as yourself," is like the first, "You will love the Lord your God." Obligations grow out of relations. The highest relation is that between the creature and the Creator, and therefore in this relation obligation shows its supreme strength: but there is a subordinate relation between creatures themselves, out of which mutual relation mutual duties arise. It must not be forgotten, however, that we should love our fellow-creatures primarily because they are the *creatures of God*, and secondarily because they are our fellow-creatures. Love to God inspires love to men, and prompts the performance of the duties we owe to men in the various relations of life. This we see where the influence of the Bible is felt; but if God had not given us the Bible, how could the standard of duty be known? Ignorant of his moral character, we should be utterly unable to settle the question of right and wrong. This view receives confirmation from the inadequate and variable standards of morals among ancient, and also among modern, heathen nations. Even the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, with all their mental cultivation, were very ignorant on moral subjects—a fact which shows that there is no necessary connection between intellectual culture and moral rectitude. As to modern heathen nations, our missionaries tell us that in them is

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exemplified the repulsive depravity described by Paul in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. The more their deplorable condition is studied, the more manifest will be the necessity of a revelation from God.

3. *Without a revelation, a future state must be a matter of conjecture.* Ancient philosophers speculated concerning it, some professed to believe it, some wished to believe it, and others denied it, while others still ridiculed it. Julius Caesar said in a speech in the Roman Senate—for he was an orator as well as a warrior—“To those that live in sorrow and misery death is a repose from their calamities, not a torment: it puts an end to all the evils that mortals are subject to, and beyond it there is no place left for anguish or joy.” Pliny, who lived some time after Caesar, expressed himself thus: “All men are in the same condition after their last day as before their first; nor have they any more sense, either in body or soul, after they are dead than before they were born.”¹

These two great men were doubtless representative men. Others espoused the views they advocated, and before them all was the gloomy abyss of annihilation. Some of the Greek philosophers had held substantially the same views, and one of the Greek poets had eloquently exclaimed in language which has been translated thus:

Alas! The tender herbs and flowery tribes
Though crushed by winter's unrelenting hand,
Revive and rise when vernal zephyrs call.
But we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
Bloom, flourish, fade, and fall; and then succeeds
A long, long, silent, dark, oblivious sleep—
A sleep which no propitious power dispels,
Nor changing seasons, nor revolving years.

Thus hopeless was the future to many of ancient times, and others, according to the testimony of Cicero, while reading the arguments in favor of the immortality of the soul,

¹ Quoted in Leland's *Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation*, vol. 2, 387.

accepted the doctrine, and laying down their books gave it up. If there is a future state, doubtless there will be in it rewards for the righteous and punishments for the wicked. How important, then, to be assured of such a state! Most men who think at all will ask, "Whither do we go?" as well as, "Whence did we come?" The restless spirit wants an answer to such questions. Surely it is desirable to have some assurance concerning the mysterious future; and how can it be obtained apart from revelation? "Faith is a conviction of things not seen."² But faith rests on testimony, and testimony implies a revelation from God; for he alone can testify to a future state, he being "the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity," with whom "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

With regard to a future state of rewards and punishments, it may be said that a belief in such a state supplies strong motives to stimulate to the doing of that which is right to the avoidance of that which is wrong. For, whatever theorists may say, it is practically true that self-interest appeals to men, while hope and fear are the two powerful springs of human action. A belief that the rewards and punishments of a future state will be distributed according to the characters that men form and the courses they pursue in this life cannot be otherwise than influential and salutary. But the future is dark without a revelation from God, and hence the necessity of a revelation.

4. *Without a revelation there is not an intimation of a way of salvation for sinners.* I have referred to the fact that a correct standard of right is impossible unless there is a divine communication on the subject. Light is needed from heaven. It must be remembered, however, that heathen nations have their imperfect standards of right and wrong, and that they universally fail to come up to these standards. They are therefore self-condemned. Conscience pronounces its censure and stings with its accusations. In accordance with this view, Paul says: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by

² Noyes's translation.

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nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.” (Rom 2:14–15) The excusing or approving operation of conscience is dependent on conformity to the recognized standard of right, while a departure from that standard is followed by self-accusation. That the departure and the self-accusation are universal among the heathen is evident from the universality of sacrifices. Offerings are made to propitiate their gods, and in these offerings there is a recognition of sin and of the necessity of appeasing the wrath of these gods “which are yet no gods.” I think it may be said that the benighted heathen labor under the consciousness that some moral disaster has come upon them, that some wreck has befallen their moral nature. They are aware that their moral constitution is infected by disease, but they know not of a remedy. They grope in darkness. That we may, as far as it is possible, place ourselves in their condition, let us shut out all the light we have received from the gospel on the subject of salvation. Then what could we learn from the light of Nature? There are many things recorded in the volume of Nature, but there is nothing concerning the salvation of a sinner. In the wide realm of Nature no discoveries can be made touching this infinitely important matter. No word comes from the abysses of the deep; for “The depth says, ‘It is not in me:’ and the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’” No price paid for knowledge of salvation can procure it; for “It cannot be gotten for gold, neither will silver be weighed for the price thereof.” Not a syllable is heard from the blue heavens above us or from the green earth beneath us. The whistling winds say nothing, the rolling thunders utter nothing, and the fiery lightning discloses nothing. All Nature is, as to the salvation of sinners, as silent as the grave.

Nor can human reason, in its amplest researches, find a way in which a sinner can be saved. We have seen that the moral

character of God cannot be known by the discoveries of reason, but his moral character is especially concerned in saving sinners. As moral Governor of the world he must exercise pardoning mercy if it is exercised at all, but reason cannot tell whether there is mercy in God. The truths involved in the salvation of a sinner are beyond the jurisdiction of reason. The science of redemption is a supernatural science. Without the light of a divine revelation it defies comprehension. We must not forget that salvation is a subject of infinite moment. It is invested with an importance which language was not invented to describe. This we see in listening to such questions as these: Will I be saved or lost? Will I go to heaven or hell? Will I spend eternal ages in the beatific presence of God or in hopeless exile from him? These questions will appear far more important ten thousand centuries hence than they do now. If salvation thus affects and involves man's supreme interests—interests which overleap the horizon of time and measure years with eternity—and if there is no intimation of a way of salvation for sinners without a revelation from God, the necessity of a revelation is incontrovertible.

Having attempted to show the necessity of a divine revelation, I will now endeavor to show that the Bible contains such a revelation. The two things are distinct. What reasons justify the belief that the Bible is the word of God, a revelation from heaven? In answer to this question the following things may be said:

1. *The human intellect could not produce such a book as the Bible.* It is cheerfully conceded that the capacity of man's intellect is great. The extent to which the mind may be strengthened and expanded in an unsettled question. It is unsettled, because no man can say to the mind in its high career of improvement, "To this point will you come, but no farther." It is equally foolish and false to deny that the capabilities of the human intellect are wonderful. But these capabilities can be exercised only in their proper spheres. There are doctrines taught in the Bible of which the unaided intellect of man could have formed no conception. We may take, for example, what the

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Scriptures say of God's omnipresence. They teach that he is everywhere—not that he is in different places at different times, but that he is in all places at all times. They teach that he has control of matter and of spirit, and that he is present with both; that his presence displaces neither matter nor spirit; and that there is in the vast realms of space no spot from which he is absent. He himself asks, "Am I a God at hand, says the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I will not see him? says the Lord." (Jer 33:23–24) David, solemnly impressed with the doctrine of the divine omnipresence, exclaimed, "Whither will I go from your Spirit? Or whither will I flee from your presence? If I ascend up into heaven, you are there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there will your hand lead me, and your right hand will hold me." (Ps 139:7–10)

Were not these grand ideas divinely communicated to David? Was it possible for his unaided intellect to originate a conception of them? Now that they are revealed, the mind can comprehend them only in part, and surely they did not have a human origin.

Again: What the Bible says of redemption by Christ is obviously above the invention of the human intellect. We are told that "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (John 3:16; Gal 4:4–5; Heb 2:9–10)

Can any man read these passages and say that they are the production of the human intellect? Could the thought have originated in the mind of man that God loved this perishing world to such an extent as to give his Son to become incarnate and suffer death, even the death of the cross? Could man or angel have imagined that it "became God," that it was worthy of him, to bring many sons to glory under the leadership of a Captain of salvation fitted for his position by means of sufferings? That the guilty creature should be saved at the expense of the incarnation of the Creator; that life should come to the sons of men through the death of the Son of God; that heaven should become accessible to earth's distant population by the blood of a shameful cross,—was utterly remote from all finite conception. Even when the wonder was made known by the gospel, it excited the contempt of Jews and Greeks. To the former it was a stumbling-block, an offense; to the latter it was foolishness. The Greeks were a highly cultivated people, acute in intellect, profound in philosophy, and subtle in reasoning, but they ridiculed the idea of salvation through one who was crucified. They may well be regarded as representing the possibilities of the human intellect—what it can do; and, so far from claiming the Christian doctrine of redemption as an invention of philosophers, they laughed at it as unworthy of philosophy. The facts of the gospel they rejected as incredible, because they seemed to be in positive conflict with their conceptions of reason. The point of the argument is that as intellect, which was developed so favorably among the Greeks, did not recognize the doctrine of redemption through Christ as in harmony with their philosophy, we must conclude that the doctrine is above the invention of the human intellect.

2. *Man's heart would not prompt him to make such a book as the Bible.* He has a heart as well as an intellect, and even if he were mentally capable of making such a volume, he is morally incompetent. This will appear if we consider the universal depravity of the human race. Whether men accept or reject the Bible view of the origin, the transmission, and the history of sin, they are

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compelled to admit that man's moral nature rests under the blight of some disaster. It exhibits imperfection and perversity from infancy to old age, and this it has done as far back as the records of history give us information. The power of human depravity does not exhaust itself by lapse of time and the succession of generations, but continues in undiminished strength from century to century. All the annals of the world's history bear testimony to this truth. The moral depravity of man shows itself in some diversity of manifestation, as we see in savage and in civilized lands, under different forms of government, but it is substantially the same in all climes and in all ages. It may surely be assumed as true that universal man is the subject of moral depravity that his heart is not right with God, that he loves sin, and that his tendencies are in the direction of evil. This being the case, "How is it possible to believe the Bible a human production?" It commends everything that is right and condemns everything that is wrong. It puts the seal of its approval on all that is good, and pronounces its censure on all that is evil. It inculcates supreme love to God, and universal love to men as the creatures of God. It declares all human works to be without merit, and presents salvation as the gift of God's sovereign grace. It crucifies the pride of man, placing him in the dust; it exalts the Lord of glory, placing him on the throne.

Now the questions arise, "Would man with his depraved heart be inclined to make such a book as the Bible?" Would he produce a volume in condemnation of himself? Would he, though by nature under the influence of a self-justifying disposition, declare his righteousness to be "as filthy rags"? Would his natural self-love operate so strangely? Would he become the patron of every virtue and the censor of every vice? Would he urge holiness of heart and life by the glories of an eternal heaven and the miseries of an eternal hell? If so, it would be equivalent to the emanation of a sweet stream from a bitter fountain. In the one case, there would be a violation of a fixed analogy of Nature; in the other, one of the established analogies of the moral world would be nullified.

It cannot be. The Bible is not a human production. Man's heart would not let him make such a book even if he had the intellectual ability. The latter, however, he does not possess. The argument in favor of the Bible as a divine revelation, as now presented, is in substance this: Man could not make such a book if he would, and would not if he could. The former is precluded by the condition of his intellect, the latter by the state of his heart. If, then, the Bible is not a human production, it follows that it is the book of God. There is no middle ground. The Bible tells us what no being in the universe but God knew, and therefore it contains a revelation from him. I may thus illustrate my view: A husband, being absent from home, receives a letter purporting to be from his wife. Some one, we will suppose, tries to convince him that the letter is not genuine, that the handwriting of the wife has been counterfeited. The husband knowing the expertness of counterfeiters, admits that somebody may have learned to form letters and to write words precisely as does his wife; but he says, "This letter is from my wife, because it tells me what no one except herself knows." Here he rests unmoved, feeling that he has the most solid foundation for his belief. Our faith in the Bible as a divine revelation may well and safely repose on the fact that it tells us what God alone knows. It is the word of the Lord, for the men who wrote it "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet 1:21)

3. *The person and character of Christ as revealed in the Bible prove the divine origin of the book.* As to the person of Christ, it is unique—it stands alone—there is nothing like it in the universe. The constitution of his person as the Christ results from the mysterious union in him of two natures, the divine and the human. As the Word, who "in the beginning was with God and was God," he was not the Christ. As man, possessing a human body and a human soul, he was not the Christ. But as the "Word made flesh," taking human nature into alliance with supreme Divinity, he became the Christ, the Anointed One. As the Christ, he lived on the earth, suffered in Gethsemane, died on Calvary, was buried, rose again, ascended to heaven, and there lives immortal.

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His person will undergo no change through all the boundless future. He will ever be the God-man, for the union of the two natures constituting him the Christ is indissoluble. Strange as it is, humanity is exalted and enthroned in the heavens. Such honor has never been conferred on the angelic nature. The person of Christ will be the wonder of wonders through all eternity. Who can believe that the thought of such a person as the Scriptures represent Christ to be could have entered into the mind of man, except by divine revelation? The origin of such a thought in the unaided human intellect would have been about as impossible as the creation of a world by human power.

The character of Christ is to be considered as well as his person. It was a perfect character. Nothing like it had been seen on earth. Imperfection cleaves to the best of men, and even in the strongest points of character weakness sometimes exhibits itself. For example, Abraham, remarkable for his faith, seems on some occasions not to have trusted in God fully; Moses, distinguished for his meekness, was not invariably meek; Job, proverbial for his patience, was not always patient; Peter, bold and impetuous, occasionally acted the coward; and Paul, most loyal of men to principle and truth, did a few things that are scarcely defensible. But the character of Christ was absolutely faultless and spotless. His friends, who for years were on intimate terms with him, who saw him in public places, in the social circles, and in the privacy of life, do not attribute to him a solitary imperfection. Their opinion of him obviously was that his character would bear the most scrutinizing inspection. Of Christ's twelve disciples, there were three, Peter, James, and John, who on several occasions were admitted to the intimacy of special friendship. The testimony of two of the three has been handed down to us. Peter refers to his Lord as a "Lamb without blemish and without spot," "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth;" and John uses this language: "And you know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says of him that he

“is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.” Nor can we attribute this immaculate perfection to the absence of temptation. Good men have often yielded to temptation, falling before its power, but Jesus, though “tempted in all points like as we are,” resisted and triumphed. “Without sin” are the significant words used in connection with his temptations—“tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” (Heb 4:15) The tempter no doubt employed all his ingenuity in presenting inducements to lead him to sin, but failed in every instance. Jesus himself said, “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” (John 14:30) That is, the purity of his character was so perfect that there was in him absolutely nothing responsive to the suggestions of Satan. The temptations which Christ resisted proved his moral rectitude, and were the means of displaying his glory, even as the dark clouds from which the sun emerges cause his welcome face to appear more bright.

If the person and character of Christ are what the Bible declares them to be, then the Bible contains a revelation from heaven. The argument is that the unassisted intellect of man could not have conceived of such a person and such a character, and therefore the portraiture of the person and character of Christ must be divine. If any man takes the opposite view and insists that the human intellect, without light and aid from heaven, could invent such a person and character, let him accept what follows; and this plainly follows: If the New Testament writers did, of themselves and without divine inspiration, conceive and present the person and character of Christ, they performed a greater miracle than any recorded in the Bible. He who assumes so unreasonable a position can never make a plausible objection to the most astounding miracles. It is not necessary to enlarge on this point.

The person and character of Christ, as revealed in the New Testament, prove the Bible to be of superhuman origin. If there were no other sources of proof, this would be sufficient. There is no rational way of accounting for what the Scriptures say of Christ, unless they are divinely inspired. While I have referred to the New Testament as specially

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revealing the person and character of Christ, it is to be remembered that the divine origin of the Old Testament is as undeniable as that of the New. The New Testament everywhere recognizes the Old Testament as the word of God. How often did Jesus in referring to the ancient Scriptures say, "It is written," "As the Scripture has said"! The Old Testament and the New are both parts of the same revelation of God to man. The Old anticipates the New, and the New presupposes the Old. Neither is complete without the other, but the two constitute God's book given to man. There is no other revelation; there is no intimation that there will be another while the world stands.

It is not worth while to go into the question of "degrees of inspiration." Nothing is said about lower or higher degrees in the Bible itself. Inspiration is a mystery. How God inspired men to speak and write his truth, "not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches," and at the same time did not interfere with individuality of style, but left it undisturbed, we do not know. We do know, however, that the style of Moses is not that of David, nor is the style of Isaiah like that of Jeremiah, nor the style of Matthew similar to that of John; and the style of Paul is plainly different from that of Peter. This diversity of style seems to us to result from individuality of character each writer using such words as he was acquainted with and accustomed to use; yet they were God's words as certainly as if the inspired men had known nothing of them. Hence we read again and again, "Thus says the Lord," and "The Lord spoke, saying." While revelation and inspiration are not precisely equivalent, the terms are often used convertibly. Thus we say "the volume of revelation" and "the volume of inspiration," meaning the same thing. Possibly a strict use of terms would require us to confine the word *revelation* to those things in the Bible which were not known, and could not be known, till God revealed them, while inspiration has to do with the whole Bible. For example, the coming of Christ in the flesh to save sinners was a matter of revelation; but that there were Pharisees and Sadducees at Jerusalem, and that the river Jordan ran through Judea, are

unquestionable facts, though not supernaturally revealed. Still, all that is contained in the Bible concerning Pharisees, Sadducees, and the river Jordan was written under the inspiration of God. That is to say, God by his Spirit influenced the sacred penmen to write just what they did write, no more, no less; so that the Bible is as much the book of God as if he, without the intervention of men had written it himself.

I have thought proper to say as much as this concerning inspiration, as there will be no chapter of this work especially devoted to the subject. Indeed, such a chapter will hardly be necessary, for if the Bible is, as I have attempted to show, a revelation from God, its inspiration must be granted. Nor will I dwell on what are called the external evidences of the truth of the Bible, such as miracles, prophecy, etc. The limits I have prescribed for myself will not permit; and, moreover, I have preferred to present some of the internal evidences of the truth of the Scriptures. Of these I have selected only a few, but if the trains of thought which they suggest are carried out, we will see that in accepting the Bible as true “we have not followed cunningly-devised fables.” (2 Pet 1:16)

If the Bible is the word of God, its authority cannot be questioned. There must be no caviling as to its teachings. What it says must be received as true, and its words must be candidly and faithfully interpreted. There must be docility of spirit—a willingness to “be taught of God,” which will express itself in the language of the child Samuel: “Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.” (1 Sam 3:9)

Recognizing the Bible as the word of God, I will appeal to it in every part of this volume as the standard of truth and right.

MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES
FROM THE
TENNESSEE BAPTIST



GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF SIN

TENNESSEE BAPTIST, SEPTEMBER 1, 1855

Let no man say when he is tempted, "I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil neither tempts he any man."—James 1:13

It may well excite astonishment what culpable as man is, he manifests a strange reluctance to own his guilt. And so far from admitting his blame-worthiness he is prone to indulge a self-justifying disposition. He may readily concede that to be placed in the moral circumstances which surround him is his misfortune, but that it involves his own *personal* criminality he is very slow to believe. Hence the multiplied and multiform excesses sinners make in palliation of their iniquities. No one acquainted with depraved human nature is ignorant of these excuses, nor of the obstinate earnestness displayed in attempts to establish their validity.

But this is not all: Men are not only disposed to exonerate themselves from blame but frequently become as impious as to charge their wickedness on God. Adam did this, indirectly, after, eating the forbidden fruit. He said to God, "The woman whom *you gave* to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." This was equivalent to his saying, "It is true I have eaten the fruit of the interdicted tree, but that fruit was offered to me by my companion in the garden, and you gave me that companion; therefore you are the real author of the act performed at her solicitation. What a charge was this; a charge brought against God by the ancestor of our race. His posterity might well weep over this awful impiety did not similar impiety in themselves call for all their tears. Adam's disposition has been transmitted

from generation to generation. It existed in apostolic times. Men were then inclined to adopt the sentiment that God tempted them to commit evil. But says the apostle in the text, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempts he any man." It is manifest from this language that the sins of man can with no semblance of propriety be charged on God. NO man is tempted by God. It is proper here to remark that the word *tempt* is used in two senses in the scriptures. It sometimes means to *try* as when it is said, "*God tempted Abraham*"—tried him—put to the test the strength of his faith. The words *tempt* and *temptation*; however, are most frequently used to denote solicitation to evil. In temptation of this kind there are motives presented to the mind, motives adapted to prompt to the commission of evil. As the Devil is pre-eminently engaged in the presentation of these motives he is emphatically called the *tempter*. God never *tempts*, never places a *temptation* before the mind, and never acts in the capacity of *tempter*. He cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts he any man.

It is highly important that we form proper views of sin. Unless we do we can never adequately appreciate the scheme of redemption through Jesus Christ. If we adopt any sentiment which suggests the inference that God is the author of sin, then it will be natural to conclude that salvation not of grace but of debt. For let the sinner feel that God is the instigator of his sins—the sins that have involved him in ruin—and he will at once feel that God is under obligation to save him from that ruin. Thus, instead of coming before the Lord as a subdued suppliant pleading for mercy, he will come as a presumptuous Pharisee claiming salvation as a matter of justice.

But let a sinner feel that God is infinitely free from all the blame attached to sin—that he has ruined himself—that he has no being in the universe to accuse but himself—and then will he most cordially espouse the doctrine of salvation by grace—he will gladly acquiesce in the plan of redemption through the Mediator's blood. After this long introduction, I

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announce the following as the proposition which I wish to establish and illustrate. God is not the author of sin.

In proof of this proposition:

I. I refer to the immaculate purity of the divine nature.

How impressive the testimony of the scriptures in favor of the holiness of God. Moses said, "A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" cried the men of Bethshemesh in the days of Samuel. Jehovah is emphatically termed "the Holy One, the Holy One of Israel." He is said to be "of purer eyes than to behold evil and cannot look upon iniquity." The inhabitants of heaven are represented as saying. "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." "Who will not fear you, O Lord, and glorify they great name; for you only are holy." These portions of the Bible prove the holiness of the divine character. And if God be holy, it follows that he cannot be tempted with evil. Evil can have no influence on the divine mind, because of its infinite purity—or can God consistently with his own nature tempt any of his creatures to sin. Immutability belongs inalienably to the character of God. He is unchangeably the same. If then God is immutable and now possesses the attribute of holiness, he has always possessed it. And if so it has always been morally impossible for him to tempt any of his creatures to commit sin—it is morally impossible now—and will be morally impossible to all eternity. If God does not tempt men—if he does not present to the mind considerations adapted to prompt to the commission of sin—how can he be the author of sin? For when he is spoken of as the author of sin, it is not meant that God himself commits sin, but that in some way he exercises his agency in influencing men to sin. But this cannot be; for that he "tempts no man" the text plainly declares. To make God the author of sin is to make a bitter stream flow from a sweet fountain. For such a stream to flow from such a fountain is inconsistent with all the analogies of the moral universe. He is not and cannot be the author of sin.

1. The Nature of the Divine Law illustrates the truth of our proposition.

The law of God may be considered an expression of his will in reference to his creatures. It would be absurd to suppose that the law of God and his will ever come into collision. The will of every being necessarily partakes of the nature of that being. A depraved being in the exercise of his will always gives indications of depravity. In proportion to the holiness of a being in that proportion are the exercises of the will Holy. God is infinitely holy, and it is, therefore, morally certain that his will cannot be controlled in its determination by evil influences. It is a holy will, and is expressed in a law which is of necessity holy, just and good. Now, the law of God shows us what sin is and prohibits its commission. We should remember too that this law takes cognizance of the feelings of the heart as well as the words of the mouth and the action of the life. Here it differs from all human laws. They have nothing to do with the interests of the heart unless they are developed in word or deed. If then a man offends not in word or deed, human laws can bring no accusation against him. It is not so with the divine law. It condemns every evil desire—every evil thought, whether it results in action or not. It approves every thing good in word, thought, and deed. Nor can we conceive of any thing which God has required of us which he ought not to require—neither can we name one thing which he has forbidden that ought not to be prohibited. The object of the law of God is to promote holiness in his creatures—holiness in heart and life. If this is the design of the law and the tendency of its operation, then God, the Law-giver, is not and cannot be the author of sin.

2. The inseparable union between holiness and happiness shows that God is not the author of sin.

The desire of happiness is not artificially created in the soul, but is inherent in it. The desire has its origin in the peculiar mental constitution which God has given us. Owing to our depravity we often seek to gratify this desire in unworthy objects. We practically overlook the fact that God has made

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holiness a prerequisite to happiness. Holiness sustains to happiness the relation which a cause sustains to its legitimate effect. In whatever part of the divine empire it exists it is invariably productive of felicity. Every holy being in the universe is a happy being. God himself enjoys infinite felicity because he is infinitely holy. He is the fountain of joy because he is the source of holiness. Angels are happy because their natures are stamped with holiness.

Heaven itself is happy because it is a holy place. The spirits of just men made perfect owe their bliss to the fact that they have been made perfect. The saints on earth are happy in proportion to their holiness. There are true joys in piety in the present life. Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Christ's yoke is easy and his burden light; the peace of God reigns in the hearts of all who love the Savior. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace. The Divine Spirit most graciously makes the human heart the theater of his operation, and the result of his operation is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost produced by the Divine Spirit. Christians are commanded to rejoice evermore. There is an obvious propriety in the command; for they, are possessed of all the elements of genuine happiness. Now if holiness is productive of happiness, then God, in requiring us to be holy, makes a powerful appeal to our desire of happiness. He virtually says, "You wish to be happy, then be holy, that you may be happy." The desire of happiness is exceedingly strong, and the greater its strength the better adapted is the appeal which God makes to it to take effect; the greater is the probability that it will be effective. The matter stands thus; God, in establishing an inseparable connection between holiness and happiness urges us by our aspirations after happiness to be holy, that those aspirations may be gratified. How evident then is it that God is not the author of sin.

3. The alliance between sin and misery may be referred to in proof of our proposition.

It will not be denied that sin is the prolific source of all the miseries of the universe. Before the birth of sin, sorrow and

wretchedness were unknown in the dominions of God. Holiness reigned, and happiness abounded. But as soon as sin was introduced, sorrow and suffering followed; and they have walked in the footsteps of transgression to this hour. Man does not desire happiness more strongly than he deprecates misery. The desire and the deprecation must, of necessity, be precisely equal in energy. Every one must see that, as misery is the result of sin, the dread of misery, so natural to man, is adapted to deter him from sin. Thus God makes his appeal not only to our desire of happiness, but to our fear of misery. It is a two fold appeal, and from its very nature we cannot conceive how it could be more influential.

In establishing an alliance between sin and misery, God may be considered as throwing impediments in the way of transgression, to prevent his creatures from walking therein. How then can he be regarded as the author of sin? No supposition can be more ineffably absurd. The connection between sin and misery speaks a language on this subject, which the intelligent universe cannot misunderstand.

4. That God presents the most powerful considerations to prompt us to holiness and deter us from sin, proves that he is not the author of sin.

Some of these considerations have been indirectly allude to, but the topics deserves greater prominence. Among the powerful considerations prompting to holiness, I may mention—the divine approbation—the value of the soul—and the bliss of heaven. Let us consider these points.

The divine approbation. Jehovah's approving smile rests on every holy being. "The Lord *knows* the way of the righteous." If this is true, then the approbation with which God regards his creatures is in the ratio of their conformity to his law which is the standard of holiness. It surely accords with rationality to suppose that creatures should desire the Creator's approbation. How desirable is the light of God's countenance! How often does David refer to it! And this is a phrase which implies the divine approbation whatever else it may imply. If then the approbation of God is so desirable,

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and if it cannot be rationally expected without holiness, what a powerful motive is this to prompt to holiness.

Consider the value of the soul. Who can compute its worth? It is endowed with noble powers. Its faculties are susceptible of indefinite enlargement. Who can solve the problem propounded by Jesus Christ? "What is a man profited if he gains the whole world and lose his own soul?" How immensely valuable must be the soul if the acquisition of all the world is no compensation for its loss! The soul's immortality adds immeasurable to its value; the mysterious spark lighted up in man's bosom will never be extinguished. It will burn forever. Now the mighty question must be decide whether the soul is to be saved or lost. Holiness will secure it salvation. Do you not see then that God presents a motive to prompt you to holiness as powerful as the soul is valuable? The motive grows out of the soul's worth and the energy of it operation should be proportionate to the value of the soul. O that we all felt as we should do the strength of this motive!

But think of the bliss of heaven. You have often heard and read of heaven. You have learned that it is the place of perfect joy. There God has established his throne. There he displays his glory. There the holy angels dwell. There the redeemed from the earth have found their long-sought rest. Yes, "there the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest"—they rest from their labors. The hallelujahs of angels and the songs of the blood-bought multitude before the throne indicated triumphant joy—ecstatic bliss. This joy will never cease—this bliss will continue forever. Holiness is indispensable to admittance into heaven. Without holiness no man will see the Lord. The pure in heart will see God. It follows, therefore, that by every thing desirable in a dwelling-place on high—by everything attractive in the bliss of the upper world, we are urged to be holy. God presents this motive, and it is a powerful one—originated as it is by every thing desirable and attractive in celestial glory—glory eternal as the divine existence. How can God be the author of sin when he presents motives so operative to prompt to holiness? He cannot be—it is impossible.

But there are considerations to deter from sin. Let us notice a few of them—such as the displeasure of God—condemnation at the judgment—and everlasting perdition in hell.

The displeasure of God. Every thing which renders the divine approbation desirable renders the divine displeasure dreadful. How awful must it be for the wrath of God to abide on his creatures. The wrath of a king is as a roaring of a lion. How tremendous then must be the vengeance of the King Eternal! Now it is sin that excites the divine displeasure. Nothing else in the universe can do it. How effectually then should we be deterred from sin by considerations of divine wrath!

The sinner will be condemned at the judgment. “Depart from the cursed,” will be the language of the Judge to the trembling multitude on his left hand. How fearful the sentence, and from it there will be no appeal.

Those on whom this sentence is pronounced will sink into the abyss of damnation. Their souls will be lost, and the loss will be eternal. The agonies of the second death are ever living agonies. I ask if God does not present the most powerful considerations to deter from sin! How manifest then that he is not the author of sin!

Thus have I employed five arguments to establish and illustrate the proposition we have been considering. May I not ask if it is not awfully impious for men to charge their sins on God? He who does this would make darkness the offspring of light—would attempt to establish concord between Christ and Belial—would cause a pure fountain to send forth bitter waters—would endeavor to identify immorality and death—would coerce heaven to form a treaty and enter fellowship with hell. “Let no man say when is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts he any man.” If the sun is not the source of darkness God is not the author of sin.

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REMARKS

1. In view of this subject we may observe that although God has permitted the introduction of sin into the universe, neither the sins of angels nor men are chargeable on him. It must be allowed that Jehovah has suffered the existence of sin. He made angels and he made our first parents moral agents, capable of retaining their primitive integrity—capable also of sinning and falling from their exalted position. That it was possible for them to remain holy is manifest from the fact that they did, for a period, so remain. They might have continued sinless forever. But I have admitted that it was possible for them to sin. And I deny that God could have made them naturally incapable of winning without dispensing with their moral agency. To complain that angels and men were created capable of sinning is to complain that they were not made machines, but moral agents. The matter stands thus. While God has suffered the introduction of sin into his empire, he has not exercised his agency in its introduction, and is therefore infinitely exempt from all the blame attached to its existence.
2. The sins of men are chargeable on themselves. “Every man is tempted when drawn away of his own lust.” The combustible materials in man through Satan may apply the torch. The Devil has no compulsory power. He can compel no man to sin against his inclination. He presents his temptations—it is optional with the tempted to yield or resist. Moral agency is voluntarily exercised in sinning against God. How guilty is man! How inexcusable! His culpability is beyond dispute. Were all intelligent beings empanelled as a jury to act on his case the verdict of “*guilty*” would be rendered in a moment.
3. The finally impenitent will forever suffer a self-procured damnation. The wages of sin is death. The sinner labors in the service of sin until the close of his short day of probation and then receives his wages. Awful thought! Let an inquest be held over any lost sinner and the marks of self-destruction will be so evident that the result of the

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inquest will given in the words, "*died of moral suicide*"—and echo—such fearful echo as is heard only in the chambers of perdition will answer, "*suicide.*"

4. With what superlative glory does the grace of God shine forth in human salvation. Self-ruined sinners that deserve the damnation of hell are saved and exalted to heaven.



SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

TENNESSEE BAPTIST, NOVEMBER 5, 1859

For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:8-10)

Paul loved to dwell on the sacred theme of salvation. It was the joy of his heart and the boast of his tongue. He took a mournful interest in contemplating the condition of the unregenerate, that he might see the wonders divine grace had done in delivering the saved from so wretched a condition. He refers in this chapter to the moral state of the Ephesians before their conversion. He represents them as dead in trespasses and sins—walking according to the course of this world—children of wrath even as others. God, who is rich in mercy, had quickened them together with Christ, and made them the subjects of a spiritual resurrection. All this had been done by grace; for by grace, says the text, are you saved, & c.

1. What Is The Gospel Import of the Term Salvation?

The very word awakens in the mind the idea of a previously lost condition. The Savior himself said, “The Son of man is come to seek and to *save* that which was *lost*.” Salvation is a comprehensive term, including all that God does in time and in eternity for those he saves. And what does he do?

- (1) *He justifies them.* They are condemned by his holy law. They are guilty in his sight. They must be reinstated in his favor. This is a material point. There is no salvation without justification. How is salvation possible without a reversal of the condemnatory sentence of the law?
- (2) *God Regenerates Those Whom He Saves.* In their un-renewed state they are children of wrath even as others. They are the subjects of spiritual death. In the process of salvation there is an impartation of divine life to the soul. The dead in sin are made alive to God. They are born again. They are created in Christ Jesus. Regenerating grace is magnified in them.
- (3) *God Glorifies Those Whom He Saves.* He glorifies their souls upon their exit from the body. Stephen prayed in his dying moments, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and it is doubtless true that the spirits of believers, as soon as they leave their tenements of clay, mingle with the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven. But the work of glorification will not be complete till the bodies of the redeemed are raised up from the grave. And they will be raised up. The mouth of the Lord has spoken it. The sleeping dust of the saints will be fashioned into bodies incorruptible and immortal, like the Savior's own glorified body. Then will the work of glorification be consummated, and the saved will, in their complete persons, inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Salvation includes all this and a thousand times more than I can tell you.

2. Salvation Is of Grace

There are, as it seems to me, but three conceivable views of salvation: It must be wholly of grace, or wholly of works, or there must be a mixture of grace and works. The last view—the commingling of grace and works—is so assured as to deserve no attention. We return then to the doctrine of salvation by grace, or by works. We are said in the text to be saved by grace, and not by works.

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That salvation is not the works is evident from several considerations:

- (1) *No act of man can have a retrospective bearing.* Nothing done by him can change the past. It remains immutably the same, & c.
- (2) *No man can do more than his duty.* There can be no such thing as works of supererogation; for the law of God requires the exercise of all the strength of the creature in the love and service of the Creator. To speak of exerting more ability than is possessed is an absurdity; and unless this can be done, no man can do more than his duty, & c.
- (3) *No act of man is meritorious.* This follows from the fact just referred to. There cannot be merit in works unless they are works of supererogation; and we have seen there are no such works. Jesus has taught us to say when we have done our duty, "We are unprofitable servants we have done that which was our duty to do." As man can do no more than his duty, and as the idea of duty excludes the idea of merit, there can be no such thing as a meritorious human action. It follows then, with all the force of logical necessity that salvation is not of works—in other words, that man cannot save himself.

The language of the text is, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." There is a distinction made by the Apostle between "works" and "good works." Works may be performed before the sinner is in a state of salvation; but good works cannot be. WE are created in Christ Jesus into good works. If so, we cannot perform good works till we are created in Christ, and then we are in a saved state. Now, if we are in a saved state before we can perform good works, it is obvious that good works do not save us; and if good works do not save us, what will I say of those to which the epithet good is not applied by the inspired writers? They certainly possess no saving capabilities. They cannot proceed from pure motives, for pure motives cannot be found in a heart unsaved from the power of sin. God ever looks at the motive prompting an act in determining the moral quality of the act. Impurity of

motive contaminates every action which it prompts. The works of a sinner, so far from having power to save, are themselves sinful, and salvation involves a concealment of the guilt contracted in their performance. Surely, then, salvation is not of works.

It must, therefore, be of grace. This is the affirmation of the text. By grace you are saved. The whole system of salvation transcendentally displays the grace of God. It is full of grace. Grace is glorious in all its parts. Whatever God the Father does in the stupendous enterprise of redemption is surely of grace. But for his unmerited favor it would never have written, "God commends his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ dies for us." He was infinitely free from obligation to provide a Savior. Prompted by the impulses of his amazing grace he sent his Son down from heaven.

Surely, too, grace is luminously displayed in whatever Christ does in the great work of salvation. While the Father sent him on a mission of mercy there was no compulsion. The Son of God came most voluntarily from his throne to the manger, the garden, the cross. What but grace influenced him to lay aside his glory—become a man of sorrows—and pour forth his blood as a sacrifice for sin? And now, what but grace secures for us his intercession in heaven? Of him the Evangelist tells us that with the heart, he comes into contact with its depravity and pollution, that he may renovate it and fit it for heaven. All the saved are born of the Spirit, and in them is exemplified what is meant by the "sanctification of the Spirit." They are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit of God dwells in them.

Thus does it appear that the conjoint operations of the three persons in the Godhead in the work of man's redemption, display, in an infinitely wonderful manner, the grace which brings salvation.

I have said that God justifies, regenerates, and glorifies those whom he saves. Justification, regeneration, and glorification, are all, in the Scripture, ascribed to the grace of God. We are

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said to be justified freely by the grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saves us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. According to his abundant mercy he begets us to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. The gift of God is eternal life. Being a gift it must be of grace. The Lord gives grace and glory. The glory he gives in heaven is graciously given. I argue, then, that the proposition I have attempted to establish is true—salvation is of grace.

3. While Salvation Is of Grace, It is Through Faith.

The blood of Christ is the meritorious cause of salvation. Faith relies on that blood; that is, on the atonement made by it—and appropriates the salvation. Faith relies on that blood; that is, on the atonement made by it—and appropriates the salvation. It is emphatically an appropriating grace. Its province is to receive Christ. In receiving him, it receives with him all the blessings of salvation; for they are all treasured up in him. We are not to suppose that faith possesses merit because it is so prominently instrumental in the salvation of the soul. It has no merit. We are not saved *for the sake of our* faith, but *through* faith. While faith has no merit of its own, it brings the believer into vital union with Christ in whose obedience and blood there is infinite merit. Thus faith, on account of its relation to Christ is the means by which we are saved. By grace are you saved through faith. The question is sometimes asked, "Is faith the gift of God, or the act of the creature?" I answer, both. It is strange that such a question was ever asked. Trust in Christ is the prominent idea in faith, and no man ever trusts in Christ until, as a lost, helpless sinner, feeling his need of salvation, he is divinely influenced and enabled to receive Christ as the only Savior of sinners. In this sense faith is the gift of God. But who exercises faith? Who receives Christ? The believer. So far then as faith is an act, it is the act of the creature. God

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believes for no man. He by his grace enables the repenting sinner to believe in the Redeemer; and thus faith is both the gift of God and the act of the creature.

4. While Good Works Do Not merit Salvation, They Are The Divinely Appointed Evidences of a Saved States.

Created in Christ Jesus unto good works. One object of this creation is the maintenance of good works. These good works emanate from a regenerate heart. They are the fruits of justifying faith. Hence, they are evidences of a saved state. They are divinely appointed evidences; for God before ordained that the saved should walk in them. Good works are important in their place. Their place is not before, but after justification with God by faith in Christ. Then they indicate the genuineness and the vitality of the faith from which they proceed. Hence, Abraham's offering Isaac on the altar, was a good work which showed most clearly the power of the faith which was counted to him for righteousness many years before. That Faith, when first it reposed confidence in God, contained in it the germ of holy obedience. The "Father of the faithful" was on this account, ever ready to do the will of God.

All believers should remember the words of Jesus: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." The grace which brings salvation, teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly righteously, and godly in this present world.

REMARKS

1. How great are the obligations of the saints to God for his grace! How ardent should be their gratitude that he has saved them according to the riches of his grace!
2. How will they admire this grace in heaven? Eternal ages will not be too long to explore and admire its wonders.

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3. How vain to rely on works for salvation? There is no hope for a sinner but in the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Salvation is of the Lord, and must, therefore, be of grace.



ARE THE HEATHEN SAVED WITHOUT THE GOSPEL?

TENNESSEE BAPTIST, NOVEMBER 26, 1859

An esteemed brother in an adjoining State wishes this question answered, for he says some Baptists take the affirmative. I am sorry to learn this. I have known some Methodists to express the opinion that heathen notions are on an equality with unconscious infants. This is not a Baptist sentiment; it is not a scriptural sentiment. Paul, in the tenth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, lays down the comprehensive proposition, "For whosoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved." Then he adopts a process of interrogative logic, as follows: "How, then, will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how will they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? And how will they preach except they be sent?"

What are we here taught? That all men are in a lost condition—that calling on the name of the Lord precedes salvation—that a belief in the Lord—in his existence, I presume—must precede calling on his name—that hearing of the Lord must precede this belief—that preaching must precede the hearing—and that preachers must be sent before they can preach. So I understand the Apostle, and so no doubt he intended to be understood; for he says in the same connection, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

The name of Jesus is the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. This is a general declaration. It contains no exceptions in favor of any man

whether in heathen or gospel lands. We have nothing, now, to do with infants. It is clear from the whole tenor of the gospel that those who have reached the period of accountability cannot be saved without faith in Christ. He that believeth not will be damned. This universal statement is appended to the command, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. But it is argued by some that after men hear the gospel and reject it they incur damnation, but that they would not incur this awful doom if they did not hear the gospel. This view supposes the rejection of the gospel to be the original basis of man's condemnation. This is not true. Man's violation of the divine law is the basis of his condemnation, while an abuse of the gospel immeasurably-enhances the condemnation. There would have been no gospel if man had not been condemned by the law. The gospel is good news because it proclaims how deliverance from condemnation may be obtained.

The apostles went forth and preached to the heathen. Their proclamation of salvation implied the lost condition of those to whom they preached. The proclamation did not bring ruin on those to whom it was made, but it was made to men already ruined, and made because they were ruined, and that they might be extricated from ruin. The jailer was a heathen, and he tremblingly inquired, "What must I do to be saved?" The answer was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." The question implied the jailer's lost condition. The answer disclosed the only way of rescue therefrom. I may refer to this subject again.



FREE AGENCY

TENNESSEE BAPTIST, NOVEMBER 26, 1859

Dear Bro. Pendleton:—Please permit me to trouble you with another question on man's free agency. How can man, who is a slave of the Devil, be a free agent, when even his master is not a free agent? Man willingly serves his master, the Devil, in the day of his power, and he willingly serves his Master, Christ, in the day of his power. Man is an agent, but where, except in Christ, is his freedom.

REPLY

The above is from a correspondent in Georgia. That the Devil is not a free agent, I can by no means admit. I have no doubt Satan would be glad to believe he is not free. But he cannot believe it. He knows that in his impious rebellion against God he acts freely—acts out his depraved inclinations. Could the Devil persuade himself that he was forced, in the first instance, to rear the standard of revolt from the divine government, and that all his subsequent wickedness has been the result of coercion, he would then consider his present condition pitiable rather than culpable. He would regard himself as unfortunate rather than guilty, and look upon his punishment as arbitrary rather than the righteous consequence of his transgressions. Satan acts freely, as certainly does Gabriel.

What is free agency? Andrew Fuller says it is the power of acting according to one's inclinations. Does not Satan act according to his inclinations? Or, are his inclinations holy, and does he sin in spite of his proclivities to holiness? There

is no holy desire in him. Does not man act freely in sinning against God? My correspondent says man is the slave of the Devil. True enough, but is it not a willing slavery? Is man necessitated to serve the Devil? Is it not a voluntary service? Most assuredly it is. The question is not whether Satan tempts men, and by means of temptation influences them to sin. The question is, whether in sinning they act according to their inclinations. If they do they are free, for voluntary action is the essence of free agency. So with regard to the service of God, the question is not whether men without the influence of the Holy Spirit would serve God, but whether, when divinely influenced so to do, they serve God willingly. They are willing in the day of the Messiah's power, my correspondent being judge. If they are willing they act willingly, and this is free agency—some labor under this mistake: They suppose that as no man will serve God till supernaturally influenced to do so, the Christian himself is not a free agent. Does not the Christian serve God voluntarily? Does not his service result from choice? If not, how can it be acceptable to God? Will he accept a reluctant service? What mean those Scriptures which require that the *heart* be right with God? There is an awful illustration of free agency in sinners, for they sin of choice; there is a sublime exemplification of free agency in saints and angels, for they serve God voluntarily and cheerfully.



DIVINE PURPOSE AND FREE AGENCY

TENNESSEE BAPTIST, NOVEMBER 5, 1859

Bro. Pendleton: "Does not the Divine purpose necessarily interfere with the free agency of man?" Please answer through the *Baptist*.

Juvenis.

Ans.—The purpose of God does not necessarily interfere with the free agency of man. So far from it, there is no interference necessary or otherwise. What is free-agency? It is the power of acting according to inclination. What originates the inclination is another question. No matter how it originates, when men are inclined to act, they act freely and not by constraint. Some good men seem to think that, as depravity has a dominion over the human heart, which can be broken only by the power of Divine grace, and as there must be a counteraction of this depravity before any one will love and serve God, therefore, the efficient grace which overcomes the depravity, must destroy free agency. It is not so. The man who loves and serves God acts freely. He is, it is true, divinely influenced to act, but there is perfect freedom. The affections of the heart are voluntarily exercised; for, otherwise, they would not be exercised at all. The obedience of the life is cheerfully rendered. To present this matter in as striking a light as possible, I may say that no man's purpose interferes with his own free agency. For example: a man forms the purpose to invest a thousand dollars in some enterprise. He does it. He acts freely in executing his purpose. Now, if his purpose in this case does

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not interfere with his free agency, how could a foreign purpose—the purpose of any other creature for instance—interfere with it? God's purpose does not destroy his free agency. He acts in pursuance of purpose, and yet acts with infinite freedom.—His purpose and free agency are perfectly harmonious. If, then, God's purpose does not interfere with his own free agency, how does it interfere with the free agency of man? His purpose to chastise his ancient people, the Israelites, through Nebuchadnezzar, was effected in perfect accordance with Nebuchadnezzar's freedom. He never acted more freely than in sending an army into Judea. He obeyed the impulses of his ambition.



QUERIES: MISSIONS AND ANTI-MISSIONS MOVEMENT

TENNESSEE BAPTIST, APRIL 3, 1858

Can the Pastor of a regular Missionary Baptist Church, who is opposed to the cause of Missions, Home and Foreign, as they now exist, and who is likewise opposed to all Theological Institutions, Bible Societies, Conventions, Associations, etc.—can such a Pastor discharge the duties of Pastor over a Missionary body?

“What course should a Missionary body pursue with a Pastor who not only refrains from contributing himself, but urges upon his flock that it is sinful in them to contribute, thereby discountenancing the philanthropic principle of disseminating the Gospel among heathen nations.”

The foregoing queries are from a highly esteemed Brother, whom I never saw.

To the first I answer, emphatically, No.

To the second I have this to say. Let a few of the prominent members of the Church aim to convince the Pastor of the injurious consequences of his course. If they convince him he will act differently. If they do not, let them kindly but earnestly advise him to resign his pastorate, that the Church may select a Pastor whose views are congenial with the spirit of the gospel.



THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

TENNESSEE BAPTIST, SEPTEMBER 22, 1860

The “Old Baptists,” as they are called, seem to be very much opposed to Theological Schools. I have seen several things against them from the pen of Dr. Watson, and in the last *Herald of Truth*, I observe that the editor, Dr. Fair, gives a summary of a sermon recently delivered by Elder Wm. Crutcher, in which the preacher is represented as saying, “That education is good in its place and useful to ministry, but when Theological Schools are used instead of grace, for qualifying men to preach, they are a reflection on the great King in Zion, who has not thought proper to use them, and should not be tolerated by Baptists.—Such institutions cannot make men pious or teach them to love God—that grace, and grace only can affect the heart, renew in us a right principle and properly engage us in the discharge of Christian duties.”

With Drs. Watson and Fair I have the pleasure of an acquaintance, and entertain for them a high regard. Of Elder Crutcher I know nothing, and am sure I feel no prejudice against him. I have however, a few things to say on the foregoing extract. I am happy to agree with Elder C. in so many points. I certainly think with him that “education is a good thing in its place.”—not out of its place—that it “is useful to the ministry”—that “such institution” as Theological Schools “cannot make men pious &c., &c.” but I protest against the impression which certain parts of the extract must make, namely, that the friends of Theological Schools use them as a substitute for the grace of God, as

instruments for the creation of piety &c. The advocates of Theological education entertain no such view. They say piety is the first qualification of a minister of the gospel. Piety is a prerequisite to church membership and young ministers, licensed by the churches to preach the gospel receive assistance in their theological studies. The churches in granting license aim to grant it only to them who are called of God to preach. I presume that no one will say that God calls those alone who have as much theological information as is desirable. I dare say Elders Watson, Fair, and Crutcher, have much more theological knowledge now, than when they began to preach and that they are still adding to their stores. They will not say it is wrong to learn more about divine things. Very well. Then it cannot be wrong for young preachers at Murfreesboro, or elsewhere, to study theology, that they may learn more of what the Bible teaches. And if they can learn to better advantage in a class with an instructor, where is the objection? Suppose a young preacher, with his mind perplexed as to what Paul and James say of justification by faith and by works, goes to Dr. Watson for instruction. He would, no doubt, very promptly explain, and show that the statements of the two Apostles are perfectly harmonious. Why may I not, at one time, explain the same matter to a class of a dozen or twenty? The explanation of Dr. W. and myself would, I am sure, be the same. It is difficult for me to see how the objection to theological study, as prosecuted at our Colleges, can be well founded. Suppose a young minister asks Dr. Fair to give his views of sermonizing. He would probably say with Herder, that a sermon should grow out of a text as a plant grows out of the seed. I would say the same thing and expatiate on it in the presence of a class, and I might refer to Elder Crutcher's discourse as a violation of this fundamental law of sermonizing; for he says many things not suggested by the text. I hope I make this statement with all due courtesy.

My theory is that the more a preacher knows about theology the better, and where this knowledge can be most advantageously acquired, there let it be sought. Indeed all kinds of knowledge may be subservient to the elucidation of

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the word of God, and may therefore be rendered promotive of ministerial usefulness. Paul's acquaintance with the Greek poets served him a valuable purpose at Athens.

Our plan at Union University is, I think, the best plan. It is for young preachers to intersperse their theological studies with their literary pursuits. In this way it is hoped that all their intellectual acquisitions will receive the sanctifying impress of piety. But that our "Theological Department" is to be used "instead of the grace of God," is a thing too monstrous to be thought of.

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“Good principles are good things, but they have no self-propagating power. Principles are powerless apart from the persons who hold them. Baptists sometimes forget this. They are so confident in the correctness of their principles as to feel that all will be well. They think that their views, without any effort on their part, will commend themselves to general acceptance. They suppose that a good cause may be left to take care of itself; but no cause, however good, takes care of itself. Its friends must advocate it, and by their advocacy secure its triumph. Baptists must not forget that they are ‘fellow-helpers to the truth.’ None of them should fail to give the ‘truth’ their help. None should ever act as if they were ashamed of being Baptists. Their principles, when assailed, should never lack defense or vindication from them. Their silence, when they should speak, would be a culpable and an injurious silence. Baptists should be ready not only to meet and to repel attacks made on their principles, but should earnestly engage in the propagation of those principles. Leaving, on suitable occasions, their fortresses of defense, they should invade the domain of error and become actively aggressive. This is one fault of some of the Baptists of this generation—that they do not zealously propagate their distinctive views. They should see to it that the truth as embodied in their distinctive principles is brought into direct, positive, constant, exterminating contact with the error opposed to those principles. What distinctive mission have Baptists, if this is not their mission?—to present the truth in love on the matters wherein they differ from Pedobaptists. What is there but this that justifies their denominational existence and saves them from the reproach of being schismatics? If they have a right to denominational life, it is their duty to propagate their distinctive principles, without which that life cannot be maintained.”

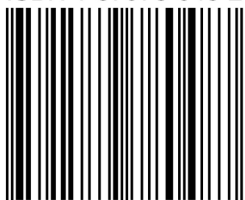
JAMES MADISON PENDLETON

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